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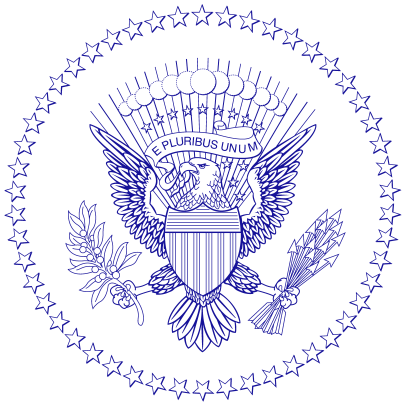
OF THE
UNITED STATES

George W. Bush



2004

(IN THREE BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

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Foreword

This volume collects my speeches and papers from the second half of 2004.

During these 6 months from July to December, I outlined my vision for the future of our Nation, and I advocated Government policies that put trust and power into the hands of the people. In September, at my nominating convention, I presented a clear plan to build a safer world, and a more hopeful America. I spoke of our Nation's need to build an ownership society where every citizen has a stake in America and all have an opportunity to succeed. I described the need to simplify the tax code; improve education and worker training; build opportunity zones in areas without hope; make health care more affordable; and reform Social Security to provide voluntary personal-retirement accounts for all Americans.

During this period, the American economy continued to expand and grow. Thanks to the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of the American people and the tax cuts of 2001, 2002, and 2003, our Nation added new jobs, built new businesses, and led the world in innovation and achievement. In the second half of 2004, the American economy gained strength—creating almost 1 million new jobs. To sustain this impressive economic growth, in October I signed a tax relief bill that helped millions of families by extending the child tax credit and marriage-penalty relief, and helped prevent middle-class families across America from being hit with the Alternative Minimum Tax. In addition, in December, my Administration hosted an important conference at the White House on America's economic future. We heard from business owners, workers, economists, and many other Americans who saw hopeful signs of growth throughout our country. We also discussed some of the fundamental challenges facing our economy—from frivolous lawsuits and burdensome regulations to the need for vital reforms in education, health care, entitlements, and the tax code.

To address these and many other issues in my second term, I built another outstanding Cabinet. In November, I named Alberto Gonzales to serve as Attorney General; Condoleezza Rice to serve as Secretary of State; Margaret Spellings to serve as Secretary of Education; and Carlos Guttierez to serve as Secretary of Commerce. In December, I named Mike Leavitt as Secretary of Health and Human Services; Samuel Bodman as Secretary of Energy; Jim Nicholson as Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and Mike Johanns as Secretary of Agriculture.

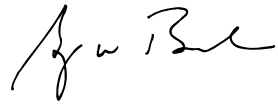
The second half of 2004 was also a time when we showed the compassionate heart and giving spirit that have made America a great Nation. In July, America commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act—a day when justice and equality triumphed over discrimination and indignity. Later that same month, I announced my initiatives to combat human trafficking. By working to provide prosecutors with new law enforcement tools and give outreach programs more help to sup-

port victims of trafficking, we took a stand for the value and dignity of every human life. In December, our Nation answered the call from our brothers and sisters in need half a world a way. America provided more than $850 million in humanitarian relief and reconstruction aid to help the people of South Asia whose lives and homes were devastated by the massive Bay of Bengal earthquake and tsunami.

As we worked to fulfill America's highest ideals of compassion and justice, we also continued to strengthen our Nation's ability to defend those ideals at home and abroad. In July, I signed the Project Bioshield Act. The Act was designed to help purchase, develop, and deploy cutting-edge defenses against catastrophic attack. Later that same month, I addressed the 9-11 Commission's recommendations. I discussed how my Administration's actions were consistent with the Commission's recommendations in detecting and disrupting terrorist cells; building a democratic Afghanistan; and improving our intelligence operations. In December, I signed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act—the most significant reform of our Nation's intelligence capabilities since President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947. The intelligence reforms of 2004 created the position of Director of National Intelligence; made it easier for law enforcement to share information about terrorists; and were designed to make all our intelligence efforts better coordinated, more efficient, and more effective.

Throughout the second half of 2004, thanks to our men and women in uniform and our international allies, we advanced the cause of freedom around the world, and the people of Afghanistan and Iraq continued to advance down the path of democracy and self-determination. On October 9, the people of Afghanistan held their first presidential election under their new constitution with more than 8 million Afghans going to the polls. On December 7, Hamid Karzai was inaugurated as Afghanistan's democratically elected president. In August, after the Coalition transfer of power, Iraqis selected a national assembly to act as a parliament until the elections of January 2005. In the months that followed, election rules were published, voters were registered, and candidates came forward to be elected to a transition government that would represent all the Iraqi people.

In the midst of all these historic steps on the road to freedom and peace, the world was reminded of the ruthless nature of our terrorist enemies. In Iraq, terrorists and insurgents continued to unleash savage attacks on those working to build a free and democratic Iraq. In late October of 2004, Al-Qaida released a tape from Osama Bin Laden that made further threats against America. I was very clear in my response: "Americans will not be intimidated or influenced by an enemy of our country." On October 31st, I told my fellow Americans: "Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth—not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for the homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're transforming our military . . . We are fighting the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We are determined, we are relentless, and we are succeeding."



Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the 43d President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1–September 30, 2004. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against a tape recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. At the request of the Office of the Press Secretary, the Bush property known as Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, is referred to simply as the Bush Ranch. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed full-text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes, and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. That coverage provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of

the Press Secretary. Also included are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed full-text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and William J. Clinton are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of Frances D. McDonald, Managing Editor, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Gwendolyn J. Henderson, Chief. The Chief Editor of this book was Stacey A. Mulligan, assisted by William K. Banks, Loretta F. Cochran, Kathleen M. Fargey, Michael J. Forcina, Stephen J. Frattini, Alison M. Gavin, Diane Hiltabidle, Alfred Jones, Ashley Merusi, Matthew R. Regan, and Michael J. Sullivan.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Printing Office under the direction of Bruce R. James, Public Printer.

Raymond A. Mosley
Director of the Federal Register

Allen Weinstein
Archivist of the United States

Contents

Foreword . . . v

Preface . . . vii

Cabinet . . . xi

Public Papers of George W. Bush,
July 1–September 30, 2004 . . . 1221

Appendix A
Digest of Other White House Announcements . . . 2273

Appendix B
Nominations Submitted to the Senate . . . 2291

Appendix C
Checklist of White House Press Releases . . . 2297

Appendix D
Presidential Documents Published in the Federal Register . . . 2303

Subject Index . . . A–1

Name Index . . . B–1

Document Categories List . . . C–1

Cabinet

Secretary of State	Colin L. Powell
Secretary of the Treasury	John Snow
Secretary of Defense	Donald H. Rumsfeld
Attorney General	John Ashcroft
Secretary of the Interior	Gale A. Norton
Secretary of Agriculture	Ann M. Veneman
Secretary of Commerce	Donald L. Evans
Secretary of Labor	Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development	Alphonso R. Jackson
Secretary of Transportation	Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary of Energy	Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Education	Roderick R. Paige
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Anthony J. Principi
Secretary of Homeland Security	Tom Ridge
Chief of Staff	Andrew H. Card, Jr.

Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency ..... Michael O. Leavitt

United States Trade Representative ..... Robert B. Zoellick

Director of the Office of Management and Budget ..... Joshua B. Bolten

Director of National Drug Control Policy ..... John P. Walters

Administration of George W. Bush

2004

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for John C. Danforth as United States Representative to the United Nations

July 1, 2004

The President. Please be seated. Good afternoon. It's an honor to welcome Jack and Sally Danforth and their wonderful family to the White House. I want to thank Justice Thomas and Ginny, Deputy Secretary Armitage, and all the other distinguished guests for joining us here today.

In his remarkable career, Jack Danforth has been called Attorney General, Senator, Special Counsel, Special Envoy, and Reverend. [*Laughter*] He's been called "Saint Jack." It's a little beyond my power to confer. [*Laughter*] Today I am very proud to name this good man and superb public servant America's next Ambassador to the United Nations.

As our Ambassador, Jack Danforth will succeed a good man with an important new mission. On Tuesday, former U.N. Ambassador John Negroponte presented his credentials to President al-Yawr as America's first Ambassador to Iraq since 1990. We appreciate his continuing service to our country.

For his own new assignment, Jack Danforth is exceptionally well-prepared. During his years on Capitol Hill, he earned the admiration of colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Jack is a man of strong convictions, unquestioned integrity, and great decency. He is a man of calm and judicious temperament who goes about his work with deliberation and a good will that draws others to his cause. These qualities were evident during his 18 years as Missouri's United States Senator and during his recent assignment in the Sudan. I'm confident that his good judgment and wisdom will serve America well at the United Nations.

Jack Danforth now heads to New York at a critical time, when the United States and the United Nations are facing new tests. We are called to defend the peace against ruthless terrorist networks and against outlaw regimes that support and shelter them. We are called to preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We're called to extend the peace by replacing poverty and repression and resentment around the world, especially in the broader Middle East. America is determined to lead all in these great objectives.

Yet, no nation can achieve them alone. Global challenges must be answered by active, effective, multilateral institutions. So we're working with many nations on the Proliferation Security Initiative, for example, to interdict dangerous weapons and materials in transit. We're helping to transform the NATO Alliance, which is now acting beyond Europe, bringing security to Afghanistan and soon providing training assistance for Iraqi security forces. And we're challenging the United Nations to rise to its responsibilities in a changing world.

The U.N. must fulfill its mission of peace by holding outlaw states to account, by aiding the rise of stable democracies, and by encouraging development and hope as alternatives to stagnation and bitterness. The U.N. is serving these great purposes in many different places. In Iraq, the U.N. is helping that newly sovereign nation to prepare for free and fair elections and will help to draft a new constitution. From Africa to the Caribbean, the U.N. is helping to turn societies away from old conflicts,

to overcome persistent poverty, to fight AIDS and other diseases.

America supports all these efforts, and we know that more will be necessary. So I'm sending Jack Danforth to the U.N. with a clear mandate. America will work closely with the United Nations to confront terror and to fight the suffering and despair that terrorists exploit. In all our work at the U.N., Ambassador John C. Danforth will be a strong voice for the humane and decent conscience of America.

One of Jack's many virtues is an eye for talent. Three decades ago, in Jefferson City, he took a chance on a promising lawyer from Pinpoint, Georgia. Since then, Attorney General Danforth has moved on to some other impressive jobs, and so has his young assistant. Today it is my honor to ask Justice Clarence Thomas to swear in Jack Danforth as the Representative of the United States to the United Nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Sally Danforth, wife of Ambassador Danforth; and Virginia Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Ambassador Danforth.

Remarks on the 40th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
July 1, 2004

Thank you all for coming, and welcome to the White House. I am so pleased you could join us to celebrate a great anniversary of justice and equality in America.

I appreciate members of my Cabinet being here and a lot of members of my administration. I want to thank many of our distinguished guests who have joined us today. I'm so pleased to see Dr. Dorothy Height. Thank you so much for coming.

We've got two Lieutenant Governors, Michael Steele and Jennette Bradley, with us. Thank you both for being here today. Marc Morial—where are you, Marc? He must be somewhere. There he is. Thanks for coming. I didn't recognize you outside the "Big Easy." [*Laughter*]

Lou Sullivan is with us. I'm honored you're here, Lou. Thanks for coming, sir. My friend Bob Woodson, president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, is here. Thanks for coming, Woody. Glad you're here. Bill Coleman, former Secretary of Transportation, I'm honored you're here. Thurgood Marshall, Jr., is with us today. Thank you so much for being here. Appreciate—I'm honored you're here. It's pretty neat to have a great father, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

I'm going to save one announcement for a little later, a special announcement. But I do want to recognize Jack Valenti, who was the Special Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson. Jack, we're honored you're here. Thank you for coming.

Forty years ago, in many parts of America, basic rights were observed or denied based entirely on race. Offensive laws regulated every detail of society: where you could get your hair cut; which hospital ward you could be treated in; which park or library you could visit. A person looking for a job or even a place to stay the night could be turned away merely because the color of the skin. And that person had very little recourse under Federal law. Forty years ago this week, that system of indignity and injustice was ended by the Civil Rights Act signed into law in this very room.

As of July the 2d, 1964, no longer could weary travelers be denied a room in a hotel or a table at a restaurant. No longer could

any American be forced to drink from a separate water fountain or sit at the back of a bus just because of their race. All discrimination did not end that day, but from that day forward, America has been a better and fairer country.

Today we have here on display, outside this room, the first and last pages of the Civil Rights Act and one of the pens that President Lyndon B. Johnson used for the signature. That law was a long time in coming, and before it arrived, the conscience of America had to be awakened. That conscience was stirred by men and women who held sit-ins at lunch counters, who rode the buses on Freedom Rides, who endured and overcame the slurs and the firehoses and the burning crosses. The conscience of America was outraged by the ambush of Medgar Evers, by kidnapings and terror bombings, and by the murder of four young girls in a church on a Sunday. Our Nation's conscience was moved by hundreds of thousands who marched right here in the Nation's Capital to demand the full promise of the Declaration and America's founding law.

President John F. Kennedy heard the voices of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, and took up the challenge. Five months before his death, the President said our Nation was confronted with a moral issue as old as the Scriptures and as clear as the American Constitution, and he called on Congress to pass civil rights legislation.

After President Kennedy was assassinated, some wondered if the new President, a son of the South, would carry forward the work of civil rights. Very soon they would know the answer. During the Senate debate on the Civil Rights Act, one of the longest debates in Senate history, President Lyndon Johnson used all his powers of persuasion, and they were considerable. [*Laughter*] No one escaped the LBJ treatment—[*laughter*]—not Senators, not their staffs, not even their families. It is said that when President Johnson called reluctant Senators at home and a child answered, he would say, "Now you tell your daddy that the President called." [*Laughter*] "And he'd be very proud to have your daddy on his side." [*Laughter*]

It was more than the force of Johnson's personality that helped win the day; it was the force of President Johnson's conviction on behalf of a just cause. As a young man, he'd seen the ugly effects of discrimination. As President, he was determined to fight it by law, regardless of the political risk. One Southern Senator warned him, "It's going to cost you the election." He replied, "If that's the price I've got to pay, I will pay it gladly."

Lyndon Johnson is known to history as the President who championed and signed the Civil Rights Act. And we recognize and remember the contributions of this strong Texan and great American. And we're honored to have his daughter, Luci Baines Johnson, with us today. We're honored you're here. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you coming.

We also remember the legislators of both parties who worked tirelessly to bring the bill to passage, in particular, Senators Mike Mansfield of Montana, Senator Edward Dirksen of Illinois, and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. When it mattered most, these principled men rose to the responsibility of their time, and our Nation honors them today.

After the Civil Rights Act became law, the change was felt immediately all across America. In 1964, Dale Long was a 12-year-old boy living in Birmingham, Alabama. One day, before the law was passed, Dale and his brother convinced their father to take them to a movie where blacks had to enter through an alley and could only sit in the upstairs balcony. "I could see the look of humiliation on my dad's face," he remembers. A few months after the Civil Rights Act, the Long brothers returned to that theater. As they remember it, they were with a friend. "We went to see a James Bond movie," Dale says, and

this time they entered through the front door and sat where they pleased.

The indignity of Dale Long's first experience at that movie theater seems like something that happened many lifetimes ago. Yet, such experiences are within the living memory of millions of our citizens. These past four decades in American life give witness to the power of good laws to prevent injustice and encourage the finest qualities of our national character.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gives all Americans another reason to be proud of our country. The work of equality is not done because the evil of bigotry is not finally defeated. Yet, the laws of this Nation and the good heart of this Nation are on the side of equality. And as Dr. King reminded us, "We must not rest until the day when justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I'm honored you all are here today. We'll have a reception on the other side of this beautiful house. Thank you for coming. May God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights leader Dorothy I. Height; Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele of Maryland; Lt. Gov. Jennette B. Bradley of Ohio; Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League; and Louis W. Sullivan, chair, President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Small-Business Entrepreneurs
July 2, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. I am glad you're here. We're here today to talk about the economic security of our fellow citizens. One of my most important jobs is to help create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes, because I believe that the fact that America is a heaven for the entrepreneur is one of the real strengths of our country. I know that when the entrepreneur feels confident, when the small-business owner invests, it's more likely people will be able to find a job.

I'm interested in people working. I want people being able to go to work and coming home, saying, "I'm doing my duty as a mom or a dad to put food on the table," or "I've got an opportunity to set aside hard-earned money for my child's education." That's what I'm interested in. And one way to do that is to make sure the small-business part of our economy is vibrant, strong, energized, and confident. And I think it is.

The economy of the United States has been through a lot. If you really think about it, it's pretty remarkable to be able to stand up and say to you that our economy is strong and getting stronger, that we're witnessing steady, consistent growth. After all, we've been through a recession, a national emergency, a war, corporate scandals. We've got an economy which is changing. The nature of the job base is changing. And all that means it's been a difficult period of time. Yet we're strong. We're getting stronger. We're witnessing steady growth—steady growth. And that's important. We don't need boom- or bust-type growth, we want just steady, consistent growth so that our fellow citizens will be able to find a job and so that the small-business sector will feel confident about expanding.

I was pleased to see that consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. That's an indication that the economy is strong and getting better. When people are confident, they tend to be a part of the decisionmaking process amongst millions of deciders that say the future is going to be better.

I've just met with some small-business owners. I'm going to introduce them here in a second. They're confident. The first thing I listened for was, do they have confidence in their voices? Were they saying to me, "Gosh, I'm confident enough to make investment"? That's what you listen for if you're somebody trying to be able to report to the economy about the nature of our economy. To a person, to a business, they were saying, "You bet; I'm confident about the future of the country. Therefore I'm going to invest more," which I'm going to talk a little bit about here in a second.

Real after-tax incomes are up 11 percent since December of 2000. To me, that's a vital statistic. Real after-tax incomes—that means that the amount of money in somebody's wallet is increasing. That's what we want to hear, isn't it, particularly if you're somebody who has got a wallet. [*Laughter*] It's a good sign when people are working and keeping more of their own money. That's what we want.

Homeownership rates are at an alltime high. That's an important statistic, particularly if you believe the more people that own something, the better off our society is. That's what I believe. We want more people owning their own small business. We want more people owning their own home. See, when somebody owns their own home, they can say, "This is my property. Welcome to my home." They don't say, "Welcome to the Government's home." They say, "Welcome to my home," which is an important part of not only consumer confidence but it's an important part of making sure people have a interest in the future of our country. If you own something, you want to make sure Government makes the right decision so you can continue to own it.

And we've got—homeownership rate is at an alltime high. And a particularly important part of that statistic is minority homeownership rates are at an alltime high. See, we not only want—when I'm talking about ownership, I'm talking about ownership for all people, not just a certain type of person. We want ownership to be a part of every neighborhood. And it's happening in America. It's really what makes us such a wonderful country, isn't it, when people from all walks of life can say, "I own something." And this administration will continue to make sure the ownership society, or the ability for people to own their own business or home, remains strong and vibrant.

Manufacturers are reporting increased activity more than any time in 20 years. We've had concern in the country about whether or not the manufacturing sector would remain vibrant and strong, and the reports are that the activity is as good as it's been over the past 20 years. That's a pretty good sign, isn't it? I was told today—reminded today that the Purchasing Managers Index is now above 60 for its 8th straight month. That doesn't mean anything unless you're somebody who follows all the numbers that comes out of Washington. But what it does mean is it confirms the notion that manufacturing activity is as good as it's been in 20 years. And that's very positive.

Today we got a new jobs report out. The jobs increased by 112,000 in June, which means we've had a total of 1.5 million new jobs since last August. To me, that shows the steady growth. It's one thing to be reporting the GDP numbers are up; it's another thing to be able to say more Americans are working. And that's what we want. We want people going to work. We want people to be able to come home and say, "Boy, how was work—it was great." [*Laughter*] "I enjoy working."

I met two good workers from North Carolina here today. I'm about to introduce the owners of their company. But they were here. They said, "We're working and feeling good about it." And that's really good news for our economy.

I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate—I can see a lot of members of my administration here. I don't want to try to go through them all except for Secretary Evans, the Secretary of Commerce. He's doing a fantastic job of running a very important Cabinet office of my Government.

But thank you all for being here. I see a lot of familiar faces. I see a lot of entrepreneurs. I see a lot of people who represent entrepreneurs here in Washington. You're doing a fine job of helping the United States Congress understand the proper role of Government is to encourage investment, encourage business formation. And that's why the tax relief package we passed was so important, particularly in the face of a recession and in the face of an emergency. It came at the right time. And I want to thank the people here who worked with us to convince Congress to trust the people with their own money. That's really what the debate was about, wasn't it: Who do you want to spend your money? Obviously, the Government needs to spend some of it to make sure we've got a military and make sure we fulfill certain functions. But at this point in our economic history, it made sense to let you have your own money to spend so that the economy would grow.

We based a lot of our decisionmaking on the knowledge that if you have more money in your pocket, if there's more after-tax pay in your pocket, you'll demand additional goods and services. And when you do so, in a market economy, if it's functioning properly, somebody will produce the goods or services. And when that happens, it kind of stabilizes the job base and then, eventually, allows for more people to go back to work. And that's what we're seeing—and that's what we're seeing.

Much of the job growth—the stimulus package was aimed at small businesses, because we knew that 70 percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. We were aware of that. And so therefore, when we went to Congress, we said, "As you reduce the tax burden on the American people, make sure you understand the effect that tax reductions can have on the decision-makers who hire most of the new people—that would be your small-business owner." A vital part of our package was to encourage investment in the small-business sector of our country, and it's paying off.

See, when the small-business owners of America feel confident and feel comfortable in investing in plant and equipment or in new services, it stimulates a vibrant part of our economy. That's what happens. The cornerstone of our policy, if the truth be known, was to trust individuals with their own money and to encourage the small-business sector to grow so people could find work.

And we did so in two specific ways. One, we encouraged investment by allowing for accelerated depreciation. That basically is a fancy word for saying if you buy a plant or equipment or new computer programs, it will really cost you less because you're able to deduct it faster from your income. That's an important part of encouraging people to make investment decisions.

The other thing was, is that we reduced all taxes. You see, our theory was if you pay taxes, you ought to get a tax relief, not if you're a certain—in a certain bracket you get tax relief. If you're going to have tax relief, the best, most fairest way to have tax relief is to say everybody gets tax relief, not just a few people. And that's what we did. Here in Washington, you know, there tends to be class warfare. It says only certain people get tax relief, or if you're labeled "the rich" you don't get tax relief. Our view was, all tax relief was the fairest way to do it.

And all tax relief, the theory of giving everybody tax relief who paid taxes, was especially beneficial to the small-business owners, because most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. See, most small businesses structure their companies as what they call Subchapter S companies—you work for a Subchapter S company—or sole proprietorships. And therefore, when you reduce individual income taxes, you're reducing income taxes on small businesses as well. And the more money a small business has in their treasury, the more likely it is they're going to be able to expand and hire, presuming they've got a good product.

Now, Government can't make you have a good product. [*Laughter*] We can't say to you, "Gosh, we'll help you align what you supply with demand." You've got to figure that out yourself. That's not the role of Government. But once you figure it out, once you've figured out how to meet demand in the marketplace, we can provide incentives to encourage you to expand. And that's what we've done. And that's why the economy is steady and strong. I'm telling you, people are going back to work because the small-businesses sector of America is strong and vibrant and confident.

Ed Kostenski is with us. There he is. Ed, stand up and be recognized. Thank you. He is from Jacksonville, Florida. I said—and by the way, he's got a business called Nationwide Equipment. I said, "Did you start this business?" He said, "Yes, at my kitchen table." It sounds pretty American to me, doesn't it? [*Laughter*] You know how many small businesses have been started at their kitchen table or in their garage? Thousands by, by the way, people from all walks of life too. Ed is one who did that. He's got an S corporation—S corp, which means that when he sees the—all rates get reduced, he's really saying, "The Congress wisely reduced the taxes on my business." That's an important part of encouraging Ed to move on. By the way, he said that his—the tax relief we passed in '01 helped him stay in business. And he is—not only is he in business, he's adding employees this year. He's added 14 this year. He'll hire another six before the year is out.

He's excited about his business. If you don't believe me, just go ask him after the meeting. [*Laughter*] He's moving used Caterpillars overseas. He buys them, refurbishes them, and finds a market and sells them, which means we'd better not have trade barriers. I mean, when you hear people talk about open trade, fair trade, and free trade, think about Ed. He's able to sell machines. There's a need for them. He's able to compete globally, even though he is a small-business owner. A lot of small businesses benefit because our Government has decided to open markets as opposed to close markets. It's an important part, by the way, of making sure America is a good place to do business, is to be confident in our ability to compete, so long as the playing fields are fair across the world, which we'll make them fair. That's part of my job. Ed's job is to meet demand. My job is to make sure he's got the ability to do so with free and fair trade.

He will invest $300,000 this year. That's a lot of money for a small business. One of the reasons he says he'll do so is because the tax savings on that investment will be about $50,000. See, that's what—when you hear me talk about incentives, that's what the tax relief plan does. It says, "Ed, invest 300,000 and you'll save 50,000 from what you normally would have." It's called an incentive.

And our American citizens have got to understand the connection between investment and jobs. When Ed invests $300,000 to build a warehouse and a painting facility, somebody has got to come and build the warehouse. Somebody has got to manufacture the material for the warehouse. Somebody is going to provide the new painting equipment for the painting facility. Investment equals jobs. When somebody invests, like Ed, somebody has to provide the goods

that he needs. And when somebody provides the goods he needs, somebody is working to provide the good he needs. And that's how this economy works. He says, "With that money I don't send back to the IRS, I can expand right here." [*Laughter*] Those are his words.

What Ed is saying is what a lot of people around the country tell me, is, "I can spend my money far wiser than the Federal Government can." And I appreciate that spirit and that attitude. That's why the tax relief we passed was so important.

The Maxwells are here—Joan and Owen Maxwell. You two know them. See, they're their boss. No, those aren't the Maxwells. The Maxwells are over here. There they are. Thanks for coming. They're from Edenton, North Carolina. They've got their own boat manufacturing company. I asked them how the fishing was off the coast of North Carolina. [*Laughter*] They manufacture center console boats. That's a pretty neat little business, isn't it? And they said their business is good. As a matter of fact, they're wisely trying to pre-sell their inventories. That's a smart idea.

Demand is up for their boats, I suspect because they produce a good-quality boat at a reasonable price. If you make a lousy-quality boat at a high price, no one's going to buy them. [*Laughter*] So they're good businesspeople. They've added 20 workers in the last 6 months. They're expanding their business. They're going to invest $750,000 this year in molds for their boat-building business. Somebody has got to make the molds. There's some worker making the molds that they're buying. And the tax relief plan we passed will save them $100,000 on that investment.

You see, there's a connection between good tax policy and decisionmaking. They're more likely to purchase $750,000 worth of molds when they realize they have $100,000 worth of savings in so doing. And that's why it's important for our citizens to be able to draw the connection between tax relief and decisionmaking that leads to more jobs.

One of the interesting things the Maxwells have done—and I really appreciate this—is that they have teamed up with a local community college to devise a course to train them for people coming into their industry, the boat-manufacturing industry. That's a wise, wise use of a very important community asset, which is the community colleges.

I've met some people in North Carolina who, because of the changing economy, had to go from the textile industry to the health care industry. A lot of people in North Carolina used to work for textiles and are looking for new work. And, wisely, the health care industry has used the community college system to train people—for really good jobs, by the way.

Now, the person is going to have to want to be trained. But the community college and the local businesses have to provide the curriculum. Government, by the way, helps pay the salary in a lot of cases. And it's a wise use of taxpayers' money, and it's a wise use of local taxpayers' money, to provide training for people so they can find work.

One of the real bottlenecks we're going to have in America as our economy changes and continues to grow is whether or not the worker is going to have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. One of the real challenges to make sure that America is the best place to do business in the world, so people will be able to continue to find work, is to make sure our education system functions well. And one way to make it function well is for the Federal Government to work with community colleges and local businesses to devise curriculum to train people for the jobs which actually exist. And I want to thank the Maxwells for being a part of this kind of practical move in education all across the country.

Joan says, "There are a lot of opportunities where people can use these skills.

We're literally building our workforce for the future here." That's the way we think in the administration. We're thinking about the future. We're thinking about how to make sure that the momentum that we have developed in the economy not only stays strong in the immediate years, but how is it going to look 10 years from now. So we've got to start planning for the future. We've got to understand the decisions we're making today are going to make it more likely that the small-business sector, the entrepreneurial spirit of America will remain very strong tomorrow.

And part of that is to make sure the education system not only teaches our youngsters how to read, write and add and subtract now, before it is too late, but it's also to make sure that our community colleges are able to put curriculum in place to train people for jobs which will exist.

So I want to thank the Maxwells for being here. I appreciate your spirit, and thank you for hiring people.

We've got—John Biagas is with us. John, thank you for coming—Newport News, Virginia. Newport News, Virginia—John purchased his business in 1997. He took a gamble and said, "I'm going to buy the business from the previous owner." I think he said they might have had a million dollars' worth of sales in 1997. They're over 14 now. That's pretty good growth, isn't it, in a 5-year period of time. This entrepreneur has taken a business that had a pretty good sales base, but he's expanded it 15 times in 5 years. I can't wait to see what you look like 5 years from now, John. [*Laughter*] By the way, it won't be very good if they raise taxes on you. See, one of the things—if John is thinking about what his business will look like 5 years from now, I can predict to him if we run up the taxes on Subchapter S corporations by raising, for example, the top rate, his business isn't going to look quite as good as it would if—when we keep taxes low.

John is an S corp. In other words, all the talk about running up the top rate affects his business. When you hear them in Washington saying, "We're going to run up the top rate," just remember this is a tax on small businesses. And you don't want to tax small businesses, because small businesses are providing the economic momentum necessary for us to have created 1.5 million jobs since August. We want that job creation to continue to go on.

Raising taxes will make it more likely somebody won't be able to find a job. You know why? Because it affects businesses like John's, that's why. When you start taking money out of John's coffers, it means he's less likely to expand. He is a full-service electrical and general contractor. That's his job. He hired 8 people in the last 2 months. He wants to hire 8 to 10 more this year. That's positive.

I think we're beginning to see a trend here. [*Laughter*] Small businesses are hiring—8 people here, 10 people there—but it adds up, because there's millions of small businesses all across America. Small business is the cornerstone of the great American enterprise system. Not only that, it's the cornerstone of a hopeful country, isn't it, the kind of country you have where John, who was one of 14 raised in Lake Charles, Louisiana—the youngest of 14, I might add—can go to the family reunion, which I suspect is quite large—[*laughter*]—and says, "By the way, my business is doing pretty darn good." It's a great American story, isn't it, where somebody who has a dream and is willing to work to realize a dream is able to do so. Our job is to make sure those dreams stay alive—the dreams stay alive.

He'll save $60,000 in taxes this year on $350,000 of investment in new trucks. When you hear the investment numbers in small businesses, it is heartening, because, I repeat, when people invest, they create jobs. That's how jobs are created. John says, "The cash we're able to keep in the business helps a lot. It helps us look forward to the future." That's what he said. That's what you want to hear. You

want to hear your CEO of a small business saying, "It helps me look forward to the future." You don't want people saying, "Oh, gosh, life is going to be miserable because when we've been able to come through tough times." You want to say, "I'm looking forward." Good policy in Washington always looks forward, not backwards.

I'm going to talk about some things we can do to make sure, as John and others look forward, the environment is encouraging and conducive to economic investment. I just told you one, and that is to make sure the education system functions well. If you're a—somebody trying to hire people and you see that the education system is working well, you'll be able to look forward with confidence, because you'll know you'll be able to fulfill your workers' needs. You can't look forward if you're worried about finding somebody to meet a skill that you need.

Joan Thompson is with us. She was talking about the level of worker—the skill level of the worker she needs. She's an owner in a—thank you, Joan—she's an owner in a—part-owner of the Minnesota Wire and Cable Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. I say "part-owner"—she's got nine other family members who own a piece of the business?

Joan Thompson. Nine children and both parents——

The President. Yes, 11 people, 11 owners. [*Laughter*] Family-owned business—it's got a nice ring to it, doesn't it, and it's got an American ring to it. There's a lot of family-owned businesses around our country. And one of the real difficulties for family-owned businesses is the fact that we tax a family's assets twice because of the death tax. It's important that Congress understand what the death tax does to capital formation and the ability for the small-business sector to invest.

The—and I say "you tax it twice"—when the Minnesota Wire and Cable Company makes a profit, it gets taxed. And I suspect you pay property taxes at the local level as well, and State taxes. And then when the—mom and dad move on, in many cases, that asset will be taxed again. And therefore, if the asset is illiquid, some people have to sell their business. You can't pass it on. I believe you ought to be able to pass your business on to whomever you choose without the Federal Government being in between you and the—and those who you designate to own the company.

And so Congress, by the way, needs to hear from small-business owners and farmers and ranchers and—to tell Congress to complete the task we started. We put the death tax on the way to extinction; unfortunately—I think it's 2011—it pops up again. That's going to make the year 2010 an interesting year for estate planners. [*Laughter*] "How do you want to handle this one," you know? [*Laughter*] "I think I'll go ahead and keep on living." [*Laughter*] They just need to make the repeal of the death tax a permanent part of the Tax Code. It will be a major part of the simplification of the Tax Code too. I understand it takes up about 30 percent of the Tax Code, which is a real thick book. And it just doesn't—to me, it's bad policy. And it's bad policy for the Thompson family and a lot of other small-business owners around America.

Joan's business is a custom design—custom wire and cable assembly business. They've got customers with defense contractors and, particularly, health care. She likes to say, "We're a part of the armies of healers that are all across the country. We're helping people save lives." That's kind of a neat way to frame your business, isn't it?

And it's going well. They've added 14 workers this year, tax savings of about $80,000 on $600,000 worth of investment. I said, "What are you going to invest in?" She said, "Robotics." It's pretty interesting to hear a small business say, "Robotics." I don't know whether small businesses were saying they were investing in robotics 20 years ago or not, but I bet they are over

the next 20 years if the incentives are properly structured, if small businesses are encouraged to invest, if the tax structure is such that it will make it easier for them to survive by making sure Government doesn't take too much of their money.

She also invests in C&C machines. Everybody knows what they are. [*Laughter*] Somebody is making it. [*Laughter*] Somebody is a part of the manufacturing process that is making the C&C machine. In other words, there is a C&C machine maker—[*laughter*]—that is employing people.

And that's how it works. That's how the economy works. I've asked these four small-business owners to come and see us, because I want to share with you a couple of things. Let me tell you what she said. She said, "The savings on the tax side gave us the confidence to launch another division in our small business." We're talking about investment in America. Investment equals jobs, and people are now confident to make investment because of good tax policy.

The role of the Government is to create a sense of confidence by doing some smart things. In other words, the more money people have of their own money the more confident they'll be, particularly as this economy picks up steam.

These are great stories, and I appreciate you all coming and letting us talk about your stories. They're uniquely American stories.

And as we look forward with confidence, we want to make sure that we make good decisions. There's a couple of good decisions we need to make. One is—a bad decision would be to raise taxes on the American people. And some of the tax relief is set to expire. And if Congress doesn't make it permanent, that's called a tax increase. And they will be tagged with raising taxes on the American people. They should not raise taxes. We need good, consistent tax policy.

If you're a small-business owner, you want there to be a constant in your life when it comes to planning. You've got too much to worry about—markets, your customer base—and you need to have certainty in the Tax Code. And the Congress needs to know that. And raising taxes creates uncertainty and will make it difficult for small-business owners to plan and invest.

Secondly, health care costs are on the rise, and that makes it difficult for employer and employee. We must not allow the Federal Government to run our health care system in America. What we must do is to put good policy and plan in place, which will connect the patient-doctor relationship and give people choices and decisionmaking powers in the marketplace. That's why I'm such a strong backer of health savings accounts. These can be tailored for small businesses. I would urge every small business in America to look at a health savings account. It's a good way to help control costs, and it's a good way to provide benefits for your workers.

We need association health plans, which allows—small businesses will be able to share risk. And big business are able to get pretty good buys in health care because they're got a lot of employees. They can spread risk across a large number of employees. Small businesses don't have that same ability, unless Government allows them to share risk across jurisdictional boundaries. And that's what association health plans do.

We need tort reform in America. Small businesses are threatened by—if you ask people what affects their confidence in the future, they'll tell you, when they see junk lawsuits or have junk lawsuits filed against them. It threatens their existence. It makes it very difficult for people to plan with confidence. And let's face it, our society is too litigious. There's too many lawsuits, a lot of them frivolous and junk lawsuits. And there is a role for the Federal Government in this. We need to have class action reform. We need to have asbestos reform.

Congress needs to get these bills passed and to my desk.

We need medical liability reform as well at the Federal level. You see, junk and frivolous lawsuits cause docs to practice defensive medicine. And defensive medicine basically means, "I'm going to prescribe more procedure than needed, so that when I get in a court of law, I'll be able to defend myself." And that runs up the cost of medicine, which hurts the patients, and it hurts the Federal Government because the Federal Government pays a lot of money for health care in Medicare and Medicaid and our veterans' benefits. And our budgets are affected by frivolous and junk lawsuits here at the Federal level. Therefore, I think it is a Federal problem that does require a Federal solution. And we proposed such a solution. The House of Representatives passed it. It got stuck in the Senate, because the trial lawyers are powerful in the Senate; that's why. And for the sake of small-business growth and for the sake of having a good economy in the future, we need to convince the United States Senate to pass meaningful and real tort reform. It's an important part—[*applause*].

And finally, if you're a small-business owner, you need to know that you're going to have reliable and affordable sources of energy. There's a lot of concern about the manufacturing sector in America, and there should be. But a manufacturing sector has got a real problem if there are disruptions of energy supply, spikes in energy prices, and doesn't have reliable electricity.

And so my administration recognized this early on. And we knew that if we were dependent upon foreign sources of energy it would create not only an economic security risk but a national security risk. And so we proposed ways to increase conservation. We promoted new technologies that will come into play in the out-years that will make us less reliable upon foreign sources of energy. We recognized that we can explore for energy in environmentally-friendly ways that we couldn't 20 years ago. We promoted new electricity reliability standards. We've done a lot of things. And we proposed it to the United States Congress, and, of course, it's stuck. They're playing politics with the national energy policy.

But if we're interested in making sure people can find work in America, if we want to be the best place to do business, if we want the entrepreneurial spirit to remain strong, we've got to develop an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I've told you Ed relies upon trade. He's moving used Cats, used John Deere, and used Case equipment overseas. He said when you look at it, you can't tell it's used, though, because he's got such good workers. [*Laughter*] They take a used piece of equipment and redo it, make it look like new, make it run like new, and sell it like old. [*Laughter*] And as he said, "I am a small-business guy utilizing free trade."

America must reject economic isolationism if we're going to be a confident, growing nation. Listen, we're good at things. Look at old Ed; he's good at something. [*Laughter*] All he needs is a chance to sell it. And if we fall into trade wars because of politics, we will be doing a disservice to the entrepreneur in America. We're good at growing things. Our farmers ought to be selling soybeans everywhere in the world. And that's what we're trying to make sure other countries hear this—hear the philosophy of this administration. "We're opening up our markets. Open up yours." That's what we're telling them.

See, we know what's good for consumers: when people have more choice. If you're a consumer in America and you've got more goods to choose from, you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's how it works. And so we've said—not only have I said but other Presidents have said—Presidents before me have said, "For the good of the American consumer, sell

us your goods and services here in America."

And now you've got an administration who is saying, "Since we do that for you, you open up your markets." I told Evans and Zoellick, "When we need to get tough with foreign nations that shut us out, get tough, because all we're interested in is a level playing field." That's what we want. We want our people treated fairly.

You'll hear people say, "Well, the best way to deal with this is to find out ways not to trade fairly, is to isolate us." That would be terrible for small businesses. And so this administration is confident in America because we're confident in Americans. We know we can—we're really good. We're really good at building things and growing things and selling things. And I intend to make sure that they have a good chance to do so, for the sake of American workers.

This economy of ours is steady and strong—it's steady and strong. It's steady and strong, which means people are going back to work—1.5 million jobs since last August. That is steady growth. And it's steady and strong because the American entrepreneur is strong and capable and willing to take risk. The entrepreneur is employing more people. The entrepreneur is investing. And the role of Government is to promote good policy that encourages the American entrepreneur.

And the other thing about the entrepreneurial spirit that is so wonderful about our country is it doesn't matter whether you're the fourth generation to own your business or you're a first-generation American. Either way, you've got the opportunity to say, "This is my business. I own it. I'm going to nurture it and grow it and, therefore, help others to find work." That's the cornerstone of the Bush economic policy. And it's working.

I'm glad you all are here. God bless your efforts, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Provide for the Transfer of the Nebraska Avenue Naval Complex

July 2, 2004

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4322, "An Act to provide for the transfer of the Nebraska Avenue Naval Complex in the District of Columbia to facilitate the establishment of the headquarters for the Department of Homeland Security, to provide for the acquisition by the Department of the Navy of suitable replacement facilities, and for other purposes." This legislation will allow the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to consolidate headquarters staff at the Complex for the foreseeable future.

The executive branch shall construe section 1(g)(3) of the Act, which purports to make consultation with specified Members of Congress a precondition to execution of the law, as calling for, but not mandating, such consultation. Construing the provision as a mandate to consult would be inconsistent with constitutional provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 2, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 4322, approved July 2, was assigned Public Law No. 108–268.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Submitting Proposed Legislative Changes To Implement the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement
July 2, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On May 18, 2004, the United States Trade Representative signed the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement on behalf of the United States. Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(B) of the Trade Act of 2002, I am submitting a description of the changes to existing laws, prepared by my Administration, that would be required to bring the United States into compliance with that agreement.

I look forward to working with the Congress in developing legislation to implement this free trade agreement with an important economic partner and close ally.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Statement on the Death of Marlon Brando
July 2, 2004

With the passing of Marlon Brando, America has lost a great actor of the stage and screen. His award-winning performances in films such as "On the Waterfront" and "The Godfather" demonstrated his outstanding talent and entertained millions across the country. Marlon Brando was one of the 20th century's finest actors and will be missed by his many fans and admirers. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to his family and friends.

The President's Radio Address
July 3, 2004

Good morning. As Americans gather this weekend to celebrate the Fourth of July, we can take pride in our country's great history and look to the future with confidence. America remains a shining example to the world of all that free people can achieve. And our goal as a nation is to make sure that all Americans can share in the promise of our country.

Our economy is showing steady progress. We've completed our 10th consecutive month of job creation. We added 112,000 jobs in June and have added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The unemployment rate has steadily declined to 5.6 percent, from 6.3 percent a year ago. With more jobs and lower unemployment, we are seeing rising consumer confidence, higher incomes, continued gains in the rate of homeownership, and a restored sense of opportunity.

Our strengthening economy is a tribute to millions of American entrepreneurs and workers. By their hard work and optimism, our Nation has overcome recession, terrorist attack, corporate scandals, and the

many economic challenges that come in a time of war.

Our Government is also doing its part. With progrowth policies in Washington, we aim to encourage the hard work and optimism of our people. With tax relief, we are strengthening the spirit of enterprise. When people are allowed to keep more of what they earn, that is good for families trying to make ends meet, good for businesses looking for new customers, and good for those looking for jobs in our expanding economy.

Now that jobs are coming back, we must build on this progress and help American workers and families continue to meet the challenges of our changing economy. My plan will help America continue to lead the world, help our workers gain the skills they need, and create an environment where small businesses will thrive and create new jobs.

Our first responsibility is not to raise taxes on hard-working Americans. All of the tax relief we have passed should be made permanent, so families can continue to keep more of what they earn, and businesses can plan for the future with confidence. I have a plan to help businesses and families with the rising costs of health care and reduce the burden of frivolous lawsuits that unnecessarily punish the job creators in America. I'm working to open more markets and level the playing field for American entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers.

Our global economy requires Americans to remain prepared for change and innovation. That is why I have proposed to help our public schools and community colleges teach our future workers the skills they need to succeed. For the sake of economic security and job creation, I proposed a national energy policy that encourages conservation and production at home and makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. All of these proposals are aimed at helping Americans prepare to meet new economic challenges, and I will continue to push the Congress to see them enacted into law.

This Fourth of July weekend, as Americans celebrate our freedom, our thoughts are also with the men and women who defend that freedom as members of the United States military. In Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, they are fighting terrorists that threaten America and helping to build hopeful, democratic societies where the ideology of terrorism has no place. Our Nation honors their sacrifice. And one of our greatest sources of pride on this Fourth of July is that men and women like them wear the uniform of our country.

I thank all of our service men and women for standing post. I wish all Americans a happy Independence Day.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:01 p.m. on July 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Independence Day in Charleston, West Virginia
July 4, 2004

Thank you all. They got the best seat in the house. [*Laughter*] Glad you all are here. Thanks for coming. Happy Fourth of July. I am thrilled to be back in your great State to celebrate once again Independence Day, this time in the capital of the

Mountain State, the great city of Charleston, West Virginia. I appreciate the good people of this State. You work hard; you look after your neighbors; and you love your country. And you sure know how to make a President feel welcome. Thank you all.

West Virginia is an important State to our Nation in many ways—in many ways. You're one of the most beautiful places to visit in America. People ought to come here and see the beauty of West Virginia, to see the Almighty's work. There are hard-working people here making the factories hum and the farms producing products we need. Listen, this country is better off because of the coal found here in West Virginia.

Presidents have been coming to this State for a long time. I did a little research. It turns out that a lot of the land owned around Charleston was owned by George Washington. I call him George W. [*Laughter*] And today we remember names like Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin. We honor their courage, and we honor their vision on the Fourth of July. We're thankful that this Nation they created 228 years ago remains free and independent and the best hope for all mankind.

Today is the day we gather with our friends and family and give thanks to the United States of America—give thanks to the fact that we are citizens in a free land. I give thanks to Shelley Moore Capito for serving the people of West Virginia so well in the United States Congress.

I was greeted by your mayor today. I'm honored the mayor, Mayor Danny Jones, took time to say hello. Mr. Mayor, thanks for having me here, and thanks for serving your community. I know; you want me to tell him to fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the president of the Charleston City Council, Councilman Tom Lane, for being here as well. Thank you, Councilman—all those who work hard for the people of Charleston.

We've got a lot of State and local officials. I'm honored you all are here. Thanks for inviting me to this beautiful capitol. I appreciate the planning committee for this independence weekend celebration. You know, it takes a lot of effort to put one of these deals together, and a lot of people have been working hard to do so, starting with Spike Maynard, who is the cochairman and the Chief Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. I told the judge I liked being in the presence with somebody who doesn't try to rewrite the Constitution.

I appreciate Mr. Sam Hindman, who is the retired publisher of your newspaper. He's a leader in your community. He's been a community leader for a long time. Thanks, Sam, for your hospitality. I want to thank my friend Bill Raney, president of the West Virginia Coal Association, for being here as well.

I appreciate the U.S. Air Force Ceremonial Brass Band for entertaining you. I want to thank the West Virginia Air National Guard and the 130th Airlift Wing Honor Guard for being here today as well. You've got a proud tradition here in West Virginia, and that is, you've got a fantastic Guard. You've got people—I appreciate you, General. And I appreciate the men and women who wear the uniform of the West Virginia Guard. I want to thank their families, their loved ones, for the sacrifice and dedication the Guard members have showed the United States of America.

There's still West Virginians overseas. We ask for God's blessings on their safety today. The day we celebrate our freedom, we thank them for guaranteeing the freedom of the United States.

And highly decorated Four Star General Doc Foglesong is with us today. General, thanks for being here. He's a son of West Virginia.

I want to thank all the singers and Scouts. By the way, if you're a Boy Scout or Girl Scout leader, thanks for doing what you're doing. Thanks for taking time out

of your life to instill values in our children. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to teach character to the future of our country.

You know, I oftentimes talk about the strength of America is the hearts and souls of our citizens. Listen, one of our strengths is our military—will keep us strong. One of our strengths is that we're a great economic power—will keep us strong. But the true strength lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens, people who have heard the universal call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself, people who understand that America can be a hopeful place if somebody who hurts is surrounded by somebody who says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? How can I help make your life a better place?"—people who step up and not only teach character to our young but feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, take care of the elderly. No, the strength of this country—make no mistake about it, the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of millions of loving American citizens.

I want to thank Aaron Tippin for being here. I like a good country and western singer. He's a good one. I appreciate Barnabus, the group that performed the National Anthem. Thank you all for taking time on your—on the Fourth of July to entertain these good folks.

Finally, I was to head to Pastor Thornton's church, the Bible Center Church here in West Virginia. Pastor Shawn Thornton and his family came in the capitol to meet me, and I was grateful. But I assured him that I was looking forward to his sermon. That's not the reason I missed it. I missed it because the plane broke down. [*Laughter*] But Pastor, thank you and your congregation for rolling out the red carpet for what would have been a Presidential visit to your fine church, but more importantly, Pastor Thornton, thank you for ministering to those who hurt. One of the great things about this particular church is that the outreach program, into the lives of those who suffer, into the lives of those who wonder if there's hope, is strong and vibrant and real.

I want you to know that on the Fourth, we are proud of our Founders, but I know that the Founders would be proud of America today. They would take a look at this great country and see a place where opportunity is common, where all stand equal before the law, where all can hope for a better life. They'd see a country full of promise and hope; that's what they would see. They would see a nation that is the world's foremost champion of liberty. They would see a nation which stands strong in the face of violent men. They would see a reliable friend of any dissident or political prisoner who dreams of justice. That's what they would see in the great land they created. They would see Americans who care for a neighbor in need and are generous to the sick, to those who struggle here at home, and to those who look for hope around the world. They would see a strong, decent, good-hearted country, and they would see millions of people proud to say, "America is my home." And they would see an America on Independence Day, 2004, that is moving forward with confidence and strength.

Listen, we've been through some tough times in this country. Everybody knows that. We've been tested. But this Nation has responded as we always do, with courage, determination, and optimism. Our economy is healthy and growing, and that's good news, because more people are finding work every single day. That's what we want. We're all working on our public school system. We want to raise the standards, so every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. No, our forefathers would see a nation of strong values, faith in God, love of our families. They would not only find those values strong all across the country; they'd find them very strong in the State of West Virginia.

I'm thankful you invited me here, especially because you're paying special tribute to the men and women who have served our Nation in uniform. I want to thank you for that. America has always been able to count on the might of our military and on the character and the courage of those who serve.

We've got a lot of veterans here. I want to thank the veterans for setting such a good example, for setting such a good example for those who have followed you. We're proud of your service. We're grateful for the example you have set for America.

On July the 4th, 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, President Franklin Roosevelt gave encouragement to our troops abroad by reminding them of our Nation's founding creed. They were fighting, he said, because Americans believe in "the right to liberty under God." The President said, "for all peoples and races and groups and nations everywhere in the world." Today, a new generation of Americans is wearing the uniform. They are serving the same creed. They are showing the same courage, and they make us proud every single day.

The war on terror has placed demands on our military. In Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, our people in uniform have been unrelenting in their performance of duty. They've been skillful and courageous. They've accepted hard missions, long deployments, and the difficulties of being separated from their homes and their families. Some have returned home wounded. Some have died. Each is mourned and missed, and each one will be honored by our country forever.

As in other times, Americans are serving and sacrificing to keep this country safe and to bring freedom to others. After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved to fight terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to arm the terrorist enemy. Afghanistan, at the time, as you remember, was a terror state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan today is a rising democracy and an ally in the war on terror.

Iraq, only last year, was under the control of a dictator who threatened the civilized world, who used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. And because we acted, the dictator, the brutal tyrant, is sitting in a prison cell, and he will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

We got a job to do. We have got a job to do, and that is to protect our country. And I've called on good men and women to do so. I'm honored that you're thanking the men and women of uniform today in Charleston, West Virginia.

Our immediate task in battlefronts like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere is to capture or kill the terrorists. That's our immediate task. We made a decision, you see: We will engage these enemies in these countries and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

You can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with these people. We must be relentless and determined and do our duty.

There's no such thing as perfect security in a country as big as ours. And the threats to our homeland are very real. We know the terrorists want to strike the United States again. They do because they want to disrupt our way of life. They want to spread fear. So we've done a lot of things to help, and there's some folks here who are working hard on your behalf. See, we reorganized the Government to make sure there's better communication between the Federal Government and the State government and the local governments. And on behalf of a grateful people, I want to say thanks to the firefighters and the police and the emergency teams of Charleston, West Virginia.

There's a lot of people in this country working hard to make sure this homeland of ours is as secure as it can possibly be

without disrupting the freedoms of our fellow citizens. They're working hard, and I am grateful—I am grateful for the hard work they are doing.

Yet in the long term, our security and safety requires more than defending the homeland and defeating the terrorists abroad. We must work to remove the conditions that give rise to terror in parts of the world like the Middle East: the poverty, the hopelessness, and the resentments that the terrorists exploit. Life in the Middle East will be a far more hopeful and, therefore, a more peaceful place when men and women can enjoy the benefits of a free society, when men and women can elect their own leaders, when the people can decide their own futures.

On this Fourth of July, we confirm our love of freedom, the freedom for people to speak their minds, the freedom for people to worship as they so choose. Free thought, free expression, that's what we believe. But we also understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And by serving that ideal, by never forgetting the values and the principles that have made this country so strong after—228 years after our founding, we will bring hope to others and, at the same time, make America more secure.

Because we've taken the fight to the enemy, because we've been strong and determined to do our duty to protect America, and because freedom is rising in places they claim as their own, the terrorists are desperate, and they are furious. They're running out of places to hide. They know their cause is failing. They know that time is against them, and their only chance is to shake the resolve of Iraqis, Americans, anybody else who loves freedom. And that's why their actions have grown more cruel and sadistic.

They cover their faces in videos, in the videos of their crimes. But those hoods cannot hide the face of evil. We've seen their kind before, in overseas death camps and gulags. And as before, America will persevere. We will fear no evil, and we will prevail.

The conditions for successes are now coming together. Afghanistan and Iraq now have responsible leaders. President Karzai of Afghanistan is a good, honest man who wants his people to be free. Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq—he's a good, honest, courageous man who will stand square in the face of these terrorists trying to stop the march of freedom. We've got an ally in these two leaders, because they understand what we know: Free men and women will be peaceful men and women; free men and women will be able to realize their deep desires. Listen, moms and dads in Iraq want to be able to raise their children in a society where their children can have a bright future, just like the moms and dads in America do.

These leaders have said, "We want your help." And America has responded. And nations of the world have rallied to them as well. The NATO Alliance and the EU and the United Nations are all standing behind the newly liberated people of Afghanistan and Iraq. And these good people are taking on more of their own responsibility. Listen, they understand their future depends on their ability to deal with the thugs and criminals and foreign terrorists. And so we're helping them train to do their duty, to do their civic responsibility in a free society.

But what's important for those people is that they can count on America. We have promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

There was a time not so long ago when America was a young democracy. When the Declaration was signed, not many in this world would have bet on the success of the American cause. We were a little group of colonies on the edge of a continent. Our

small and hungry band of soldiers was against the army of a great empire. Many in that empire considered July the 4th, 1776, to be just another day on the calendar. Yet, America's Founders knew that something very important had happened that day, something new and hopeful in the course of human events.

They called the American experiment a "new order of the ages." The time has confirmed their belief. The Colonies became a country. The people of America crossed a continent, and the ideals that created America have crossed the globe.

This history we celebrate today is a testament to the power of freedom to lift up a whole nation. And we still believe, on America's 228th birthday, that freedom has the power to change the world.

May God bless you, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:57 p.m. at the West Virginia State Capitol Grounds. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Hindman, former publisher, Charleston Daily Mail; Maj. Gen. Allen E. Tacket, adjutant general, West Virginia National Guard; Gen. Robert H. "Doc" Foglesong, USAF, commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, commander, Allied Air Forces Northern Europe, and air component commander, U.S. European Command; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Rev. Shawn R. Thornton, senior pastor, Bible Center Church, Charleston, WV; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister David Oddsson of Iceland and an Exchange With Reporters

July 6, 2004

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Iceland to the Oval Office.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for coming.

I'll have an opening statement. He'll have an opening statement. We'll answer a couple of questions.

I remember my first NATO meeting, and I walked in, and the person who greeted me and made me feel most at home was my friend here. And I've never forgotten that. Iceland has been a steady friend of the United States of America, and they have been an important friend.

We had an interesting discussion on some important issues, and it was a frank discussion. And that's what you expect among friends. It was open and honest. And the Prime Minister is a person who cares deeply about the security of his country and the welfare of his people, and that's why he's been such an effective leader for the good people of Iceland.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I'm very happy to be here, not least on the President's birthday. It's a privilege.

President Bush. Thank you for remembering.

Prime Minister Oddsson. Well, we discussed some things—I will make two points. You had just recently, a week ago, in a NATO meeting in Istanbul, a very good meeting, I think, not least because of the firm leadership of the President and his open manner, his easy-speaking manner that everybody understands when he speaks. And he changed the atmosphere inside NATO for the better. The past is behind us. People are united to a future. Secondly, we had the opportunity to discuss the defense issues in Iceland, which is very

important to us. And the President is looking on that in a positive way. But of course, he has to see the issue from all sides. This was a fruitful discussion about the future. Thank you.

President Bush. Yes.

A couple of questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, the Republican National Committee says that John Edwards is disingenuous, inexperienced, and unaccomplished. I wonder, do you agree with that? Is that the tone that you want to set in talking about——

President Bush. Listen, I welcome Senator Edwards on the ticket. The Vice President called him early this morning to say—after the announcement was made—to say that he welcomes him to the race, and as do I. And I look forward to a good, spirited contest.

Have you got somebody from your press corps?

Prime Minister Oddsson. Okay. From Iceland somewhere?

Iceland-U.S. Defense Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, did you reach an agreement on the defense treaty with Iceland?

Prime Minister Oddsson. That was never—the meeting—was to have an agreement. Now, today I had the opportunity to explain my view of the issue to the President, and he is looking into my position and the Iceland position, but he had an open mind.

President Bush. Yes. Let me comment on this, about—this is an issue related to the F–15s, for the American press. We've got four F–15 fighters stationed there. The Prime Minister pressed very hard for us to keep the fighters there. He was very eloquent, very determined that the United States keep the troops there. And I told him, I said I'm open-minded about the subject. I want to make sure I understand the full implications of the decision as to whether or not to leave them there. And we will gather more information. He is going to provide information about the basing there in Iceland and the requirements there. I will talk to the respective departments here, and I will make a measured judgment as to the finality of this issue.

I told the Prime Minister I'm—I appreciate our alliance. I appreciate his friendship. I fully understand the arguments he's made, and we will work together to solve the issue.

Holland [Steve Holland, Reuters], where are you?

Central Intelligence Agency

Q. Here, sir. Thank you. There's a story today that the CIA held back information from you that Iraq had abandoned its WMD programs. Is that true? And what's your timetable on nominating a new CIA director? Are you going to wait until after the election?

President Bush. I haven't made up my mind on the nomination process. Secondly, I will wait for the report, the Senate report, to come out. This is information from the report of the United States Senate, Chairman Roberts' committee. I will look at the whole report.

I will tell you, however, that I know that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He was a threat to the neighborhood. He was a threat to the people of Iraq. He harbored terrorists. Mr. Zarqawi, who continues to kill and maim inside of Iraq, was in the country prior to our arrival. Saddam Hussein had the intent. He had the capability. And the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. And the world will be more peaceful when this Iraqi Government, under Prime Minister Allawi, emerges and there are elections.

And that's what we're seeing. We're seeing a transformation in a part of the world that needs liberty and freedom. And so I look forward to the full report, and I'll react to it when I see it.

Anybody else?

Prime Minister Oddsson. Well, I just—on this, I must say I agree with the President about Iraq. The future of Iraq is—the future of the world is much better because of the undertaking that the United States, United Kingdom, and their alliances took there. And without that done, the situation in that area of the world would be much more dangerous than it is now. There's hope now. There was no hope before.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

[*At this point, all present sang "Happy Birthday" to the President.*]

President Bush. Thanks. You actually call that singing? [*Laughter*] No, it was beautiful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Legislation To Implement the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement
July 6, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents prepared by my Administration to implement the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This Agreement adds an important dimension to our bilateral relationship with a steadfast ally in the global economic and strategic arena. This FTA will enhance the prosperity of the people of the United States and Australia, serve the interest of expanding U.S. commerce, and advance our overall national interest.

My Administration is committed to securing a level playing field and creating opportunities for America's workers, farmers, and businesses. The United States and Australia already enjoy a strong trade relationship. The U.S.-Australia FTA will further open Australia's market for U.S. manufactured goods, agricultural products, and services, and will promote new growth in our bilateral trade. As soon as this FTA enters into force, tariffs will be eliminated on almost all manufactured goods traded between our countries, providing significant export opportunities for American manufacturers. American farmers will also benefit due to the elimination of tariffs on all exports of U.S. agricultural products.

The U.S.-Australia FTA will also benefit small- and medium-sized businesses and their employees. Such firms already account for a significant amount of bilateral trade. The market opening resulting from this Agreement presents opportunities for those firms looking to start or enhance participation in global trade.

In negotiating this FTA, my Administration was guided by the negotiating objectives set out in the Trade Act of 2002. The Agreement's provisions on agriculture represent a balanced response to those seeking improved access to Australia's markets, through immediate elimination of tariffs on U.S. exports and mechanisms to resolve sanitary and phytosanitary issues and facilitate trade between our countries, while recognizing the sensitive nature of some U.S. agricultural sectors and their possible vulnerability to increased imports.

The U.S.-Australia FTA also reinforces the importance of creativity and technology to both of our economies. The Agreement

includes rules providing for strong protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, promotes the use of electronic commerce, and provides for increased cooperation between our agencies on addressing anticompetitive practices, financial services, telecommunications, and other matters.

The Agreement memorializes our shared commitment to labor and environmental issues. The United States and Australia have worked in close cooperation on these issues in the past and will pursue this strategy and commitment to cooperation in bilateral and global fora in the future.

With the approval of this Agreement and passage of the implementing legislation by the Congress, we will advance U.S. economic, security, and political interests, and set an example of the benefits of free trade and democracy for the world.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 6, 2004.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Judicial Nominees and an Exchange With Reporters in Raleigh, North Carolina
July 7, 2004

The President. Good morning. It's good to be in the great State of North Carolina. I just met with three judicial nominees from this State, Judge Terry Boyle, Bob Conrad, Jim Dever. These are men with broad experience, good character. They've been rated by the ABA as qualified to serve on the bench. They represent mainstream values. They will strictly and faithfully interpret the law. They won't use the bench from which to legislate.

Their nominations are being held up, and it's not right, and it's not fair. The people of North Carolina deserve better. These judges deserve better treatment in the United States Senate. A minority of Senators apparently don't want judges who strictly interpret and apply the law. Evidently, they want activist judges who will rewrite the law from the bench. I disagree. Legislation should come from the legislative branch, not from the judiciary.

Judge Boyle—Judge Terry Boyle of North Carolina has waited for a vote since May of 2001, and there's no reason why this good man should have been kept waiting for so long. He's an exceptional candidate for the appeals court. He was appointed to the district court in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan and has spent the last 7 years as Chief Judge of the Eastern District of North Carolina. He'd make a superb addition to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and he is vitally needed on that court.

The seat I nominated him to fill has been designated a judicial emergency by the Judicial Conference of the United States, because when they name something a judicial emergency, it means there's a shortage of judges. I put this good man up, and he can't get an up-or-down vote on the floor of the Senate. He is—he, along with Bob Conrad, have waited too long.

Bob Conrad I named for one of the district courts here in North Carolina. He served as a Federal prosecutor for 15 years, including 3 years as the U.S. attorney in Charlotte. He did a really good job in that capacity. He's waited for more than 14 months for a vote.

Jim Dever is the magistrate judge. He has had strong bipartisan support. He's waited for more than 2 years for a vote. The post to which I have nominated Judge Dever has also been declared a judicial

emergency. This is a disservice to the State. I repeat, there's a minority of Senators blocking the process. They're playing politics with something as important as the judiciary. You might remember, I had named six nominees to appellate benches. They had enough votes to be confirmed, and they—their nominations were filibustered on the floor of the United States Senate. These are not the three I've discussed. These are other judges.

Now, we recently got 25 nominees through, and I appreciate that. But there's an issue in North Carolina that needs to be solved, and the only people who can solve it are the United States Senators, who are holding these nominations up.

I laid out earlier in the year some proposals that would make the process go better. Judges would provide one year advance notice of retirement or departure. Presidents would select a nominee within 180 days of receiving notice of an upcoming vacancy, and then the Senate would hold both a hearing and an up-or-down vote within 180 days. That's fair. That ought to apply to both Republican as well as Democrats. This is the kind of reform that is necessary to make the system work better.

The—when we see vacancies where people are declaring judicial emergencies, it seems like to me the Senate ought to pay attention to them and give these good nominees an up-or-down vote and a confirmation hearing in some cases. The Senate ought to let them go in front of the Judiciary Committee and get them to the floor. It's not right, and it's not fair.

I told these three men that I'm standing with them. And I've said, "I am sorry that you're having to wait so long. I'm sorry that you're being hung out by a handful of United States Senators." I appreciate their service. I'm honored that they would be willing to serve our country by going on the bench. It's time for them to get—to at least get an up-or-down vote.

Let me answer some questions for you. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press]. Yes, I stiffed you the other day. I'm glad to call you this time.

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, Kerry, during the primaries, often said that John Edwards was not ready to be President. Do you believe that he is ready to be a heartbeat away from the Oval Office?

The President. Well, that will be up to the voters to decide, but I tell you what I think about North Carolina. I did well here in 2000 because the North Carolinian voter understood we shared values. I'm going to do well again in 2004. They know we share those values. People in North Carolina remember I came to this State and said we'll make sure our troops are well-paid and well-housed and taken care of, and we've done that. I told them we'd cut their taxes, and we've done that. The economy is strong here in North Carolina. I also know that when they go to the polls to vote for President that they'll understand that the Senator from Massachusetts doesn't share their values.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes, speak up. I'm getting a little——

Q. If I could try another Edwards question—he's being described today as charming, engaging, a nimble campaigner, a populist, and even sexy. How does he stack up against Dick Cheney?

The President. Dick Cheney can be President.

Next.

Q. Mr. President, does this John Edwards selection force you to spend more time in the South and change your strategy in the Southern States now?

The President. I'm going to carry the South because the people understand that they share—we share values that they understand. They know me well. And I am—I believe that I did well in the South last time; I'll do well in the South this time, because the Senator from Massachusetts

doesn't share their values. And that's the difference in the campaign.

Yes.

Q. Will you have to spend more time, strategy-wise?

The President. Well, talk to—talk to the schedulers. I'm not the scheduler. I'm just the simple candidate. [*Laughter*]

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, candidate——

The President. Welcome. No, "Mr. President," thank you.

Judicial Nominations

Q. The judiciary you hope to create with these nominees, could you——

The President. Those aren't the nominees.

Q. Well, they're——

The President. That's Senator Burr—to be.

Q. Could you offer thoughts as to how that judiciary is different from the one that might exist under a Democratic Kerry-Edwards administration, and perhaps with particular reference to issues of civil damage suits and abortion?

The President. Well, look, I've—first of all, on issues like abortion, I don't have a litmus test. In other words, when the nominees come before people in my administration, we don't say, "What is your specific position on that issue or another issue?" What we say to the person is, "What is your judicial temperament? Will you be willing to faithfully interpret the law, or will you view your position on the bench to rewrite law?" And that is the difference of judicial philosophies. I've been consistent in naming people to the bench that will faithfully interpret the law. I suspect that's one of the reasons why a minority of Senators are blocking my nominees and creating a judicial emergency.

And after I leave here, I'm going to Michigan to bring up the same point. There are six judges that are being withheld because of their judicial temperament, not because of a specific issue but because of their temperament. And I don't believe in litmus tests. I do believe in making sure that we share a philosophy. As I said before, I want the legislators legislating. I don't want the judges legislating.

Look, you look awfully hot, and I think it's time for us to go to the next event. Thank you.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—difference from a Kerry-Edwards administration—could you see how they might——

The President. Of course. They're the ones blocking the nominees in the first place. They're the types of Senators who are blocking the advance of these nominees.

Take for example here in North Carolina. Senator Edwards will not allow two of the nominees to whom I referred to even get to the committee for a hearing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. at Raleigh Durham International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Richard Burr of North Carolina, senatorial candidate in North Carolina.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Judicial Nominees in Waterford, Michigan

July 7, 2004

Good afternoon. I just met with six of my judicial nominees from the State of Michigan. I knew these were decent people, capable people, when I nominated them. My meeting with them today confirmed that. These are good people.

They are of the highest caliber. They've been rated well by the ABA, "qualified" or "well-qualified." In other words, the experts have taken a look at them and said these are qualified people to do the job. They're devoted public servants. They—their nominations are stalled because of the tactics of a minority of Senators. These are superb nominees. They deserve a vote. They deserve to have their day on the Senate floor.

Four of the nominees are waiting to join the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. David McKeague was confirmed unanimously by the Senate 12 years ago to serve as a Federal judge for the Western District of Michigan. Susan Neilson is an outstanding judge with more than a decade of experience on the bench. Henry Saad is a State appeals court judge. Richard Griffin has had 16 years of experience as a State judge. These experienced and dedicated individuals are needed, vitally needed, on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. I'll tell you why: Congress has authorized 16 judges for this court, yet 4 seats are vacant. All four of these vacancies have been designated judicial emergencies by the Judicial Conference of the United States. It is irresponsible for the United States Senate to deny an appeals court 25 percent of the judges it needs.

My nominees for the district courts in Michigan have also waited far too long. Tom Ludington, a respected State judge for nearly 10 years, has waited more than 21 months without a vote. Dan Ryan, a jurist with a decade of experience on the State bench, is held up for more than a year. I believe this treatment is unfair. I believe it's disrespectful. It is a disservice to the people of this State.

My Michigan nominees are not only the ones—are not the only ones being blocked by a Senate minority. Since I took office, more appeals court nominees have been forced to wait over a year just for a hearing than in the past 50 years combined. Six of my appeal court nominees have earned enough support to be confirmed by a vote on the floor of the Senate yet have been filibustered. It's an unprecedented step against appeals court nominees.

I believe this is unfair treatment. I believe that some Senators are doing this because they don't appreciate the fact that I named judges who will faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. They apparently want activist judges who will rewrite the law from the bench. I believe if laws need to be written, they need to be written by the legislature, by the legislative body.

Some Members are undermining the quality of justice in America by playing politics with these nominees. You see, vacancies on the bench leave sitting judges overworked. They cause needless delays in the provision of justice.

Now, I am pleased that the Senate recently voted on 25 of my judicial nominees. That was a welcome step. Yet it's not enough. These six from Michigan have waited far too long. The Senate must hear that there is an emergency. The time for giving these men and women a fair hearing is now. They deserve an up-or-down vote. I proposed a way to fix this system, and that is for judges to provide a one-year advance notice on retirement or departure. Upon that notice, the President would select a nominee within 180 days. And then the Senate would hold both a hearing and an up-or-down vote within 180 days of the nomination. This seems fair to me. It would treat these people who are willing to serve fairly.

I met with the six members, six nominees, because I wanted to assure them I was not going to abandon their nomination, no matter what the politics was like in the U.S. Senate. And I wanted to thank them for their patience. It's not easy to be nominated and then have your hearing held up for political purposes.

These are good, decent people. I asked them to thank their families. And now I'm calling upon the Senators from this State

and the minority of Senators who were refusing to move my nominees along to be fair and just give them a vote. They can express their opinions about whether or not they think these judges are qualified. Obviously, I think they are. They can argue about their judicial temperament, and that's a fine debate. But for fairness' sake, give them a vote, up or down.

The people of Michigan must know that six good, decent Michiganders who are capable people are not being allowed to serve their State on the Federal benches because of politics being played in Washington, DC.

Thank you for giving me a chance to come by and discuss this very important issue. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at the Oakland County International Airport.

Memorandum on Designation of Officers of the Environmental Protection Agency
July 7, 2004

Memorandum for the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

Subject: Designation of Officers of the Environmental Protection Agency

By the authority vested in me as President under the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, 5 U.S.C. 3345 *et seq.* (the "Act"), I hereby order that:

Section 1. Order of Succession.

During any period in which the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (Administrator), the Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the officers designated by Executive Order 13261 of March 19, 2002, entitled, "Providing an Order of Succession in the Environmental Protection Agency and Amending Certain Orders on Succession," as amended, to perform the functions and duties of the Administrator have died, resigned, or otherwise become unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of Administrator, the following officers of the Environmental Protection Agency, in the order listed, shall perform the functions and duties of the office of Administrator, if they are eligible to act as Administrator under the provisions of the Act, until such time as at least one of the officers mentioned above is able to perform the functions and duties of the office of Administrator:

Regional Administrator, Region I; and

Deputy Regional Administrator, Region IV.

Section 2. Exceptions.

(a) No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 1 in an acting capacity, by virtue of so serving, shall act as Administrator pursuant to this memorandum.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this memorandum, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by the Act, to depart from this memorandum in designating an acting Administrator.

Section 3. Prior Memorandum Superceded.

This memorandum supercedes the Presidential Memorandum of March 19, 2002, entitled, "Designation of Officers of the Environmental Protection Agency."

GEORGE W. BUSH

Satellite Remarks to the League of United Latin American Citizens Convention
July 8, 2004

Hector, thank you very much. I appreciate so very much the invitation to take part in your celebration of the 75th anniversary of LULAC. And I'm so honored to speak to members of America's oldest leading Latino civil rights organization.

Listen, you picked a great place for your convention, Hector. San Antonio and Texas are—San Antonio is a wonderful city, and Texas, of course, is a great State. And thanks for giving me a chance to speak to you.

I appreciate—listen, one of the reasons I enjoy working with LULAC so much is I appreciate your commitments to freedom and to entrepreneurship and to the values of *familia y fe*, which help to make our society a stronger place. And what I believe is those commitments deserve recognition and respect of all of our Americans. See, we share the same goal: We will keep working to make this Nation a welcoming place for Hispanic people, a land of opportunity *para todos* who live here in America.

And so, thanks, Hector. I appreciate your leadership, and I want to thank your friendship. It is good to see you via video, and I appreciate you working closely with my administration. I want to thank Ken Cole for the introduction as well, and I want to thank you for sponsoring this important gathering of American leaders.

I also want to thank people there who are representing my administration. I know that Tommy Thompson is with you. He's doing a fantastic job in running the Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you for being in Texas, Tommy, and thanks for the job you're doing on behalf of all America.

I also see a great Texan and great American, a person who greeted me at the base of the stairs of Air Force One when I snuck off from Texas last Thanksgiving to go say thanks to our troops in Baghdad, Iraq, and that, of course, is General Rick Sanchez. General Sanchez, God bless you, sir, and thank you for your great service to America.

You know, when I think of General—when I think of the story of Rick Sanchez, it reminds me that America is the Nation of the open door and must remain that way. Every generation of our history has brought new immigrants and new stories. And those immigrants have brought great strengths. When men and women arrive here ready to work hard or care for their families and honor the law, they make our country more, not less, American. And Rick Sanchez's history and his family history reminds me of that aspect of our country.

You see, in the United States our aspirations matter more than our origins. And my administration is committed to this basic principle: *El Sueno Americano es para todos.* And all deserve a chance to achieve the American Dream.

Success in America, of course, depends on personal effort. I believe that a compassionate Government should encourage and reward that effort. An opportunity society must educate every single child, encourage a spirit of enterprise, treat immigrants with fairness and respect. I believe America has made progress in all these areas, and I want you to know I look forward to working with LULAC to do more.

The first commitment of an opportunity society is a good public school in every neighborhood. To succeed and rise in the world, a student must know the basics of reading and math. Parents are entitled to expect these basics from their schools. I believe strongly, every school has a duty to teach the basics.

My judgment is, too many children in America have been just shuffled through the system without learning essential

skills *. It's easy to quit on a boy or girl from an immigrant family. We've got to end that practice of social promotion. We've got to stop the practice of hearing only excuses from a bureaucracy. When it comes to our fundamental obligation to children, there is no excuse for failure, because I believe every child can learn. And that is why I proposed and signed the No Child Left Behind Act.

We've increased Federal funding for Title I schools, which serves the poorer students, by 41 percent over the last 3 years. And in return, because I believe every child can learn, we're requiring schools to measure performance of all students to make sure every child is learning. And that is how you make sure that every child can read and write and add and subtract. That is how you can make sure the dreams of every parent in America can be achieved.

We're measuring achievement in math and reading, and we're getting results. You see, when you raise the bar and call upon results, you can get results. The Council of Great City Schools released a study on the progress since the No Child Left Behind took effect. The study examined 61 urban school districts and found that more than two-thirds of grades tested showed improvement in both reading and math amongst Hispanic students, and that's what we want. We want progress, substantial progress. And my pledge to you is, I'm going to continue to work to bring about more progress so every child can have a chance to realize the great promise of a country.

What I hope you do is join me in understanding that when politicians criticize testing and high standards, they do a disservice to our schools, to the parents, and to the students. In other words, what they're saying is they're choosing bureaucracy over our children. Instead of undermining standards, we're striving to meet those standards in every part of America. I made a promise to LULAC and to others to improve the Nation's public schools. I'm delivering on that promise.

Secondly, the commitment of an opportunity society is a healthy and growing economy in which entrepreneurs are encouraged to take risks and to build their businesses and to hire new workers. I believe that starts with a respect for the earnings of those who pay the taxes.

And so, in order to get this economy moving after a recession, an emergency, and an attack, we've given tax relief to every person who pays Federal income taxes. And by leaving more money in the hands that say—that spend and save and earned, our economy is strong and getting stronger.

And one reason why is because tax relief has helped millions of small-business owners and entrepreneurs who pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate. You see, if you're a small-business owner, you're likely to be what they call a Subchapter S corporation or a sole proprietorship, and therefore, you pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate. And because new jobs or most new jobs are created by small businesses, I thought it was wise to cut taxes on small businesses to encourage economic growth. And we're seeing the results of this tax relief and the stimulus for small businesses.

America has had now 10 consecutive months of job growth. Since last August, our economy has added more than 1.5 million jobs. The unemployment rate today is lower than the average rate in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. But most importantly, and I think one of the most important statistics of all, is that there are millions of new small businesses owned by members of the Hispanic community. And that doesn't surprise me, because the entrepreneurial tradition is strong amongst Americans—Hispanic men and women.

According to the most recent data, Hispanic-owned companies employ about 1.4 million Americans and carry a payroll of

* White House correction.

nearly $30 billion. And what I'm here to tell you today is our economy is stronger, our society is better off because Hispanic-owned businesses are thriving and creating jobs all across America.

We have many issues to discuss, but I want to end on this important issue. The third commitment of an opportunity society is a policy of fairness and justice toward those who have come to America to live and work. Our country must confront this basic fact: Jobs being generated in our growing economy are not being filled by American citizens, and these jobs represent an opportunity for workers who come from abroad, who want to put money on the table for their children. Yet current law says to those workers, "You must live in a massive, undocumented economy."

And so we've got people in America working hard who live in fear and who are often exploited. And this system isn't fair, and it's not right. So I proposed reforms that will match willing foreign workers with willing American employers when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs, a system that would grant legal status to temporary workers who are here in the country working, that will increase the number of men and women on the path to American citizenship.

The reason I do so is because I know this proposal is good for our economy, because it would allow needed workers to come into the country under an honest, orderly, regulated system. And the reason I made this proposal is because it's humane. It would bring millions of hard-working people out of the shadows of American life. This proposal reflects the interest and best values of America, and Congress should pass it into law.

As a citizen of Texas and the Governor of Texas, I have been privileged to see the many contributions of Latinos to our economy, to our State, to our culture, and to our Nation. As President and Commander in Chief, I've seen other great contributions. Some 85,000 Latinos have served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 100 have given their lives. Over 400 have been injured in combat. Our Nation will never forget their service and their sacrifice to our security and to our freedom.

I want to tell you about one of the most meaningful moments of my Presidency, if you've got a minute. I had the privilege of meeting Master Gunnery Sergeant Guadalupe Denogean. Sergeant Denogean was an immigrant from Mexico who had served in the Marine Corps for more than 26 years. He was wounded in combat in Iraq. When he was brought home for treatment, they asked the Sergeant if he had any special requests. He said he had two. First, he wanted a promotion for the Corporal who had helped to rescue him, and second, he wanted to become an American citizen. And I was privileged to be right there at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center the day he raised his right hand and took the oath of citizenship. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of this good Sergeant, and now I'm proud to call him fellow citizen.

You see, brave Americans like Sergeant Denogean are sacrificing for the cause of our country, and America has needed that sacrifice. Our men and women in uniform have removed two terrorist regimes that threatened our people and are now helping the Iraqi and Afghan people get on the path to democracy and self-government. By fighting the terrorists abroad, they have made American people more secure here at home. By standing for the cause of freedom, they're making our world more peaceful. And by acting in the best traditions of duty and honor, they're making our country proud.

This country of ours has been through challenging times in the past few years. We're overcoming those challenges, thanks to the courage and the character of the American people. We're ready to meet every challenge that comes our way and, of course, to seize new opportunities. And

as always, America looks to the future with confidence.

Once again, I appreciate the good work of LULAC and of your members and of your leadership. Thank you so very much for having me. *Que Dios los bendiga, y que Dios bendiga a los Estados Unidos. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:20 p.m. from the Map Room at the White House to the convention meeting in San Antonio, TX. In his remarks, he referred to Hector M. Flores, national president, League of United Latin American Citizens; Kenneth W. Cole, vice president, government relations, General Motors Corp.; and Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, USA, commander, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of President Thomas Klestil of Austria
July 8, 2004

Laura and I offer our deepest condolences to the people of Austria and to the Klestil family on the death of President Thomas Klestil.

President Klestil was a distinguished statesman who had previously served as Austria's Ambassador to the United States and as Austria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. President Klestil was well known in the United States as a man dedicated to freedom and human dignity, and as President he was a committed and eloquent advocate of these values. We join all the people of Austria in mourning his passing.

Remarks in a Discussion at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown, Pennsylvania
July 9, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I'll be there in a minute. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. It's an honor to be here in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Thank you for coming out to say hello. I appreciate it.

If you see some of your neighbors who were lining the road, waving to us in the bus, tell them thanks too. It's great hospitality here in this part of the world.

I'm here for a reason. I'm here to let you know that I want to serve the people of this country for 4 more years. I'm here to let you know, and I have a reason to ask for your help and your vote. I want this country to be safer and stronger and better for every one of our citizens.

I'm also the first to admit that I can't win without your help. So I'm here to ask for your help. I would like for you all—not only am I asking for the vote, I'm asking for you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And then when you ask—when you register them, you might get them to vote for old George W., while they're at it.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to the campaign. I've got plenty of energy to run a race. I know

who I want to lead this country, and I'm here to ask for your help.

One good reason to put me back in there for 4 more years is so that Laura will be the First Lady. [*Applause*] Thank you. I married well. What a fabulous woman she is. It's been a fantastic experience to have her by my side for 3½ years serving this Nation. She is a—she's come to know what I know, that we can make a difference in people's lives, a positive difference in their lives. Laura has got the capacity to touch people in a way that inspires them. Every time she sees a teacher, she says, "Thanks for teaching." And since she's not here, I want to say thanks for teaching.

She loves books. When I married her, she was a public school librarian. [*Applause*] Yeah! How are all you librarians out there? She didn't particularly care about politics or politicians. Now she's married to one. [*Laughter*] She's doing a great job. And by the way, this is a special day for me. One of our daughters, newly graduate of the University of Texas, is traveling with me. Jenna, thanks for coming. She's already given me good advice. She said, "Dad, change your shirt." [*Laughter*]

Today I want to talk about how to make sure America is safer, stronger, and better. I'm going to talk to some of our fellow citizens here. I'd like to answer some questions, if we have time. This is a little different format than you're used to, as opposed to a guy just sitting there lecturing. So what I try to do is get others involved in the conversation, to help make the points about why I want to be your President.

Before I do so, I want to say thanks to Arlen Specter for traveling with me today. He's on the ballot. I hope he wins. Thank you for coming, Senator. Also, we managed to get old Rick Santorum to come with us as well. I asked him how all his kids were doing. He said, "We only got six." [*Laughter*]

I want to thank very much Congressman Jim Gerlach for being here today. Congressman, thanks for coming. Congressman Todd Platts is with us. There he is. His mother made me some peanut butter fudge. [*Laughter*] She expects me to eat it on the bus ride. [*Laughter*] I don't know. But anyway, tell her thanks for the fudge. [*Laughter*]

I was traveling today with Charlie Dent. He's a State senator from right down the road. I'm glad he's here. And like Charlie, Scott Paterno is running for the Congress. Appreciate you being here. I don't know about these guys with famous fathers. [*Laughter*]

The job of the President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The job of the President is to do the hard work so that people can grow up in a society which is a safer society, a stronger society, and a better society.

You know, when I ran for office in 2000, I spent a lot of time in Pennsylvania. And by the way, we're going to do a little better this time than last time.

I never thought I'd be a war President. As a matter of fact, you know, I was hoping I wouldn't be a war President. But the enemy attacked us on September the 11th. It's an event that I will never forget. It is a duty that I will honor, which is to keep America safe.

And there's a lot of people working hard to make sure the homeland is secure. I picked a good man to run the new Department of Homeland Security. You trained Ridge well. [*Laughter*] He's doing a fine job. It's a hard task, when you think about it, to bring all these agencies together in a seamless organization, all designed to help protect the homeland. And there's a lot of really good people at all levels of government who are doing everything they can to do our collective duty, which is to protect you.

And so I want to thank all the first-responders who are here, the firefighters, the police officers, the EMS teams that work hard on behalf of the Pennsylvania citizens. As I tell them, as I've tried to

explain to the American people, we've got to be right 100 percent of the time; the enemy only has to be right once. And it's a hard job. The best way to defend America is to stay on the offense, is to use every asset at our disposal and to hunt the terrorists down before they hurt America. And that's what this administration is going to do. I am determined. I am focused. I will not relent in my quest to make sure America is safe and secure.

We must use all our assets, including the United States military. When I got into office, along with the fine Vice President, Dick Cheney, our military was underappreciated and underfunded. We worked with the United States Congress to make sure the military had the resources it needed. And today, nobody can question the skill, the strength, and the spirit of the mighty United States military. And it is my high honor to be their Commander in Chief.

Let me tell you a couple of lessons I learned from September the 11th. We face an enemy which has hijacked a religion. They're not religious people. They've hijacked a religion. Secondly, therapy is not going to work with them. You cannot negotiate with these people. You can't discuss it. The only way to make sure America is more secure is to bring them to justice. Thirdly, I learned about this enemy that they try to find soft spots in the world. They try to find safe havens. They try to burrow in and corrupt a government. They become parasitical. And that's why I laid out a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist and feed one, you're just as guilty as the terrorist."

Let me tell you something else about the Presidency—one other thing about this job that I have is that when you say something, you need to say it clearly so people will understand, and you better mean what you say. And I meant what I said, and the Taliban in Afghanistan found out exactly what we meant. Al Qaida no longer has the training bases and the safe haven they had throughout most of Afghanistan. Oh, they try to get in and out all the time, but now we've got an ally in Afghanistan.

And when people ask you about the decision, you remind them that it was more than just upholding doctrine. My decision was more than just routing out Al Qaida. See, I care deeply about the fact that young girls were not allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. I care deeply about the fact that there was a barbaric regime that was so dim in their view of the world that they not only suppressed women; they suppressed young girls. They would not allow for dissent. They did not believe in the ideals we believe in. Today, thanks to the United States and our broad coalition, Afghanistan is free, and they're going to have elections in a couple of months.

Now, we have a duty to defend ourselves—we have a duty to defend ourselves. I believe we also have a duty to work to free people from tyranny.

I also said that—told the American people this: Another lesson of September the 11th is that when you see a gathering threat, you've got to deal with it before it materializes. Obviously, the first choice, when I say "deal with it," is diplomacy. The first choice is to try to convince people to come to their senses if they're a threat. And that's precisely why I went to the United Nations. I saw a threat in the form of Saddam Hussein. Who wouldn't have seen a threat? He's the guy who used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He's a person that harbored terrorists. Abu Nidal was a known terrorist living in Baghdad. Zarqawi, the murderer who still kills innocent Iraqis, received health care in Baghdad after getting wounded in Afghanistan. You don't think Saddam Hussein knew he was there? It was a tyrannical society that he was running.

This was a guy who attacked his own neighborhood. It's a guy who professed hatred for America. He was a threat, see. And I said, "He's a threat." I went to the United Nations and said, "He's a threat."

And they agreed with the fact that he was a threat, by a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council. See, the world spoke. Not only did* America speak, the world spoke. I looked at the intelligence. Members of the United States Senate looked at the same intelligence and saw a threat. And the United Nations saw the threat. They said, "Disclose; disarm; or face serious consequences.

See, I think when you say something you better mean it, in order to make the world a more peaceful place. He said—and so what did Saddam Hussein say to the world? He said, "Forget it. I'm not going to—we're going to play games with the inspectors." Intelligence clearly says that he was gaming the system. He wasn't going to disclose. He wasn't about to show the world what he had. Inspectors—like they had for years—were denied access. And so I had a choice to make. I'm the President who was in office during September the 11th. I remember the lessons well. The choice was to trust Saddam Hussein or to make the decisions necessary to defend our country. And given that choice, I will defend America every single time.

It's hard work. We've done hard work before. It's hard work to take a country from tyranny to freedom. It's hard when you've got a society in which people have been brutalized. It's hard to convince them that, you know, "Trust us. Freedom is a good thing." But it's happening. It's happening day by day, and it's necessary work, because in the short term, the best way to protect America is to stay on the offense; the long term, the best way to protect America and others is to spread freedom. We know that free societies are peaceful societies.

It's hard work, but we've done this kind of work before. You know, right after World War II, there were a lot of doubters and skeptics as to whether or not Germany could be rebuilt and become a democracy. You can understand why. They were tyrannical and brutal and gassed millions. People said, "Well, you can't rebuild them." And there was a lot of doubt, and there was a lot of skepticism and a lot of second-guessing of the strategies. And the same in Japan. The skeptics were saying, "Japan can't possibly self-govern; after all, they're not Caucasian." But fortunately the pessimists and the skeptics didn't have their day; did they? My predecessors were strong in their faith for the capacity of all people to self-govern. And as the result of adhering to the values we hold dear to our hearts, today, German and Japan are free, and they're allies with the United States in this war against terrorism.

It is hard work—it is hard work. We will complete our job. Iraq will be free. The Middle East will see freedom in its midst, and America will be better off.

A stronger America is an America where people are working. Now, we've got some citizens here today that will help make my point. Listen, we want everybody working. That's what we want. We want people going to work. We want our people putting food on their table to feed their kids. We want our entrepreneurs to feel like there's—feel so confident about the future that they're willing to invest.

Things are getting better. A President must lead. Right after I got in, we had a recession. That means we're going backwards. It means people aren't working. It means the future looks a little cloudy. Then we had an attack. That hurt our economy. Then we uncovered corporate scandal. By the way, the message ought to be clear to everybody in corporate America now that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

In spite of all that, this economy is strong. You know why—not because of Government but because the spirit of the American people. We've got great workers, hard-working people. We've got wonderful entrepreneurs. Our small-business sector is vibrant and strong because of the dreamers

* White House correction.

who live here in America. And the job of Government is to inspire, is to help. The role of Government is not to try to create wealth, but it's an environment in which people are willing to take risk.

And that's why I was so strong on tax relief. Listen, when your economy is going bad, you want people to have more of their own money in their pocket, because when they have more of their own money in their pocket, they will spend or invest. And when they spend or invest, it means the economy is going to pick up. And sure enough, it has. The numbers here in the State of Pennsylvania are strong. It wasn't all that long ago that people were worried about unemployment here in Pennsylvania. Today, the rate is 5.1 percent, as I understand it. There was 44,700 jobs created in this State since last February. In other words, people are going back to work.

It was great driving through this country. I'm telling you, I love beautiful country. This is beautiful country, the farm country. The farmers are doing well here in Pennsylvania. That's a good sign. It's a good sign when you can stand up and say the farm economy is strong.

Audience member. Come visit our farm!

The President. What do you grow?

Audience member. Corn and—[*inaudible*].

The President. There you go. I may just do that, but when you ask for that, just remember, 400 policemen, 8 buses, an entire press corps—[*laughter*].

No, this tax relief is working. And the thing that is necessary to make sure it continues to work is not to raise your taxes. That's going to be—this is an issue in the campaign, see. You have a person who's willing to lay out a bunch of new ideas that cost a lot of money. And the campaign is just getting started. There's no telling how much they're going to promise by the time this is over. And therefore, you're going to have to ask the question, how are they going to pay for it?

Yes, it's going to be a lot of money. They're going to say, "Oh, only—all we're going to do is tax the rich." It doesn't work that way. You can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all the programs. So guess who's going to pay? You are. It's the wrong time to be raising taxes on the American people. This economy is strong; it's growing stronger; and we ought not to be raising taxes.

A couple of other points. See, my job is to be thinking down the road. This economy is strong. It's growing stronger. I want it strong 10 years from now as well. And then we need to do some things to make sure that people are comfortable hiring people. We need an energy policy. You got coal in this State. We ought not to be afraid to use it, and we ought to be using technologies to make sure it burns cleanly. Someday we're going to figure out to use that corn you're growing more efficiently, so you can grow energy on your farm. And so we're spending our research and development money.

See, we got some fuel here at home that we need to use, but technology is going to enable us in the long run to do what we need to do, which is to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's what we need to do.

A couple other points I want to make right quick. We have a changing economy too. I mean, this is a growing economy, and it's changing. And you're going to hear from some people who changed jobs and actually made more money when they changed jobs. One of the things we got to make sure is that we educate people for the jobs which will actually exist in the 21st century. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system. I think the community college system really works well because community colleges are available; they're accessible; they're affordable; and they change curricula to meet the changing times. If you got—a business walks in and says that, "We need to hire"—a health care business, for example, says,

"We need to hire health care technicians," the community college system is able to design a curriculum to train those folks for the jobs which exist. In order to make sure we're competitive, we've got to be wise about our education policy.

In order to make sure we're competitive, we've got to make sure health care costs are reasonable. You talk to these small-business owners here in America, and they will tell you the cost of health care makes it awfully hard to expand their job base. So I've got some practical suggestions, all of which make sure that the Federal Government doesn't run the health care system. I don't want people in Congress running your health care system.

Health savings accounts—those are tax incentive savings accounts for people to put money aside with a catastrophic health care plan. This is a good idea. This is a new product. One of my jobs is to make sure people know they're available, and people ought to look into them. You ought to look into them, Mr. Businessowner. Association health care plans allow small businesses to pool risk, just like big businesses get to do and, therefore, lower the cost of insurance for small businesses.

But I'll tell you what else Pennsylvania needs to do and America needs to do in order to make sure health care costs are reasonable; you need medical liability reform in this State. You need to make sure—everybody ought to have their day in court. Everybody ought to have their day in court if they get hurt, but these frivolous and junk lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine. They're driving docs out of business. They're making it harder for small businesses to hire new people. I'm telling you, the lawyers in Washington, DC, are blocking progress for medical liability reform.

I want to thank these two Senators for joining me on this important issue. I wish you lived in another State where they had a Senator that was blocking it. You'd let them know, wouldn't you?

I met Roger Schmidt. Thank you, Roger. He's a business guy here. He's about to tell you what he does, at least what his business does. He runs the business. I've asked him to come because I want you to understand clearly what this tax relief has meant for the small-business sector of America.

Most people don't know this, but this is a fact. By far, the vast majority of small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Now, people don't know that, but it's true. See, if you're a sole proprietorship or, in Roger's case, a Subchapter S corporation, your business pays tax at the individual income-tax rate. And so when you hear us talking about cutting individual rates, make sure you understand, when you think about it and your neighbors talk about it, that they understand we're really stimulating the small-business sector when we do so.

Now, why would you do that? Well, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business people—70 percent. And if one of the things you're worried about is job creation, it's a logical conclusion to say, "Let's stimulate growth in the small-business sector," which is precisely what we did.

Roger, welcome. Thank you for coming.

Roger Schmidt. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I just had coffee with Roger down the road. I want you to know I picked up the tab. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Schmidt. Thank you.

The President. No problem. [*Laughter*] It is an election year. [*Laughter*] Anyway, what do you do, Roger?

Mr. Schmidt. I work at E.J. Breneman. We're a 62-year-old highway construction firm working in the Eastern United States.

The President. Good. He's a Subchapter S corporation. I've asked him to come because he's one of millions of Subchapter S corporations around America, which means when you pay tax you pay at the——

Mr. Schmidt. The highest rate, individual rate, yes, sir.

The President. That's called leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Schmidt. I'm a good follower. [*Laughter*]

The President. You have got—okay, so you hired people this year, have you not?

Mr. Schmidt. Yes, sir. We've put new—eight hires to work this year so far.

The President. Yes. If you have confidence in the future—like, you're a business guy, you have confidence in the future, guess what you do when your business is growing? You hire people. So one of the things I ask when I travel around the country, I ask the small-business owners, "Are you hiring?" It's a good sign when they are. You know, it's not easy to hire people.

Mr. Schmidt. No, sir.

The President. And you hired them, why?

Mr. Schmidt. Why? Because our business is expanding.

The President. Expanding. It's like, they tell me, "Expand, Mr. President." Expand, Roger. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. Schmidt made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me stop him there. That's called investment. And when you hear somebody say, "I'm investing," it's important to say, really what's happening is they're creating jobs. You know why? You just heard him say, "I'm buying a new piece of equipment." Well, somebody has got to make the equipment, right? So when Roger says, "We're buying equipment," somebody is producing the equipment he's buying, which means somebody is likely to at least keep a job. And if there's more Rogers around, they may have to add somebody to make more equipment. That's how the economy works.

When he says he's investing, doubling his investment, that investment creates jobs. Not only does it create jobs from the person that he's purchasing the equipment from, he's going to need somebody else to either maintain or drive that equipment.

Mr. Schmidt. Correct.

The President. That's how job expansion works.

And so one of the key ingredients of the tax relief plan was to say to Roger and small businesses all over America, "Not only are you going to keep more of your own money as you make money, but when you make investments, we're going to provide a little extra tax break for you." It's called bonus depreciation. What we're trying to say, good tax policy is, "Feel comfortable making an investment. Here's a little extra in your pocket when you do so." And so the bonus depreciation aspect of the tax plan was equally important to cutting all the tax rates.

Roger, how's your business like? I mean, so you sit around the table; you're saying good future, bad future?

Mr. Schmidt. Right now, Mr. President, we are very optimistic. We'll probably have the best year this year that we've had in the last 5.

The President. There you go. Keep working. Keep hiring. Thanks for coming.

Good tax policy affects businesses, but most importantly, it affects families and individuals. You know, we had a big debate in Washington about tax relief. My attitude on tax relief is that if you're going to cut tax rates, you cut them on everybody who pays taxes, not just a few, not those who are the political favored. You say, if you're going to have relief, "Everybody pays. Everybody gets relief." It's the only fair way to do something like that. And it's been effective. It's working. It really is working.

One of the reasons it's working is because—people like Dale and Sharon Stump, who are with us. Thank you all for coming. I had coffee with them as well.

Dale Stump. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. You do what for a living?

Mr. Stump. I'm a self-employed builder/remodeler for 20 years.

The President. Great. And Mom is a teacher.

Sharon Stump. Yes. I was in the insurance industry for a number of years but retired to be a full-time mom and wife, and we home-school our three children now.

The President. That's fantastic. Thank you for doing that.

The Stumps saved $2,200 in 1903—I mean, 2003. [*Laughter*] That would have been a lot in 1903. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Stump. I'm not that old. [*Laughter*]

The President. They saved $2,200 in 2003. Now, I know that doesn't sound like a lot of money to the folks in Washington, DC, who are talking in huge numbers, but it's a lot to them. That's $2,200 of their own money, by the way, that they get to keep to decide what they want to do with it. You see, my attitude is, once Government sets priorities, people ought to have more of their own money to put in their pocket. I always say—and I believe this firmly—that the Stumps can spend their money far better than the Federal Government can.

What did you spend it on? None of my business but—[*Laughter*]

Mr. Stump. Well, since we're homeschooling, we did purchase some curriculum. We have to do that every year, so we did that. And we also were able to purchase with part of it a property in northern Pennsylvania to——

The President. Okay—landowner.

Mr. Stump. Landowner.

The President. Nothing better. By the way, every day is Earth Day if you own your own land. [*Laughter*]

The reason they got tax relief is we dropped all rates. We created a low—a new 10-percent bracket, which makes sense. We raised the child credit to $1,000 per child. They've got three children. That helps a lot. A guy with children is nodding his head. We reduced the marriage penalty. If one of the things you're trying to do in America is encourage families and marriage, it doesn't make any sense to tax marriage, does it? I just don't understand—"marriage penalty." Why would you want to penalize marriage? We want to be encouraging marriage in America.

These parts of the tax relief are set to expire. This is one of these—they giveth, and they taketh away. And I've been working with the Congress and the Senate to make it clear that they're not—what they're doing is they're taking money out of the Stumps' pocket. That's what they're doing, just as the economy is coming back. If they don't make sure this tax relief stays in place, they're really raising their taxes. They'll have—their tax burden will increase by $1,000 in '05 if Congress doesn't act.

And the reason I've asked them to stand here in front of you: this is a great American story. He's self-employed. In other words, he's taking a risk. Mom stays home and teaches the kids. They're doing their duty as a mom and a dad, which is the most sacred duty anybody has got in America. And here the Government—and the Government is fixing to take $1,000 out of their pocket. And it doesn't make sense.

Thank you for coming. I appreciate you all being here. Good job.

Mr. Stump. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. We've got the Griesemers with us today. Thank you all for coming. We're proud you're here. Debbie is with us, and Jim. Tell us your story, Jim.

[*Jim Griesemer made brief remarks.*]

The President. I was talking to him over coffee. I had a lot of pretty good coffee experience today—[*laughter*]—except for getting stuck with the tab. Anyway—[*laughter*]—it must have been miserable for you. Here's a guy who is maybe over 40, but barely. And he's laid off, you know. It must be a miserable experience, and he said it was. And then he told me what a joyous experience it was to be in an economy or a part of the world where the economy is strong. He's now working.

Go ahead, put the mike closer. As Debbie says, put the mike up——

Mr. Griesemer. I'm sorry, I missed what you said, sir.

The President. I said you're doing well.

Mr. Griesemer. Yes. Yes, yes.

The President. You're working.

Mr. Griesemer. Yes, at C.H. Briggs Hardware. It's an expanding economy. With that company, it's been tremendous.

The President. Making a little more money now than you were?

Mr. Griesemer. Oh, yes, yes.

The President. Yes, you see, one of the things that's really important is to hear people are making more money. After-tax disposable income—that means money you have in your pocket after tax—has gone up by 11 percent since 2001. See, we want Jim having more money in his pocket. The economy does better. Families do better when you have more of your own money in your pocket.

Debbie, what do you do?

Debbie Griesemer. I'm executive assistant to the president of a manufacturing firm, SFS Intec.

The President. Good. You growing?

Mrs. Griesemer. Yes, it's growing—record sales through the second quarter this year.

The President. Manufacturing firm with record sales—that's a pretty interesting thought, isn't it?

You left because there was a better—you left your old job.

Mrs. Griesemer. Yes. Yes, better opportunity, more responsibility, better—optimistic future.

The President. A little more pay?

Mrs. Griesemer. A little more pay, doesn't hurt.

The President. Look, the reason I've asked them to come by is because it's important for the fellow citizens in this area to understand people who have been laid off are getting back to work. That's what's happening. People that were worried about their future—they can say it, not me.

But thank you all for coming. We're proud you're here.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Marcie Hartman is with us. Thanks, appreciate you. Hey, Marcie, thanks for coming. Tell us your story.

Marcie Hartman. I just recently switched positions to ServiceMaster by Round the Clock. It's a better-paying job. I'm a commissioned salesperson, and obviously, the economy is doing better because I'm getting commissions.

The President. There you go, yes. See, people are—in a growing economy—one of the things that's important for our citizens to understand, in a growing economy, when there's a sense of optimism about the future, when people are investing, new job opportunities come along. People are able to change jobs to embetter themselves. She worked in one job—voluntarily left, I think you told me.

Ms. Hartman. Yes, I did.

The President. That's always the best way—[*laughter*]—and is now making more money.

Ms. Hartman. Yes, I am.

The President. And keeping more money.

Ms. Hartman. No, I'm spending more. [*Laughter*]

The President. Oh, well, that's good for the person you're spending—for the store you're spending it in. That's what we like. That's how the economy works. It's an interesting point she just made. She just gave us an economic lesson, didn't she? She's making more money. Instead of keeping more money, she's spending more money. That's what we want. See, the economy works when she decides, "I've got a little extra money in my pocket. I'm going to demand an additional good or a service." Somebody has got to produce the good or service to meet her demand in the way our economy works.

She made the point about how tax relief works. That's why Congress must make

sure they don't raise the taxes on people like this good lady.

Here's your chance. You got anything else?

Ms. Hartman. No, nothing else.

The President. All right, thanks for coming.

A stronger America is an America in which people are working. They're working here. And the question is, how do you make sure they're working not only this year but next year and in the following years. I got a plan to do that. I understand the proper role of Government. And I understand the need to make sure our small-business sector is strong. When you hear them talking about taxing the rich, just remember the lesson we heard today about the Subchapter S corporation. That's who they're taxing. They're going to be taxing people who are creating jobs, because Subchapter S corporations, small businesses who are sole proprietorships, pay tax at the individual income-tax level.

Now, I want to talk about a better America right quick, and then I'm going to answer some questions. A better America means every child is educated; every child has a dream. This system that says if your—color of your skin is a certain color or your parents don't speak English as a first language, and therefore, you're going to move them through because they're too hard to educate, is ending in America. I refuse to accept low standards for every child. When you lower expectations, you get lousy results. See, what we're doing is challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations, because I know every child can learn—every child can learn. And so we're insisting on raising the standards.

We've increased Federal money a lot since I've been the President, for mainly Title I students. The key thing—when you hear that, you probably cringe. You say, "Well, not only are you doing that, but then you're going to try to run the schools." No, quite the opposite. I strongly believe in local control of schools. I believe the local folks can manage their schools far better than the people in Washington, DC, can.

But here's the thing. For the first time, the Federal Government says, "In return for money, show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract. You, the State of Pennsylvania, design the system on accountability, but show us." We want to know. It seems like a reasonable request. "Can you read at fourth grade? If you can't read at fourth grade, you're not going to read at eighth grade. If you can't read at eighth grade, you've just been shuffled through the system as if you don't count." That's not what I believe. I believe every child can read by grade level in the fourth grade, and I want the schools to show me. That's what I want to see.

That's how you determine whether or not the curriculum being used at the local level is working.

We've got a fantastic reading initiative started here. It says, "We're going to use curriculum that works." It's working. I'm telling you, the test scores are going up all across America—most importantly, for some groups of children that people say, "Well, they could never learn to read," you know, and it's happening. America is going to be a better place because we've got high standards, strong accountability, and local control of our public schools.

America is going to be a better place as well because I think I've got a proper perspective of Government and its relations to the people. The great strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's an important principle which we're trying to help deliver help to people who hurt. See, if you believe that the great strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, then it makes sense for Government to encourage those loving citizens to help save lives, doesn't it?

I believe America—I know—I don't believe, I know America can change, one heart at a time. And I also know, amongst

our plenty, there are people who hurt. There are people who, you know, totally addicted to alcohol and drugs, who need help and love. There are children whose moms and dads are in prison, who wonder whether or not there is any future for them in America. There are people who are homeless, looking for help. And there's the hungry. And the best way, in my judgment, to heal the hurt, is to call upon those who have heard the universal call to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves and empower them to do just that, is to surround the lonely with love, is to mentor the children who need help, is to say to the faith-based institutions in America, whether you be Christian, Jewish, or Muslim: "The Federal Government does not fear your works, but we welcome your works. We love your compassion."

We should not ask the question, what is the process involved in providing help? We ought to ask the question, can you save a life? Can you save a life? If you take the alcoholic, you know, sometime a Government counsel can make a difference. But a lot of times it requires somebody to put his arm around him and say, "There's a higher power. And I'm going to help you change your heart, and when you change your heart, you're going to change your habits." No, Government ought to say, "Are you able to save lives?" And if so, these programs ought to be able to access the billions of dollars we spend on social services. A better America will happen when we understand the proper role between the Federal Government and the true strength of America, the hearts and souls of the American citizens.

And so when you hear me talk about "safer, stronger, and better," that's what I mean. And I know how to get us there. And I'm looking forward to have your help so I can work together with you to make sure the country is safer and stronger and better.

I'm honored you're here. Let me take a couple of questions. I haven't had a press conference in a while. [*Laughter*] Just last week, I think it was. Any questions? Yes, sir.

Senate Report on Intelligence

Q. Mr. President, I recently read, I think yesterday or the day before, in the Philadelphia Enquirer that the—I think it was the Senate Intelligence Committee was going to release a report that highlighted the fact that the CIA had given wrong information on Iraq prior to both you and the Congress. And I was wondering if you might comment on that.

The President. Yes, thanks. I think the—first of all, I appreciate the Senate's work, and I'll tell you why—because one of the key ingredients to winning the war on terror is to make sure that our intelligence agencies provide the best and possible intelligence to the Chief Executive, to the executive branch, as well as to the legislative branch. And so the idea that the Senate has taken a hard look to find out where the intelligence gathering services went short is good and positive, and I commend the chairman of the committee for doing that.

We need to know. I want to know. I want to know how to make the agencies better, to make sure that we're better able to gather the information necessary to protect the American people. One of the key ingredients and one of the vital ingredients of keeping us safe is to gather the best intelligence we can gather.

And so this is a useful report. There's going to be a lot of talk about reform in Washington, reforms of the agencies. And I look forward to working with Members of Congress to put out reforms that will work. A couple of ideas that I think make sense: One, we need to bolster human intelligence. In other words, one of the best ways to figure out what the enemy is thinking is to get to know the enemy firsthand, I guess is the best way to put it—is to have as much human intelligence as possible, good, quality intelligence and enough

human intelligence agents, assets, out there so that we can cover the globe.

Secondly, one of the key ingredients is to use our technologies to listen and look better. And so we've got to always make sure our intelligence agencies are on the cutting edge of change.

And thirdly, there are quite a few intelligence gathering agencies within Washington, and there needs to be better coordination between the agencies.

Now, having said that, I want—I haven't seen the report yet. I know it's quite critical. It's very important for our fellow citizens to know there's some really good people working hard in our intelligence gathering agencies, taking risks for their lives, doing the very best job they can. I will remind them that there has been some failures. Listen, we thought there was going to be stockpiles of weapons. I thought so. The Congress thought so. The U.N. thought so.

I'll tell you what we do know. Saddam Hussein. had the capacity to make weapons. See, he had the ability to make them. He had the intent. We knew he hated America. We knew he was paying families of suiciders. We knew he tortured his own people, and we knew he had the capability of making weapons. That we do know. They haven't found the stockpiles, but we do know he could make them. And so he was a dangerous man. He was a dangerous man. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. America is safer.

I want to know the truth. I want to know the facts. I appreciate the factfinders working hard, and I want to work to make it the very best system we can possibly have, because we've got a duty to do for the American people. This war goes on. There's a mighty ideological struggle taking place. Remember, it is really—the better way to describe what's happening is, this is a war against an ideology which stands exactly opposite of what we believe. It's an ideology that can—if you just think, remember the Taliban—it's an ideology that brutalized people because of what they thought. It brutalized people because of how they worshiped. It brutalized people because of their gender. It's the exact opposite of what America stands for.

You see, we believe that you're as big a patriot if you worship the Almighty as if you don't. You have the freedom to do so, and if you choose to worship, whether it be as a Christian, Jew, or Muslim, you're equally as patriotic as your neighbor. That's what we believe. You have the freedom to worship as you see fit in America.

That's the exact opposite of the dim view of the people who are trying to cause us harm. They use terror as a tool. So this is really a ideological struggle where the enemy is willing to use terror as a tool. And they kill innocent life because they know our good hearts break every time we see an innocent soldier die and an innocent citizen die. They know the compassion we all feel. Forget political parties. All Americans grieve when we see a son or a daughter, a husband or wife, go down in combat. We weep when we see that. We care when suiciders bomb innocent children inside Iraq. That's the nature of our soul, and they know that.

And see, they want to use terror as a tool to drive us out. They want us to forget our duty. They want us to get scared and pale in the face of their horrific acts. They do not understand the American people. Yes, we'll weep, but we will never cower in the face of killers and thugs. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

Okay. Anybody got a question? Other than the United States Senators—their questions are always too hard. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

President's Memoirs

Q. Thank you—[*inaudible*]—and I was wondering, there's a lot of talk right now about memoirs being written with the former President. After you are elected in 2004, what will your memoirs say about

you, what will the title be, and what will the main theme say?

The President. I appreciate that. [*Laughter*] There is a painting on my wall in the Oval—first of all, I don't know. I'm just speculating now. I really haven't thought about writing a book. My life is too complicated right now trying to do my job. [*Laughter*] But if—there's a painting on the wall in the Oval Office that shows a horseman charging up a steep cliff, and there are at least two other horsemen following. It's a Western scene by a guy named W.H.D. Koerner called "A Charge To Keep." It's on loan, by the way, from a guy named Joe O'Neill in Midland, Texas. He was the person—he and his wife, Jan, introduced—reintroduced me and Laura in his backyard in July of 1977. Four months later, we were married. So he's got a—I'm a decisionmaker, and I can make good decisions.

And so we sang this hymn—this is a long story trying to get to your answer. [*Laughter*] This is not a filibuster. [*Laughter*] That's a Senate term, particularly on good judges. Anyway, the hymn was sung at my first inaugural church service as Governor. Laura and I are Methodists. One of the Wesley boys wrote the hymn. The painting is based upon the hymn called "A Charge To Keep I Have." The hymn talks about serving something greater than yourself in life—I—which I try to do, as best as I possibly can.

The book—I guess one way, one thing to think about it is—one of the themes would be, I was given a charge to keep. And I gave it all my heart, all my energy, based upon principles that did not change once I got into the Oval Office.

Secretary of State Powell

Q. Mr. President, my name is Craig——

The President. Hi, Craig.

Q. How are you? I just wondered, when you defeat your opponent this fall, Jane Fonda's poster boy—[*laughter*]—are you going to be able to keep Colin Powell on your team?

The President. That's going to be up to him. He is a—thank you for bringing up Colin. He is a fabulous Secretary of State. He's done a really good job. [*Applause*] Thank you.

It's really important for a President to surround himself with smart, capable, strong people. I like being around smart, capable, strong people. I've got a great Cabinet. These are good, decent, experienced Americans who know what they're doing. Colin Powell is one such person. And it's hard work to work in Washington. It's asking a lot for people to serve their country. It's a tough town, and the hours are really long—really long. And I'm really grateful for people who have served our country who work with me.

The other interesting thing about Colin is that he is the kind of person that gives you his honest opinion, and that's what you want. I mean, you want somebody to be able to march inside that Oval Office, "Here's what I think." And I get a lot of opinions, and that's good, because I need to hear them. But you also got to know about me: I can make a decision. And when I make a decision, people in this administration said, "Yes, sir, Mr. President. We're with you all the way." And Colin Powell was such a man as well.

Manufacturing Jobs

Q. Mr. President, my name is Don Snyder. I left the legislature in Pennsylvania 3 years ago to head up a community college in this region.

The President. Well, thanks.

Q. And thank you for the support. My question to you is, the community colleges are certainly trying to provide the workforce training that's so necessary. So one of the things we are working with is the manufacturing industry, and Pennsylvania has always been a leader in manufacturing. Besides the tax policies that you've already enacted that certainly have helped, what

is the additional agenda to keep manufacturing jobs not only staying in the United States but expanding?

The President. Yes. First of all, let's start with making sure that the workers are trained to do the jobs which exist. If you can't find a—if you're a manufacturing person, and you can't find the workers with the skills necessary to work at your plant, they're going to go elsewhere. It's as simple as that. That's why not only are we making sure that the community college system retains flexibility, that we restructure our WIA programs, Workforce Investment Act programs, which are way too bureaucratic—we spend too much on overhead and not enough on helping people—plus additional $250 million going to the direct relationship between the community college and those people looking for workers.

Secondly, you can't be a manufacturing society if you don't have good, reliable sources of energy. You ask some of these Pennsylvania manufacturers what it's like to have their electrical supplies cut off, and they're going to tell you it's a lousy place to try to do business. If you can't have reliable electricity and you're running a manufacturing company, you can't compete. And therefore, when I talk about good energy policy, really what I'm talking about is keeping jobs here at home.

The best way to prevent jobs from going overseas is to make sure our manufacturers have got reliable sources of energy. We need to get an energy bill out of the United States Congress. I proposed one 2 years ago. It encouraged more conservation, which makes sense. It encouraged using our own—being able to explore for oil and gas in our own country. I know that makes some nervous. We can do so in environmentally friendly ways. It makes no sense not to do so.

We need to be using coal. We've got ample reserves of coal, but we need to use technology as well, combined with coal. That's why I'm a big backer of clean coal technology. And there are a lot of things we can do, sir, to make sure that the energy—and we need to, by the way, get new rules for the electricity grids in America. I mean, like, these are really old rules, written during the Depression. They need to be modernized so more capital flows in to modernize your electricity grids. The blackout we suffered should be a reminder that we ought to modernize, and that's how you keep jobs here at home.

Thirdly, if the tort laws of America are not changed, job creators are going to say, "I'm tired of getting sued. I'm going elsewhere." There are some practical things. We're good at things here in America, by the way. There's a lot of talk about what they call economic isolationism. That basically says, "We're going to wall ourselves off from the rest of the world." I think it's a big mistake to think that way. If you're good at something, you ought to be confident about competing.

Now, here's the issue on trade. Presidents prior to me have said, "Let us open up our market to other countries, because it's in our consumers' interest." Think about what I'm saying there. This is what they said. Because if you get more product coming in—in other words, consumers have more choices—a consumer will end up with a better price and better quality. That's how the marketplace works. And so administrations have said, "We'll open up our markets for the sake of the consumers."

Now, the problem has been, is that we haven't said forcefully enough to other countries, "Our markets are open. You open up yours. See, we've opened up ours, so let's make sure yours are open." And that's what this administration is doing. We're filing suits against countries that we think are dumping wrongly in our country. I've made action on the steel industry, because I felt like the steel industry needed some breathing room because of—for competitive reasons. In other words, what we've got to do is to make sure that countries treat us like we treat them, and it will

make it more likely manufacturers will be able to compete here at home.

I want to—appreciate your question. Thanks for running the community college system. It's a vital part of making sure people are trained.

Yes, what you got? Let her go. Just yell it out. If I don't like the question, I'll change it. [*Laughter*]

Same-Sex Marriage

Q. I was wondering what your plans are for banning gay marriages in the 50 States?

The President. Yes. He asked about gay marriage. This is, first of all, a very sensitive issue that people need to take a deep breath and debate with the ultimate of respect, for starters. I believe in the sanctity of marriage. I believe that marriage is a—I believe a marriage is an important part of the future of families, the traditional definition of marriage. I think it's—history has shown us that marriage between men and women has served society well, and any redefinition by itself will weaken marriage.

Secondly, this is a subject which ought not be decided by courts. This is a decision which ought to be decided—this is too important a decision to have defined by four judges in a State, say, like Massachusetts. And therefore, I believe the people ought to be encouraged to participate in the process.

Thirdly, one of the interesting issues that we're confronted with here in the country is that if a State decides to redefine marriage, people who were then married in that State can come to a State like Pennsylvania, and Pennsylvania must accept that marriage. Now, that is, right now, protected—what's called the Defense of Marriage Act, signed by President Clinton. But there's a lot of legal experts who tell me that that act is going to be struck down in the court of law, which would then mean that a court could decide, redefine marriage—a court—the people would get married, and they'd come to another State and say, "You must accept me as a married—us as a married couple," which then redefines the marriage in the new State.

Now, this is a sensitive issue that the people ought to decide, and the best way they ought to decide, in my judgment, is to be—is to have a constitutional process go forward that must be ratified by the State legislatures. That's how you get the people involved. And I repeat to you—my own view is, is that if a State—if people decide to—what they do in the privacy of their house, consenting adults should be able to do. This is America. It's a free society, but it doesn't mean we have to redefine traditional marriage.

She's coming right behind you.

2004 Election/War on Terror

Q. As a mother of two, my greatest concern is national security. What is your biggest fear with, if you'll excuse me, a Kerry administration?

The President. No, I'm—that's up to the voters to decide. Thanks for asking that. But my job is to lay out what I am going to do and talk about what I believe. My greatest fear is we're going to get attacked again. That's my greatest fear. And we're just working hard to stop it from happening. I am worried that there's—the enemy watches and sees other parts of the world kind of cower in the face of their barbaric behavior and, therefore, draw the wrong lessons from it. That's my worry.

And you've just got to know there's a lot of people—I mean, there's a lot of really good people working as hard as they possibly can to uncover any information that would give us an indication of something that might happen, and they're fully prepared to respond. They're ready to make a move.

This is a different kind of war. I remember, right after September the 11th, saying to the American people that this is a different kind of war. This is something that's just beyond our—the way we have thought before about how war goes. First of all, nobody likes war. You just got to know

that about me. I love peace. I long for peace. But I also understand the nature of this enemy. And I told the American people that sometimes you'll see action and it will look like things are normal, but beneath the surface will lurk this enemy. And that's just the way it is. And I want the American people to live a normal life. It's my job to worry about it. It's your job to go about your business. If you see something strange, of course, let the local authorities know. But it is a—this is a—we're in this for a while. And I fully understand the fatigue that comes with being told information as best as we know it that something might happen, but it's my duty. I've got to be as open with the American people as I can and realistic in my assessment about the realities of the world.

And I will repeat what I said, then I've got to get on the bus and head on out. But I will repeat what I said to Lancaster. Let me say what I said before about this—about the world we live in. We have a capacity to leave behind a better world. I say "we"—my—our generation, those of us who have been given the responsibility of assuming the duties of a civil society. We have a chance—and we will leave behind a better world for future generations of America, by sticking to what we believe, by understanding the great power of liberty in societies, of believing that credo that all people, regardless of their faith or the color of their skin, have the capacity to self-govern.

You see—let me end on this note. I understand and most Americans understand that liberty and freedom are not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world. We will defend America—we will defend America. We will be unrelenting in our defense of this country, by finding the enemy before they find us. Listen, we want to whip them in Iraq before we have to face them here at home. We want to—but ultimately, we will prevail, ultimately prevail, because of the great values, the great universal values that this country lives by.

Listen, thanks for coming. Thanks for your help. God bless, and God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Pat Roberts, chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Remarks in Pottstown, Pennsylvania
July 9, 2004

Thank you all very much for coming out to say hello. I'm honored to be here. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm campaigning because I want America to be a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

It's such an honor to be in the great State of Pennsylvania, and it's such an honor to represent the greatest country on the face of the Earth. Thanks for coming out to say hello. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:41 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Lancaster, Pennsylvania
July 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for having me. Please be seated, unless, of course, you don't have a seat. [*Laughter*] What a spectacular drive in here. As you know, we're on a bus, and it's hard to park a bus in a small parking lot, by the way. [*Laughter*] But we drove through this beautiful countryside and saw thousands of your fellow citizens there. They were so warm and gracious in their hospitality. I'm sorry they're all not here so I can thank them in person. Hopefully, somebody is recording this on a TV camera so they'll hear my thanks. But it is a really—what a special part of the world. And thanks for having me.

I'm here to talk about the fact that I'd like to be reelected President for a reason. You know, I love holding the office. It's—got a nice airplane to fly on and—[*laughter*]—housing is good. [*Laughter*] But I want to serve for 4 more years because I want the country to be safer, stronger, and better. I have a reason to ask for your vote.

And I'm going to spend a lot of time in Pennsylvania because I want to carry Pennsylvania this time. It's an important State. And we're going to—and we're going to.

I'm sorry that Laura is not with me. She's a fabulous First Lady, a great wife, and a wonderful mother—of my daughter Jenna, who is traveling with me today, University of Texas grad. How about that—in 4 years. [*Laughter*] Laura sends her best. She's campaigning herself. She is a—she's come to realize what I know in that you can make a difference in people's lives in so many different ways in the positions that we're honored to hold.

I remember the time she gave the Afghan radio address—radio address, my radio address, and talked about women in Afghanistan. And it was such a comforting and reassuring voice, I'm sure, for the women there who had been so brutalized by the Taliban, to hear the First Lady speak. But the feedback from the radio address was really good. And she—I remember her coming back upstairs in the White House and saying, "Gosh, they heard me." People heard that somebody in America cares for them, that when we talk about young girls in America and our desire for them to be able to realize their dreams, we also said the same thing about young girls in Afghanistan. And that message resonated. And Laura was the messenger, and it made such a difference to those ladies and women in Afghanistan who heard her voice that it, in return, made a great difference for her. She knows what I know: One, it's a honor to serve our country; and secondly, you have an opportunity to affect people's lives in a positive way. And that's exactly what she's doing.

I want to thank Joe Pitts for introducing me. Joe is a good, strong, solid United States Congressman with a lot of integrity and a lot of decency, and I'm proud to serve with him. I just want to thank you, Joe, very much.

I'm traveling with the United States senior Senator, Arlen Specter. I'm proud to be traveling with him. I hope he wins, and I'd like you to support him. We discarded Santorum somewhere up the road. [*Laughter*] Actually, he's off to York to greet us there, which is our next stop.

I want to thank very much members of the statehouse who are here, particularly State Senator Noah Wenger. I'm honored you're here, Senator. Thank you for coming. I also want to thank—thanks for being here. State Senator Charlie Dent, who has tossed his hat in the ring for the United States Congress, is traveling today, as is congressional candidate Scott Paterno.

Thank you for coming, Scott, appreciate you being here.

I know we've got some grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who are actually going to turn out the vote and do all the work. My job is to set the vision and explain to people what I want to do for 4 more years. And the grassroots activists' jobs are to find those who are willing to vote. I think there's a lot of potential voters here, at least it seems like it. There was a lot of signs on the road—[*laughter*]—a lot of friendly waves. So I hope you garner them up and remind them that we all have a duty to do in a democracy and get them to the polls, turn them out, register people. We've got a web site, georgewbush.com, which is a place where you can sign up and get some marching orders and gives you something to do if you're interested in helping in the campaign.

I spend a lot of time thanking people who are campaigning on our behalf because I know it's hard work and it takes time out of your busy lives. And so the first thing I want to do is, for those who are willing to help Dick Cheney and me, I want to thank you very much for what you're doing. It makes a difference. And I'm confident—I'm confident our work will pay off come November 2d of this year.

You're probably wondering why would you—I mean, I imagine we could have drawn thousands of people. As a matter of fact, tonight in York, we are going to have a giant crowd. But why would you forgo a big crowd to come to this entrepreneurial haven to talk about the issues confronting the country? And the answer is, is because this is a perfect example of what I try to talk about when it comes to the economy. That's why I'm here. I'm here because our country's economy is strong, because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. And the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in this company, see. This is a small business that succeeds because the owners and the fellow workers work hard to make it succeed. It doesn't succeed because of business—I mean Government. It succeeds because of the business acumen of the people running this enterprise.

And so I want to thank very much the Lapp family for their hospitality. I am honored that you would host me today. It's not easy to host people called President. [*Laughter*] It's just about—5 buses, 4 vans, 200 policemen, and here we are. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Greg and Tim. Those are the Lapp boys. They bought the business from their dad, who is with us as well, and Mom. Thank you all for being here. It was a wise decision. There's nothing wrong with a couple of brothers following in a father's footsteps. [*Laughter*]

I told you one of the things I'm running for is to make the country stronger. A strong country really starts with having a country which economy is healthy. That's a strong country. If you got a strong economy, you've got a strong country. It means people are able to work.

We had a tough time for a while, because the country was in recession. That means it wasn't growing. It means it was going backwards. It means employees were wondering whether or not they were going to be working the next day. It means small-business owners are wondering whether or not they want to invest capital at all. In other words, you don't grow unless you invest capital. People were nervous during the recession.

Then we got attacked, and I'm going to talk a little bit about making America safer. But we got attacked on September the 11th. It hurt our economy. In other words, you're in a recession; then we have an attack. And the attack cost us a lot. It cost us dollars. It reminded us that the world has changed dramatically from the world that we thought we lived in. It was a tough moment in the history of this country. Yet it was a moment that we were able to overcome, because the great strength of America is the people of the country. They

refused to be intimidated by terrorists. The entrepreneurs of our country, although set back some, still had that spirit within them, the desire to grow their businesses and to provide employment opportunities for people.

Then we discovered something else which hurt us, and that was that some of our citizens forgot to tell the truth, that they were given positions of responsibility and they weren't responsible citizens. And we uncovered corporate scandals. And we acted, by the way. Instead of wringing our hands trying to figure out what to do, we got together with the Congress, passed tough laws. The message is clear now that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America, that we expect responsible behavior for those who are in positions of responsibility.

And then another subject I'll talk about here in a minute: I made some tough decisions to defend the country, and we went to war. During a period of war, it's hard for the economy to grow because people don't feel confident. The concept of war is negative, not positive. I don't know if you remember, but we used to have on our TV screens "March to War." And if you're a small-business owner or a big-business owner, when you're thinking you're marching to war, there's a sense of uncertainty with that. People don't want to invest in an uncertain environment.

All these became hurdles for our economy. We overcame them. I'm confident one of the reasons we overcame them is because we cut the taxes on the people who work in America. We let people keep more of their own money. I say we overcame them—you'd expect me to say that; it's an election year. But others say it too. After all, the economy is strong right now. It's growing and getting stronger. Obviously, there's more to do, but it's growing. Listen, we added 1.5 million jobs since last August. That's a good sign.

Pennsylvania's unemployment rate is 5.1 percent. That's good news for people who are trying to find jobs. Obviously, the unemployment rate can go lower. We expect it to go lower because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Manufacturing is up.

One of the great statistics in America is the fact that more people—the homeownership rate in the country is the highest ever. And that includes amongst minority citizens. I'll tell you why that's great. It's because when people own something, they have a vital stake in the future of the country. We want people owning things in America. The idea of somebody owning their own home is just a fantastic part of making sure the future of the country is a bright and hopeful future. I mean, I love the idea—think about people from all walks of life being able to say, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property. I own this." And today, the homeownership rates are the highest they've been ever. And I know that's good for the homebuilders. It's also good for the homeowners. And that's a positive sign. In other words, times are good. But there's more we can do—there's more we can do.

Let me tell you one of the—some of the reasons I have made the decisions I made on the economy. And the best way to do it is to start with the Lapp boys. That's what I call them, at least. [*Laughter*] When you cut taxes, it means people have more money to spend. And first of all, principle one is that it's not the Government's money; it's your money to begin with. And the second principle is that when you have more of your own money to spend, you'll demand an additional good or a service. And when you do that, somebody has to produce the additional good or a service. That's the way the marketplace works. And when somebody produces the additional good or a service, it means somebody is likely to find a—keep a job, and as those additional—as demand expands, people are going to need to expand their businesses—in other words, hire more people—in order to meet the demand. That's how I think the economy works; others do as well. As

a matter of fact, that's what the tax relief is showing us, that the economy works that way.

One of the key components of economic vitality is the small-business sector of America. Now, two points on this. One, most small businesses, just like Lapp Electrical, pay individual income-tax rates. A lot of Americans don't know that. This company pays taxes at the individual income-tax rate because they are what they call a Subchapter S corporation. Or many small businesses are what they call sole proprietorships; they, too, pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. So when you hear me talk about cutting taxes, it is very important for people to connect that to small businesses. Most small businesses pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate.

Secondly, most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Therefore, it makes sense to put economic policy in place that stimulates the growth in the small-business sector. If you're interested in creating jobs, if you're interested in people being able to find work—and most new jobs are created by small businesses—it makes sense to have economic policy focus on small businesses. And that's exactly what our tax relief plan did.

Now, there was a debate in Washington as to who ought to get tax relief. My attitude is everybody ought to get tax relief. If you're going to have any tax relief at all, the only fair thing to do is to give everybody tax relief. I really don't think you want a Government that's fixing to cut tax rates say, "Only these kind of people deserve it." That means politics is getting to decide. Our policy said, if you're paying taxes, all rates are reduced. And it's helped Lapp Electric, and that's important.

I'll tell you why it's important, because they've added five workers since January. That's what I'm interested in. I'm interested in people working. And so I come into this business, and the two Lapp boys say to me, "I've added—we've added five workers. Your tax relief helped us. It enabled us to grow." And the definition of growth is five new workers working here. And that's good news—guess for who: the five people that are working.

Part of the tax relief plan also enabled people to have what they call bonus depreciation. In other words, it encourages people to make investment. And so one of the reasons I came is to try to connect investment to their decisionmaking to jobs. Greg and Tim told me they're going to invest $80,000 this year. Part of it is because they see a better tomorrow; part of it is because the Tax Code said, "If you do so, you'll get a little extra, a little extra help in the Tax Code." And they're going to buy new mezzanines, budget trucks, and service vans. That's called investment. In other words, they set aside $80,000, and they're going to do something with the 80,000.

Now, the way the economy works is that as they make a purchase with the 80,000; somebody has to manufacture or fix up or take care of the product they're buying—in this case, a mezzanine or a bucket truck or a service van. Somebody has to make that for them, which means somebody is going to work as a result of the investment. So when you hear people say investment equals jobs, that's what that means. They're making an investment. Somebody has to manufacture the product that they're purchasing, which means as the economy grows, more people are going to find work. And the tax relief we passed said to them, "If you make an investment, you get additional tax relief." That's how it works. That's why the tax relief we passed is so vitally important to economic vitality and growth.

Remember, they're a Subchapter S corp. This is important because there is talk in Washington about raising taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Oh, yes. I know. But that's just the way they think over there sometimes. [*Laughter*] In other words, when you hear them say, "Tax the rich

in order to spend for—in order to pay for bigger spending programs," I want people to think about Lapp Electrical. They're talking about raising the top rates; they're taxing small businesses. The economy is strong. It's getting stronger. Now is not the time to be taxing small businesses in America. Now is not the time to be raising taxes at all.

Here's what Greg said about tax relief: "It helped us pull out of the lull quicker than we would have." That's positive, isn't it? In other words, they were in a lull. It's called recession. Actually, in his case, it was like neutral. "Now, we're so ridiculously busy," says Greg, "that we need to hire more people to get everything done." That's exciting news. There's a lot of Gregs all over America who are ridiculously busy that they see a better future, that they're confident, that they're willing to invest $80,000. See, things are getting better in America. The spirit is strong. The great entrepreneurial spirit of America is vibrant, and we intend to keep it that way.

With us as well is Tim King. Thanks for coming, Tim. Tim is sitting next to Jenna. He was a telecommunications technician, served in the United States Air Force, lost his job last year. That's hard when that happens. It's not easy, wondering what's going to go on. Fortunately, the economy is growing. Fortunately, things are such that Lapp Electric was willing to hire Tim. He's gainfully employed here. In other words, the tax relief not only encourages nice statistics, but here's a fellow here whose life, that I can say to you directly has been improved. He said, "It's an excellent work atmosphere here. I have a larger variety of work to do." He's working here because the economy is getting better. I think he's working here because the tax relief we passed has made a difference in stimulating economic growth and vitality. I appreciate you letting me use you as an example, and I'm glad you're back at work. I'm glad you're here.

There are about 900,000 small-business owners in Pennsylvania that enjoy a lower tax burden, thanks to the work we did. That's good news. Tax relief also has an effect on American families. A lot of times in Washington, we just—well, we seem to overlook what tax relief has meant for people. We talk about it. But what I like to do is let people's own stories carry the philosophy.

Tim and Dawn Martin are with us today from Lancaster. Thank you for coming. I see you've got your two lads. I appreciate you bringing them. As you can see, they're a young family—Nathaniel and Ian. Because of tax relief, the Martins saved $1,700 off their taxes last year. Now, I know for a lot of them there in Washington, 1,700 doesn't seem like much. Just ask the Martins what it feels like, though. That's what matters. It doesn't matter what people think in Washington. What matters is what these people think. It's their money. It's 1,700 more dollars in their pocket. Here's what he said. He said, "It makes us feel more comfortable." That's important. You know, confidence has a lot to do with whether an economy grows. When you're comfortable, you're confident or more likely to be confident. "We're able to put money aside for our children's future education."

One of the things the Martins know is that their most important duty, their most important responsibility as a mom or a dad, is to love their children with all their heart and all their soul. And I appreciate that spirit of prioritizing your children's education. The tax relief we passed enables them to do so. It makes a lot of sense.

By the way, part of the tax relief is the fact we raised—comes from the fact we raised the child credit to $1,000. Part of it happened because we created a new 10-percent bracket, and part of it happened because we're beginning to reduce the negative effects of what they call the marriage penalty. I've always been slightly perplexed by why do you have a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. I mean, it seems like one

of the things that we ought to be doing in America is encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage.

All those three tax relief packages are getting ready to expire. See, Congress passed it, but in order to make the numbers work, they said, "Well, some of it will expire." My attitude is that it ought not to expire because if it expires, it raises taxes on the people like the Martins. They're comfortable now. They're going to be not so comfortable when the Government gets back in their pocket for some of the money that they expect is coming their way. I'm calling on the Congress once again to make sure that these aspects, at the very minimum, these parts of the tax relief plan, remain permanent, that they don't go away, that they don't raise the taxes.

No, I'm upbeat about this economy of ours. But my job is not only to think about today, but it's to think about what life is going to look like 5 years from now or 10 years from now. We have an opportunity to do some things today to make sure that America is the most competitive place in the world to do business so that people can find work. Let me give you a couple of ideas right quick.

First of all, I'm concerned about what health care costs do to companies like Lapp Electrical. Premiums are going up. There's some smart things we can do. One, we have passed what's called health savings accounts, which will enable consumers to be able to save tax-free and have a better relationship—for your medical expenses—and better afford catastrophic care and which, by the way, will keep the link between patient and doctor intact.

There is a philosophical debate going on in Washington about who is the best decisionmaker for health care. A lot of them up there think that it's the Federal Government. Of course, I don't. I think it's the consumers. I think it's the people. I think it's the patients that should be empowered to make the decisions for what is best for them.

I believe in association health plans. This is kind of a fancy word for allowing small businesses to pool with other small businesses to be able to spread risk so that their premiums are lower for their employees. You can't do that today. The Federal Government needs to allow Lapp Electrical to team up with the equivalent in Texas so that there's purchasing power for small businesses. That will enable the owners of this business to be able to have a more affordable health insurance for their employees.

Finally, I'll tell you, in order to make sure we've got reasonable health care costs, we've got to do something about the frivolous and junk lawsuits. Listen, we're too—there's too many lawsuits here that are running up the—these lawsuits—look, if you're hurt, you ought to have your day in court, no question about it. But lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit is running up the cost of medicine, and it's running doctors out of practice. You've got an acute problem here in Pennsylvania, as you know. I remember coming to your State and talking to doctors and hearing their stories about not being able to heal here. And they want to. They want to practice their trade. They want to help people, but they can't afford to stay.

When I first got to Washington, I looked carefully at this issue. As a former Governor, I thought it was a State issue, and then I realized how much it cost our Federal Government. The defensive practice of medicine costs the Federal Government billions because of—we're providing a lot of money for Medicare and Medicaid and veterans' health benefits. These junk lawsuits are costing the taxpayers once at the State level and another time at the Federal level. So I decided it was a Federal issue and, therefore, called upon a Federal—for a Federal solution.

We got it out of the House. Of course, it's stuck in the Senate—[*laughter*]—stuck in the Senate. A lot of the tort reform is stuck in the Senate. I don't think you

can be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer. You've got to pick. I'm pro-small-business.

A couple of other points I want to make right quick. In order for the Lapp Electricals of the world to be able to grow or any other business in Pennsylvania to be able to grow, we've got to have a reasonable energy policy. I mean, people talk to me about the manufacturing sector a lot, and obviously, I want manufacturing jobs to be—to stay here and for the manufacturing sector to grow, which it's now doing, by the way. But it's going to be hard for the country to maintain a manufacturing base if we don't have reliable supplies of energy. Imagine trying to run a manufacturing company with sophisticated equipment, and you're not certain whether or not the electricity you turn on is going to be available. Remember, we had a blackout, and it wasn't all that long ago. We need to modernize our electricity grids if we expect to stay competitive.

We're very dependent on foreign sources of oil and natural gas. It seems like to me it make sense to encourage conservation, to use research and development to find alternative sources of energy, but also to use the resources we have in an environmentally friendly way. Listen, we've got a lot of coal; we need to be burning coal. We've got the ability to find natural gas in our own continent. We can do so in an environmentally friendly way. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, this country must be wise about its energy policy and become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We have been working on this for a couple of years. It's stuck in the Senate. Well, actually it's stuck in conference—that's not fair. But the Congress needs to get together and get a bill to my desk. They just need to.

Trade is a big issue. I know people are concerned about trade. Here's the issue. Most Presidents prior to me agreed that we ought to open up U.S. markets for foreign goods. You know why? It's good for consumers. It's good for the American people. If you have more choice in products, you're bound to get better quality at better price. That's just the nature of the way the economy works. In other words, if there's more choice for consumers, prices will be better, as will quality.

The issue really has been whether or not other countries are opening up their markets like we have ours. That's the issue, as far as I'm concerned. And so my job is to say to China, "Open up your markets." My job is to say to Europe, "Open up your markets." And we're making progress. Just ask the farmers here in Pennsylvania what it's like in the farm economy today. You know why? We're selling a lot of farm product overseas. Look, we're good at something—we're good at growing things—we ought to be selling things everywhere around the world. My job is to say, "Open up your markets. If ours is open, yours needs to be open." Just give us a chance to compete, and America can out-compete anybody, anytime, anywhere.

And so we've got to reject economic isolationism. It just doesn't make any sense for the future of this economy of ours. If we want people working in America, let's be confident. Let's just make sure the playing field is level, give our workers a chance. We've got the most productive workforce in the world. And a fair chance to compete means America wins, as far as I'm concerned.

Finally, this economy of ours is also a changing economy. I don't know if Tim found that or not, but there's different types of jobs that are now becoming available. And therefore, we better have the ability to train workers for the jobs which actually exist. A lot of times, we've got great, decent people willing to work, but they don't have the skillset necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'm thinking about, for example, when I was in North Carolina seeing textile workers—[*applause*]—there you go. Thank you, sir—[*laughter*]—seeing textile workers now working in the health care field because they got the training necessary to change skillset. And one place to make sure that that is effective, that we're able to have that job training effectively, is at the community college system.

Community colleges are available. They're affordable. And the best thing of all is they're flexible. In other words, when the health care system of a particular town says, "Gosh, I need nurses," the community college ought to say, "Let me—design the curriculum with me so I can train workers." One of the key components of whether or not we're going to be able to survive in the 21st century is whether we've got a workforce trained for the jobs of the 21st century. And that's a great challenge of our country. And we've got the assets in place to do it. I'm willing to put up money from the Federal level to see to it that the community college programs are vibrant and alive and active and well for training these good folks for the jobs which actually exist.

So here are some ideas as to how to make sure America is competitive, the best place in the world to do business, the best place where the entrepreneurial spirit can continue to flourish and be strong.

I also told you I want to be President again because I want to keep America safer. That's my solemn duty, is to protect the American people. It was a solemn duty that really became so evident on September the 11th, 2001. I mean, the enemy hit us in a way that was nearly impossible for anybody to dream that they would attack us, using our own airplanes to kill thousands of innocent people, a sudden attack. It says a couple of things about the nature of these people. They are coldblooded killers. They're not religious people. They've hijacked a great religion. They think they're religious, but they're not. Their hearts are filled with evil. They are—you can't negotiate with them. There is no peace treaty you can sign with these kind of people. They've got a dim vision of the world.

I resolved then that I will do whatever it takes to defend America. My duty is to do everything I can to protect our country. I called a good man into action named Ridge. You might remember him. His job is to see to it that the Homeland Security Department functions well, and he's doing a great job. And it's not easy—it's not easy. For the first-responders who are here—that would be your firefighters and your police and your EMS teams—I thank you for the job you're doing. We're all working together. We're on the frontlines.

We're communicating better. We're sharing information better. We've now got the FBI and the CIA sharing information. We've got divisions within the FBI sharing information. Before September the 11th, we couldn't have the criminal division and the intelligence division of the FBI even talking to each other about certain cases. No wonder information slipped through the net. That's why we passed what they call the PATRIOT Act.

So—by the way, let me say something about the PATRIOT Act. Nothing happens without court order. The same rules that we're using to catch drug lords is now—we're finally starting to apply to terrorists. It's essential that these tools stay in place if we expect to be safe.

Anyway, I decided then and there that I'd do everything to defend the country, so we set up this Department of Homeland Security. But we've got to be 100 percent correct here at home; they've got to be right once. And therefore, the best way, really, to defend the country is to stay on the offensive, is to find these killers before they get here, is to use every asset we have, everything at our disposal to hunt down these evildoers and bring them to justice, which is exactly what I will continue to do as your President.

We're making progress. Two-thirds of the known Al Qaida leaders are—have been

brought to justice, and we're slowly but surely, methodically, finding them and bringing them to justice. It's hard work, and we've got some really fine people working hard, really fine people. A lot of them wear the uniform of the United States military.

Politicians make a lot of promises, I know, and I've tried to do everything I can to meet them. One of the promises I did make is that help is on the way. When I—2000, Dick Cheney and I were campaigning, we used to go to see the military—go to a military base or talk to military families. Our pledge was, help is on the way. Help has happened. Our military is strong, vibrant, skilled. They're getting paid better, and they're getting housed better. They're getting all they need, and that's what they deserve.

Listen, I—as the Commander in Chief, I've got to be able to tell the husbands and wives and the moms and dads, we're doing everything we can, everything we can to make sure you've got what you need to help us do our duty, which is to protect America.

A second lesson in all this business is that when a President says something, he better mean it. In order to make the world more peaceful, the President must speak clearly and mean what he says. I said, "If you harbor a terrorist"—I said the first thing is we will find—we will stay on the offense and bring Al Qaida to justice. And then I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." In other words, I was sending a message to those who felt like that they could maybe give Al Qaida safe haven and maybe we would just ignore it. But that's not how you make sure America is secure. You not only have to deal with Al Qaida and their affiliates and friends, but you have to say to people, "Don't provide safe haven for them." In other words, you've got to keep them on the run.

As you might recall, the Taliban in Afghanistan were providing safe haven for these people. We gave them an ultimatum. They, of course, didn't believe it. And we went in. And we went in to not only eliminate the training bases and the safe havens for Al Qaida, to protect ourselves; we also went in to liberate the people of Afghanistan from the Taliban.

These people, as I mentioned to you earlier, are barbaric people. America weeps when they know that young girls are brutalized by a government. And that doesn't—that's not our value system. We care about human suffering. This is a compassionate country. And we also understand that when people are free, they're going to be peaceful.

And so we did a couple of things in Afghanistan. One, we liberated the people. Secondly, we got rid of Al Qaida safe havens. And thirdly, Afghanistan is now on the road to democracy, and Afghanistan is an ally and a friend in our task to make America more secure.

And then, as you know, I looked at intelligence and facts, and I came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat to America. You see, because the other lesson of September the 11th is when we see a gathering threat, that we've got to deal with it—sooner, rather than later; that we can't hope that a gathering threat just goes away. That's the lesson of September the 11th.

And, therefore, I went to the United Nations and said, "Listen, I've looked at this intelligence, and it says he's a threat." I also, during my talk, reminded them that the guy had actually used weapons of mass destruction on his own people and that he had harbored terrorists. Abu Nidal is a terrorist. As you might recall, he killed an American. This guy Zarqawi got hospital aid there in Baghdad when Saddam Hussein was in power. He was the guy running a poisons factory in northeast Iraq. He's still in Iraq. He's the guy killing a lot of innocent people, ordering suiciders, bragging about it, cutting people's heads off. He's an Al Qaida affiliate. In other words, it was a safe haven. And the Congress

looked at the very same intelligence I did, the exact same intelligence, and came to the same conclusion: He's a threat. Interestingly enough, so did the United Nations.

Remember, I went to the United Nations and said, "We've got a problem here. As a matter of fact, it's such a problem that I think you probably have passed over a dozen resolutions saying he's a problem, and yet nothing has happened." And so I said, "Why don't we pass one and really mean what we say." And so with a 15-to-nothing vote, the United Nations Security Council did just that—15 to nothing—said, "He's a threat." "Disclose, destroy, or face serious consequences," is what the United Nations said, a collection of nations.

So we all felt the same thing back there. And of course, Saddam Hussein defied, and he just ignored what the free world had to say once again. Now, once you say something, you better mean it. At least that's the way I think. And we said "serious consequences." We meant serious consequences. I had a choice to make: Either trust this madman, who clearly hated America, who had—was fooling around with terrorists, who had used weapons of mass destruction and we had thought had weapons of mass destruction—take his word for it, or defend the country. Given the lessons of September the 11th, I chose to defend the country. And that's exactly what I would do again. America is a more secure place because Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

The Senate is looking at intelligence failures, and should. We all ought to welcome an investigation about where we went right and wrong with our intelligence gathering. You know why? Because it's important for a President and the Congress to get the best intelligence possible in this war against these terrorists. One of the key components of finding out who is going to hurt us is good intelligence. And there are a lot of really good people working in our intelligence gathering, by the way—dedicated, solid, fine Americans. They too want the intelligence services to be as effective as possible. So I welcome their investigation. I really do.

And like Members of the Senate and the House, we thought there would be stockpiles of weapons. We haven't found them yet. We do know, however, and I just want you to remember this, that the man had the capacity to make weapons. He had the ability to make weapons. He had the intent and the capability, which is why I say I would have done it again, because he's a dangerous person.

The work is hard in Iraq right now. It's really hard because we're trying to take people from a society run by a tyrant to a free society. We've done this kind of work before, though. I want our fellow citizens to remember that. After World War II, we helped to rebuild Germany and Japan. And that wasn't easy. If you go back and look at the history, you'll find that there was articles written about how the reconstruction effort wasn't properly planned, why the societies were still violent, how maybe Japan couldn't conceivably self-govern because of its past history. There were a lot of skeptics and pessimists about the ability of liberty to have a transforming effect on societies. And I can understand that. It's hard work.

But fortunately, my predecessors didn't listen to the skeptics. And today, I'm able to sit down with the Prime Minister of Japan and discuss key issues like North Korea. In other words, a former enemy—former enemies sit at a table together and say, "How can we work to keep the peace," because there were people that preceded me that had great faith in the ability of freedom to change societies.

The Iraqi people want to be free. We've got a good leader there named Allawi. He's a tough guy. He's a strong guy. He's dedicated to a pluralistic, self-governing society. He's courageous enough to get them there. He just needs America to stand by his side. The terrorists have got—they've got an advantage over us: They don't have hearts,

and we do. They kill in the hope that we—our hearts will be so full with sorrow, like they are every time, that we'll forget our promise and that we'll leave. We're not leaving. We will stand.

Let me tell you an interesting story. I'm probably going on—am I going on too long? [*Laughter*] Either Laura or Jenna will give me the hook. [*Laughter*] Let me tell you an interesting story. They said that they've got some people from Iraq coming to see you. The door opens up in the Oval Office—which, by the way, is a fantastic place. It's a shrine to democracy. It's a powerful office. Just being in there is such an honor. And in walk seven people who have had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. These were small-business guys. And not only did they have their right hands cut off, they had X's carved on their foreheads by the Hussein henchmen. The currency of the country had devalued, and he needed a scapegoat, so he found seven small merchants to blame the currency devaluation on and punished them by cutting off their right hands.

I asked one guy, "Well, why you?" He said, well, he was a jeweler, and he sold dinars to buy—I think it was either dollars or euros so he could get gold to use as a product for his jewelry. And they round him up—of course, no jury, no press looking after human rights, nothing.

He cut off seven hands off. Interestingly enough, a documentary was made of these seven guys, and the documentary was seen by a Houston newsman named Marvin Zindler. He is the—I don't know if you ever saw "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," the play. He's the guy, the newsman, that discovered this place in central Texas—anyway, famous in Texas, at least. [*Laughter*] But he started a foundation years ago to help people. And he saw the story, and he flew them over.

And so these seven guys walk in with new hands as well, because in Houston they had been outfitted because of the compassion of this American. In other words, what a contrast, isn't it, the brutality of a tyrant and the compassion of an individual citizen.

And they came in, and one guy took his new hand—they're just learning to use their hands—and he wrote "God Bless America" in Arabic. I nearly broke out in tears right there, it was such an emotional—I said, "Welcome to the Oval Office." I said, "I'm glad you're here." I said, "You don't have to worry about America. When we say we're going to do something, we'll do it, and we will stand with you so your children can grow up in a free society, which will make us more secure."

See, a free Iraq, free societies in the Middle East are in the long-term interest of America. In the short term, we get after them with every asset we got. In the long term, we defeat terror and darkness with the light of democracy and freedom. That's what we believe. Look what happened in Japan and Germany. And I'm telling you, it can happen.

Anyway, I told these guys, I said, "It's good you're in the Oval Office because I want to tell you something about our society. The office of the President is bigger than the person. This is a great place to meet because it's a chance to remind you that in your new country, when you've survived, the institutions you put in place will be bigger than the people, and therefore, your society will be stable, and you're more likely to be free."

Now, finally, I want your vote because I want to make America a better place—a better place. There's a lot of ways we can do so. I want to make sure the education system works well. I'm telling you, the No Child Left Behind Act is a good piece of legislation. We spent more money than we ever have at the Federal level. At the same time, we said we trust local people to make decisions for their schools, and we did something else that I thought was very wise. We said, "Show us the results." For too often we'd just spend money and hope for the best, and guess what

would happen? Kids whose parents didn't speak English as a first language just get shuffled through the system—the hard-to-educate, inner-city kids—"Just move them through. Maybe they'll learn; maybe they won't." That's not good enough for the 21st century, and it's certainly not good enough for me.

And so we've raised the bar. And we said, "You're going to get more money, but now you're going to devise accountability tests to show us whether the kids can learn," to read, for example. We want every child reading at grade level by the third grade. That's what we want, right? Seems like a reasonable national goal to me. That's not too hard to ask in America, to say, "How about just reading at the third-grade level? And if you don't, there will be remedial help, and the parents will get more choice." In other words, there needs to be accountability.

And it's working. We've raised the bar. We're saying, "Show us whether or not the kids can read and write and add and subtract." We're paying for curriculum that works. Listen, some reading programs work; some of them don't. You know what I'm talking about. And the best way to determine whether yours does is to measure. And that's what we're doing with local control of schools. See, we called it the No Child Left Behind Act. That's exactly what I mean. I don't want any children left behind in America. I want everybody to be able to realize their full potential. And so a better America is going to come when our public schools get better, and they are. They are.

Another way to make sure America is a better place is to surround people with love. The Government is not a loving organization, however. [*Laughter*] Government is law and justice. Love comes from the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. Love is found in our churches and mosques and synagogues. Love is found in those kind of daily acts of kindness that take place all the time not because of governmental law, because—many times because of a higher law. And it happens in America every single day. The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people, and a President must understand that.

And so we started what I call the Community and Faith-Based Initiative, which says we're going to open up Federal monies to applications for grants from faith-based organizations. I mean, if you want somebody to quit drinking, sometimes you have to change his heart and therefore change his behavior. Not every time—it doesn't have to happen every time. But a lot of times, if you change a person's heart, good chance they're going to change their behavior. And faith-based organizations are pretty good at changing hearts. That's why they exist, isn't it? And so Government must be willing to allow faith-based programs to access Federal money without causing the faith-based program to change their mission. How can you practice to be a faith-based program if you cannot practice your faith?

And so what I'm telling you is, is that part of a changing and better America is for Government to understand—or for the person, for the President to understand the true strength of the country and be willing to rally that strength. We're going to change America one heart at a time, one soul at a time, because the American people are so loving and so caring and so decent. And one of my jobs is to call upon that decency and to rally the armies of compassion.

Listen, I am honored that you came out and given me a chance to share with you my vision for a safer, stronger, better America. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm working for the vote, because I have something to do. I've got a reason to serve. There are things I want to do to make this country the greatest country it can possibly be. It's a honor to serve America. Thank you for coming, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. in the warehouse at Lapp Electrical Service, Inc. In his remarks, he referred to Charles W. Dent and Scott Paterno, candidates for Pennsylvania's 15th and 17th Congressional Districts, respectively; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in York, Pennsylvania
July 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all. I'm honored you're here. We've had a fantastic day in the great State of Pennsylvania. See my little bus there? We've been traveling the backroads of this great State. It's so beautiful. All kinds of people came out to say hello. And what a great place to end a great trip, in York, Pennsylvania. Thanks for coming.

You probably know this, but for 9 months in 1777 and 1778, York was the capital of the United States. Today, York is the capital of Bush-Cheney country.

I want to thank all my fellow Republicans. I want to thank the discerning Democrats and wise independents who are here today. I'm proud you're here. I'm here to let you know that I have the desire, the drive, and the vision to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm back in this important State to ask for the vote. And I'm here in this crowd to ask for your help. Register your friends and neighbors. Work those phones. Put up the signs. If you want to help, go onto georgewbush.com on the Internet. You can find out how to sign up to help. I'm counting on you. And together we will win a great victory in Pennsylvania and a great victory across this Nation on November the 2d.

You know how many people running for President would love to have Joe Paterno introduce him in Pennsylvania? Everybody who has ever run for President wants Joe Paterno to introduce him. [*Laughter*] But in the year 2004, there's only one, and I'm honored it's me. I want to thank you, Joe. Thank you very much for being here. I'm proud of the example you set. You're a fine, fine, fine American. And you raised a fine son in Scott. We need to send him to the United States Congress—Scott Paterno.

I regret that Laura is not here. I'm going to give you all kinds of reasons to send me back to Washington today, but probably the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. I'm really proud of her. She's a fantastic, fantastic woman. I love her dearly. We talked to her on the phone on the bus; she sent her best. And in her stead, traveling with me today is a new graduate from the University of Texas, one of my great daughters, Jenna Bush. Made it through in 4 years, I want you to know.

Proud to be here on stage and traveling today with a fine United States Senator, Senator Rick Santorum. What a fine job Congressman Todd Platts is doing for the people of this area. Where's your mother? There's Mom, right there. She made me some fudge. [*Laughter*] I'm going to run all day—well, I'm going to bike all day tomorrow. [*Laughter*] Thanks for the fudge; I actually had some.

I appreciate Jerry Pappert, the attorney general from the great State of Pennsylvania, who joined us today. Thanks for coming, General. State Senator Jeff Piccola is with us. I know other members of the statehouse are here. Thank you all for coming. I'm proud you're here. Turn out the vote. Make sure you spend enough time in your district to get the vote out.

I want to thank State Senator Charlie Dent. He's running for the Congress up the road here. He's going to make a fine United States Congressman. Charlie, thanks for coming. I know we've got other candidates here, and I want to thank you for running.

I appreciate my friend Alan Novak, the chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican Party. He's representing the grassroots activists who are here. A grassroots activist is somebody who is getting ready to turn out the vote. And for those of you who are going to do that, thanks a lot. It really means a lot. It's important. The stakes are high in this election. Just like you're counting on me, I'm counting on you.

I love the Oak Ridge Boys. Every time I see them, they say, "We're your friend. You can count on us." And sure enough, every time I've counted on them, they have been there. I am honored to have you here. Thanks for coming. I want to thank the Matt Goss Band as well. Thank you for coming.

Ethel Berdall is with us. She is 101 years young. Hi, Ethel. I'm proud to have your support. Thanks for coming.

The last 3½ years have brought serious challenges. We have given serious answers. We came to office with a stock market in decline and an economy headed into a recession. But we acted. We led. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy in the industrialized world.

There were corporate crimes in America recently, people who forgot what it means to be a responsible citizen. We acted. We passed tough corporate reforms. We're bringing wrongdoers to account. It is now clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We acted. I have led. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is served and America is safe from attack.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We have liberated over 50 million people. America is safer because of our actions. The world is better off. America is once again proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When the Vice President—and oh, am I running with a fine man in Dick Cheney—when he and I came to Washington, the military—remember back 3½ years ago—the military was underfunded and underappreciated. We gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no friend or foe can question the skill, the strength, and the spirit of the United States military.

It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. It is the President's job to make hard decisions, to keep his commitments. That is how I have led our country, and that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

I'm ready for the contest. I'm ready for the contest. I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be a tough race, make no mistake about it. That's why I'm traveling stop to stop on this great bus. I take nothing for granted. After all, I'm running against an experienced United States Senator from Massachusetts.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been there a long, long time. He's been there long enough to take both sides on just about every issue.

He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq. If you disagree with the Senator from Massachusetts on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. [*Laughter*]

And now, just last weekend, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values. [*Laughter*] I know—I know, but I'm quoting his own words. Believe it or not, that's what he said. [*Laughter*] It's hard to square that statement with his previous statement when he said, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." On issue after issue, from funding our troops who are on the battlefield, to involving parents in important decisions of their minor daughters, to supporting faith-based and community organizations that are helping those in need, the Senator is out of step with the mainstream values that are so important to our country.

My opponent now has a runningmate. I look forward to a spirited debate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the Senate, and he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the Senate. Back in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I have a clear vision to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan and a strategy to create more jobs so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of America. I'm seeking the vote to rally the compassionate spirit of this country so every citizen can realize their full, God-given potential. I will be clear on where I stand, and I'll be certain about where I'm going to take this Nation. When America gives me 4 more years, America will be safer, stronger, and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family in America is the tax burden. By providing the largest Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government could have.

Our economy is strong, and it is growing stronger. Since last summer, our economy is outpacing the entire world by growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added more than 1.5 million new jobs. In this State, in the great State of Pennsylvania, you've added 44,000 new jobs since February. The unemployment rate in this State is at 5.1 percent, below the national average. Across the country, the manufacturing sector is growing stronger. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Interest rates are low. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The economy is moving into high gear. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude the sky is falling. But whether their mission is—whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. That's the surest way to end economic growth and to put Americans out of work. This Nation is on the path of progress, and we're not turning back.

To sustain economic growth, we need to keep your taxes low. Higher taxes right now would undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help grow the American economy and create more jobs for American workers, I have a better idea. Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent and not raise taxes

on the American people. To make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to be wise about how we spend the money you send to Washington. That's why we need discipline, spending discipline, in Washington, DC. And spending discipline starts with understanding whose money we spend. We're not spending the Governor's—Government's money in Washington, DC; we're spending the people's money in Washington, DC.

I not only want us to grow next year, but I want us to keep growing in the outyears. So I've got a plan to do so. First, we've got to stop these frivolous and junk lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I have made my choice. I will continue to push Congress to reform tort laws and end frivolous and junk lawsuits.

And that includes medical liability reform. Small businesses make it difficult—it's very difficult for small businesses to hire new people because their health care premiums are going up. And one of the reasons why is because there's too many junk lawsuits suing the docs around this country and in this State.

We need energy legislation, commonsense energy legislation, if we want our economy to continue to grow. A couple of years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, that modernizes our electricity grid, but also says that we need to use the resources we have at hand in environmentally friendly ways. We need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need to be opening up markets for Pennsylvania entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. Listen, I know we've got some farmers here. You're making a good living these days, and one of the reasons why is because we're selling Pennsylvania farm products all around the world. We need to be opening up markets. Our market is open; let's get other countries to open up theirs. Give us a level playing field, and America can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere, anytime.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Angry talk and class warfare rhetoric and economic isolationism won't get anybody hired. That's not a plan for the future. The best way to make sure our people find work and keep work is to reelect a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business, pro-farmer President, George W. Bush.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

As in other times, many Americans are serving and sacrificing to keep this country safe and to bring freedom to others, and we thank them for their sacrifice. We mourn the dead and vow never to forget their sacrifice. I thank the families—the wives and the husbands, the moms and the dads, and the sons and daughters—of those whose loved one is overseas serving our Nation. We stand with your loved one. America honors their service.

They serve because after the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved to fight the terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terror state, provided safe haven for Al Qaida. They trained and plotted and planned there. Because we acted, America is more secure. The training camps no longer exist. Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. And they're

an ally—Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror.

Iraq only last year was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world. He had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. For decades he tortured and tormented the people of Iraq. We must never forget the mass graves of the thousands he murdered. Because we acted, America is more secure. Because we acted, Iraq is free and a sovereign nation. And because we acted, the dictator is now in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

We must never forget the lessons of September the 11th. It's a lesson—there are many lessons, but I want to share one with you that we—I will never forget, and I hope this country never does: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. When we see a threat, we just can't hope for the best anymore. That's the lesson of September the 11th, and we must never forget the lesson. My administration looked at intelligence, and we remembered the past of Saddam. We remembered he used weapons on his own people. And then we looked at further intelligence, and we saw a threat. The Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the very same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat.

Remember, I went to the United Nations. I said, "For too long, you had said the man is a threat, and he had ignored you." And so we went to the United Nations and demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. That's what the United Nations said. And as he had for over a decade, he ignored the ultimatums of the free world. He said, "Your resolutions don't matter to me."

I happen to believe that when you say something, you better mean it. Well, we said—"we" being the free world—out of the United Nations Security Council said, "Disclose your weapons. Disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what was said. And he denied. He deceived. He wasn't about to listen to the demands. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Although we haven't found stockpiles of weapons, I believe we were right to go into Iraq. And America is safer today because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We've got tough work to do. We've got hard work to do in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our immediate task in those countries is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. Every terrorist we deal with abroad is one who will never do harm to an innocent America or anyone else. You can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with these people. They're cold-blooded. They are—they've hijacked a great religion. They're not religious people. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We must engage these people in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home. And that's exactly what I will do during the next 4 years.

My most solemn duty is the security of American families. It's my solemn obligation. There is no such thing as perfect security. The threats to our homeland are real. We know the terrorists want to strike us again because they want to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. We've reorganized our Government to protect the homeland. I put a good man in there to run that organization. You trained him well. Tom Ridge is doing a great job. A lot of people

are working hard on our behalf, your behalf—a lot of good people. I want to thank the police and firefighters and emergency teams from York, Pennsylvania, for standing on the frontlines of homeland security.

We're defending our homeland. We will defeat the terrorists abroad. Yet, in the long run, our safety and the safety of our children and grandchildren requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East: the poverty, the hopelessness, and the resentments that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their leaders and the people can decide their own future.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we also serve the deepest ideals of our country. We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Because we have taken this fight to the enemy, because freedom is rising in places they claim as their own, the terrorists are increasingly desperate. They know their cause is failing. They know that time is against them, and their only chance is to shake the resolve of America and Iraq and anyone else who loves freedom. So their actions have grown even more cruel and sadistic. They cover their faces in videos of their crimes, but those hoods cannot hide the face of evil. We've seen their kind before, in death camps and gulags. And as before, America will persevere. We will fear no evil, and we will prevail.

Our men and women in the military are keeping America more secure. They're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases across the country and around the world, I have had the privilege, the high privilege, of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their decency and their unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

And when we put our soldiers in harm's way, they deserve the very best. They deserve the full commitment of the Federal Government. That's why I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. This legislation provided for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for the military. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against the legislation, and 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain his vote, the Senator from Massachusetts said this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it," end quote. That sure clears things up. [*Laughter*] The American President must speak clearly and mean what he says.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have a strong coalition of more than 30 countries in Iraq. I will continue to build on our alliances and to work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. We're strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of the Government.

We stand for good public schools by insisting on high standards, local control, and strong accountability measures. We stand for fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand

for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in our country. The culture of America is changing 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 dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for supporting the teachers and the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult, a time when resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. There were workers in hardhats shouting at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember looking in the eyes of those firefighters and policemen, and a guy looked at me and said, "Don't ever let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We'll need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. We will make America safer, stronger, and better. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:02 p.m. in the Toyota Arena at the York Fair and Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Joe Paterno, head football coach, Pennsylvania State University; Scott Paterno and Charles W. Dent, candidates for Pennsylvania's 17th and 15th Congressional Districts, respectively; Alan Novak, chairman, Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania; and entertainers the Oak Ridge Boys and the Matt Goss Band.

The President's Radio Address
July 10, 2004

Good morning. The United States Senate this past week began an important discussion about the meaning of marriage. Senators are considering a constitutional amendment to protect the most fundamental institution of civilization and to prevent it from being fundamentally redefined.

This difficult debate was forced upon our country by a few activist judges and local officials, who have taken it on themselves to change the meaning of marriage. In Massachusetts, four judges on the State's highest court have ordered the issuance of marriage licenses to applicants of the same gender. In San Francisco, city officials issued thousands of marriage licenses to people of the same gender, contrary to the California Family Code. Lawsuits in several States including New Jersey, Florida, Nebraska, and Oregon are also attempting to overturn the traditional definition of marriage by court order.

In 1996, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Defense of Marriage Act, and President Clinton signed it into law. That legislation defines marriage, for purposes of Federal law, as a union between a man and a woman and declares that no State is required to accept another State's definition of marriage. Yet an activist court that strikes down traditional marriage would have little problem striking down the Defense of Marriage Act. Overreaching judges could declare that all marriages recognized in Massachusetts or San Francisco be recognized as marriages everywhere else.

When judges insist on imposing their arbitrary will on the people, the only alternative left to the people is an amendment to the Constitution—the only law a court cannot overturn. A constitutional amendment should never be undertaken lightly. Yet to defend marriage, our Nation has no other choice.

A great deal is at stake in this matter. The union of a man and woman in marriage is the most enduring and important human institution, and the law can teach respect or disrespect for that institution. If our laws teach that marriage is the sacred commitment of a man and a woman, the basis of an orderly society, and the defining promise of a life, that strengthens the institution of marriage. If courts create their own arbitrary definition of marriage as a mere legal contract and cut marriage off from its cultural, religious, and natural roots, then the meaning of marriage is lost and the institution is weakened.

The Massachusetts court, for example, has called marriage "an evolving paradigm." That sends a message to the next generation that marriage has no enduring meaning and that ages of moral teaching and human experience have nothing to teach us about this institution. For ages, in every culture, human beings have understood that traditional marriage is critical to the well-being of families. And because families pass along values and shape character, traditional marriage is also critical to the health of society. Our policies should aim to strengthen families, not undermine them. And changing the definition of traditional marriage will undermine the family structure.

On an issue of this great significance, opinions are strong and emotions run deep. All of us have a duty to conduct this discussion with civility and decency toward one another. All people deserve to have their voices heard. And that is exactly the purpose behind the constitutional amendment process. American democracy, not court orders, should decide the future of marriage in America.

The process has now begun in the Congress. I urge Members of the House and Senate to pass and send to the States for ratification an amendment that defines

marriage in the United States as a union of a man and woman as husband and wife.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on July 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee
July 12, 2004

Thank you for the warm welcome. I realize the Y–12 National Security Complex doesn't get a lot of visitors—[*laughter*]. Thanks for the special arrangements. I'm also glad to have the opportunity to thank each one of you for the vital work you do here. And please pass the word to your fellow employees, many of whom were waving, I want you to know, as we drove in, for which I'm thankful. The Nation counts on your great expertise and your professionalism in producing, protecting, and maintaining material that is critical to our security. America is safer because of your service at Oak Ridge. You need to know our Nation is grateful for that service.

I appreciate our Secretary of Energy, Spence Abraham. He traveled with me today. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your service.

I want to thank Jeffrey Wadsworth, who's the Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory. It's not the first time I have met Jeffrey. I appreciate Jon Kreykes. I want to thank all the people who helped make this visit a successful visit.

I want to thank Senator Lamar Alexander, the other Members of the United States Congress who are traveling with us today—strong supporters, by the way, of Oak Ridge.

I appreciate the mayor being here, David Bradshaw. Mr. Mayor, appreciate you taking time to come. I want to thank my fellow citizens for giving me a chance to come and visit.

I've just had a close look at some of the dangerous equipment secured in this place. Eight months ago, the centrifuge parts and processing equipment for uranium were 5,000 miles away in the nation of Libya. They were part of a secret nuclear weapons program. Today, Libya, America, and the world are better off because these components are safely in your care.

These materials are the sobering evidence of a great danger. Certain regimes, often with ties to terrorist groups, seek the ultimate weapons as a shortcut to influence. These materials voluntarily turned over by the Libyan Government are also encouraging evidence that nations can abandon these ambitions and choose a better way.

Libya is dismantling its weapons of mass destruction and long-range missile programs. This progress came about through quiet diplomacy between America, Britain, and the Libyan Government. This progress was set in motion, however, by policies declared in public to all the world. The United States, Great Britain, and many other nations are determined to expose the threats of terrorism and proliferation and to oppose those threats with all our power. We have sent this message in the strongest diplomatic terms, and we have acted where action was required.

Every potential adversary now knows that terrorism and proliferation carry serious

consequences, and that the wise course is to abandon those pursuits. By choosing that course, the Libyan Government is serving the interests of its own people and adding to the security of all nations.

America's determination to actively oppose the threats of our time was formed and fixed on September the 11th, 2001. On that day, we saw the cruelty of the terrorists and we glimpsed the future they intend for us. They intend to strike the United States to the limits of their power. They seek weapons of mass destruction to kill Americans on an even greater scale. And this danger is increased when outlaw regimes build or acquire weapons of mass destruction and maintain ties to terrorist groups.

This is our danger but not our fate. America has the resources and the strength and the resolve to overcome this threat. We are waging a broad and unrelenting war against terror and an active campaign against proliferation. We refuse to live in fear. We are making steady progress.

To protect our people, we're staying on the offensive against threats within our own country. We are using the PATRIOT Act to track terrorist activity and to break up terror cells. Intelligence and law enforcement officials are sharing information as never before. We've transformed the mission of the FBI to focus on preventing terrorism. Every element of our homeland security plan is critical because the terrorists are ruthless and resourceful, and we know they're preparing to attack us again. It's not possible to guarantee perfect security in our vast, free Nation. But I can assure our fellow Americans, many fine professionals in intelligence and national security and homeland security and law enforcement are working around the clock, doing everything they can to protect the country. And we're grateful to them all.

To overcome the dangers of our time, America is also taking a new approach in the world. We're determined to challenge new threats, not ignore them or simply wait for future tragedy. We're helping to build a hopeful future in hopeless places, instead of allowing troubled regions to remain in despair and explode in violence. Our goal is a lasting, democratic peace in which free nations are free from the threat of sudden terror.

Our strategy for peace has three commitments: First, we are defending the peace by taking the fight to the enemy. We will confront them overseas so we do not have to confront them here at home. We are destroying the leadership of terrorist networks in sudden raids, disrupting their planning and financing, and keeping them on the run. Month by month, we are shrinking the space in which they can freely operate by denying them territory and the support of governments.

Second, we're protecting the peace by working with friends and allies and international institutions to isolate and confront terrorists and outlaw regimes. America is leading a broad coalition of nations to disrupt proliferation. We're working with the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other international organizations to take action in our common security. The global threat of terrorism requires a global response. To be effective, that global response requires leadership, and America will lead.

Third, we are extending the peace by supporting the rise of democracy and the hope and progress that democracy brings, as the alternative to hatred and terror in the broader Middle East. In democratic and successful societies, men and women do not swear allegiance to malcontents and murderers; they turn their hearts and labor to building better lives. And democratic governments do not shelter terrorist camps or attack their peaceful neighbors. When justice and democracy advance, so does the hope of lasting peace.

We have followed this strategy—defending the peace, protecting the peace, and extending the peace—for nearly 3 years. We have been focused and patient, firm

and consistent. And the results are all now clear to see.

Three years ago, the nation of Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida, a country ruled by the Taliban, one of the most backward and brutal regimes of modern history. Schooling was denied girls. Women were whipped in the streets and executed in a sports stadium. Millions lived in fear. With protection from the Taliban, Al Qaida and its associates trained, indoctrinated, and sent forth thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own.

Today, Afghanistan is a world away from the nightmare of the Taliban. That country has a good and just President. Boys and girls are being educated. Many refugees have returned home to rebuild their country, and a Presidential election is scheduled for this fall. The terror camps are closed and the Afghan Government is helping us to hunt the Taliban and terrorists in remote regions. Today, because we acted to liberate Afghanistan, a threat has been removed and the American people are safer.

Three years ago, Pakistan was one of the few countries in the world that recognized the Taliban regime. Al Qaida was active and recruiting in Pakistan and was not seriously opposed. Pakistan served as a transit point for Al Qaida terrorists leaving Afghanistan on missions of murder. Yet the United States was not on good terms with Pakistan's military and civilian leaders, the very people we would need to help shut down Al Qaida operations in that part of the world.

Today, the Governments of the United States and Pakistan are working closely in the fight against terror. President Musharraf is a friend of our country who helped us capture Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the operational planner behind the September the 11th attacks. And Pakistani forces are rounding up terrorists along their nation's western border. Today, because we're working with the Pakistani leaders, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror and the American people are safer.

Three years ago, terrorists were well-established in Saudi Arabia. Inside that country, fundraisers and other facilitators gave Al Qaida financial and logistical help with little scrutiny or opposition. Today, after the attacks in Riyadh and elsewhere, the Saudi Government knows that Al Qaida is its enemy. Saudi Arabia is working hard to shut down the facilitators and financial supporters of terrorism. The Government has captured or killed many first-tier leaders of the Al Qaida organization in Saudi Arabia, including one last week. Today, because Saudi Arabia has seen the danger and has joined the war on terror, the American people are safer.

Three years ago, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America who provided safe haven for terrorists, used weapons of mass destruction, and turned his nation into a prison. Saddam Hussein was not just a dictator; he was a proven mass murderer who refused to account for weapons of mass murder. Every responsible nation recognized this threat and knew it could not go on forever.

America must remember the lessons of September the 11th. We must confront serious dangers before they fully materialize. And so my administration looked at the intelligence on Iraq, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and the Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. In fact, according to former weapons inspector David Kay, Iraq's weapons programs were

elaborately shielded by security and deception operations that continued even beyond the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thanks.

Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass murder and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

Today, the dictator who caused decades of death and turmoil, who twice invaded his neighbors, who harbored terrorist leaders, who used chemical weapons on innocent men, women, and children, is finally before the bar of justice. Iraq, which once had the worst government in the Middle East, is now becoming an example of reform to the region. And Iraqi security forces are fighting beside coalition troops to defeat the terrorists and foreign fighters who threaten their nation and the world. Today, because America and our coalition helped to end the violent regime of Saddam Hussein and because we're helping to raise a peaceful democracy in its place, the American people are safer.

Three years ago, the nation of Libya, a longtime supporter of terror, was spending millions to acquire chemical and nuclear weapons. Today, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. And nuclear processing equipment that could ultimately have threatened the lives of hundreds of thousands is stored away right here in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Today, because the Libyan Government saw the seriousness of the civilized world and correctly judged its own interests, the American people are safer.

Three years ago, a private weapons proliferation network was doing business around the world. This network, operated by the Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan, was selling nuclear plans and equipment to the highest bidder and found willing buyers in places like Libya, Iran, and North Korea. Today, the A.Q. Khan network is out of business. We have ended one of the most dangerous sources of proliferation in the world, and the American people are safer.

Breaking this proliferation network was possible because of the outstanding work done by the CIA. Dedicated intelligence officers were tireless in obtaining vital information, sometimes at great personal risk. Our intelligence services do an essential job for America. I thank them for their dedication and hard work.

The Senate Intelligence Committee has identified some shortcomings in our intelligence capabilities; the committee's report will help us in the work of reform. Our Nation needs more intelligence agents—what is called human intelligence—to cover the globe. We must have the best cutting-edge technology to listen and look for dangers. We must have better coordination among intelligence services. I need and the Congress needs the best possible intelligence in order to protect the American people. We're determined to make sure we get it.

Three years ago, the world was very different. Terrorists planned attacks with little fear of discovery or reckoning. Outlaw regimes supported terrorists and defied the civilized world without shame and with few consequences. Weapons proliferators sent their deadly shipments and grew wealthy, encountering few obstacles to their trade.

The world changed on September the 11th, and since that day, we have changed the world. We are leading a steady, confident, systematic campaign against the dangers of our time. There are still terrorists who plot against us, but the ranks of their leaders are thinning, and they know what fate awaits them. There are still regimes actively supporting the terrorists, but fewer

than there used to be. There are still outlaw regimes pursuing weapons of mass destruction, but the world no longer looks the other way. Today, because America has acted and because America has led, the forces of terror and tyranny have suffered defeat after defeat and America and the world are safer.

All this progress has been achieved with the help of other responsible nations. The case of Libya's nuclear disarmament is a good example. In the fall of 2003, American and British intelligence were tracking a large shipment of nuclear equipment bound for Tripoli aboard a German-registered cargo ship. We alerted German and Italian authorities, who diverted the ship to an Italian port where the cargo was confiscated. We worked together. These events helped encourage Libya to reconsider its nuclear ambitions. That was a dramatic breakthrough, achieved by allies working together. And the cooperation of America's allies in the war on terror is very, very strong.

We're grateful to the more than 60 nations that are supporting the Proliferation Security Initiative to intercept illegal weapons and equipment by sea, land, and air. We're grateful to the more than 30 nations with forces serving in Iraq and the nearly 40 nations with forces in Afghanistan. In the fight against terror, we've asked our allies to do hard things. They've risen to their responsibilities. We're proud to call them friends.

We have duties, and there will be difficulties ahead. We're working with responsible governments and international institutions to convince the leaders of North Korea and Iran that their nuclear weapons ambitions are deeply contrary to their own interests.

We're helping governments fight poverty and disease so they do not become failed states and future havens for terror. We've launched our Broader Middle East Initiative to encourage reform and democracy throughout the region, a project that will shape the history of our times for the better. We're working to build a free and democratic Palestinian state, which lives in peace with Israel and adds to the peace of the region.

We're keeping our commitments to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, who are building the world's newest democracies. They're counting on us to help. We will not abandon them. Delivering these nations from tyranny has required sacrifice and loss. We will honor that sacrifice by finishing the great work we have begun.

In this challenging period of our history, Americans fully understand the dangers to our country. We remain a nation at risk, directly threatened by an enemy that plots in secret to cause terrible harm and grief. We remain a nation at war, fighting for our security, our freedom, and our way of life. We also see our advantages clearly. Americans have a history of rising to every test; our generation is no exception. We've not forgotten September the 11th, 2001. We will not allow our enemies to forget it either.

We have strong allies, including millions of people in the Middle East who want to live in freedom. And the ideals we stand for have a power of their own. The appeal of justice and liberty, in the end, is greater than the appeal of hatred and tyranny in any form. The war on terror will not end in a draw. It will end in a victory, and you and I will see that victory of human freedom.

I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for your dedication. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. in Building 4500 of the laboratory. In his remarks, he referred to Jon Kreykes, manager, National Security Advanced Technology Programs, Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Mayor David Bradshaw of Oak Ridge, TN; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan;

President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004
July 13, 2004

Thanks for coming. In just 4 years, the African Growth and Opportunity Act has shown the power of free markets to improve the lives of people in both the United States and Africa. By reducing barriers to trade, this law has increased export, created jobs, and expanded opportunity for Africans and Americans alike. It has given American businesses greater confidence to invest in Africa and encouraged African nations to reform their economies and governments to take advantage of the opportunities that AGOA provides.

So today I'm pleased to build on that success and extend the law's benefits long into the future by signing the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004. This legislation is a product of strong bipartisan cooperation, and I thank the Members of the House and the Senate for working together on this very important piece of legislation. And I want to thank those in the audience who worked hard to see that the bill made it to my desk as quickly as it did.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for your leadership. Secretary Powell is a strong believer in the potential of the continent of Africa, and so am I.

I appreciate so very much Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist for joining us today. Senator, thank you for coming. I'm pleased to see that my friend, the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Max Baucus is still standing. [*Laughter*] And I appreciate your leadership, sir. We're honored that Dick Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is with us. Mr. Chairman, thank you, and thank you for your clear vision for a better world. I appreciate so very much the members of the Ways and Means Committee who are here with us, the chairman and ranking member—Chairman Bill Thomas, who's worked so hard for this legislation, as has his friend and ranking member, Charlie Rangel, both fine Members of the Congress. Thank you all for being here, and thanks for your good work. I also am honored that Ed Royce, the chairman of the International Relations Subcommittee on Africa, has joined us. And soon we'll be joined by Donald Payne, the ranking member, as well.

These Members put in good work. They worked hard. They brought the other Members of Congress along with them, many of whom are with us.

I am honored that the dean of the African diplomatic corps stands with me today. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for coming. I'm proud you're here. And thank you for representing the other ambassadors who have joined us today. We appreciate you taking time to come. And thanks for supporting this legislation.

There's a growing consensus in both Africa and the United States that open trade and international investment are the surest and fastest ways for Africa to make progress. That's what you have said; that's what Congress has responded to. For too many years, the world's efforts to promote Africa's development were focused on aid. Development aid is important—nothing wrong with aid. My administration has substantially increased aid to Africa, and we appreciate working with the Members to do that.

But as Uganda's President Museveni has said, "By itself, aid cannot transform societies. Only trade can foster the sustained economic growth necessary for such transformation." This African leader understands that when nations close their markets and opportunity is hoarded by a privileged few, no amount of development aid is ever enough. But when nations respect their people, open their markets, expand freedom and opportunity to all their citizens, entire societies can be lifted out of poverty and despair. This is a hopeful piece of legislation. As America works for open markets and opportunity on the African Continent, we will also confront disease and hunger and the violence that undermines progress and hope.

I'm deeply concerned about the humanitarian and human rights crisis in Darfur, Sudan. For the sake of peace and basic humanity, I echo the sentiments of the Secretary of State. I call upon the Government of the Sudan to stop the Janjaweed violence. I call on all parties of the conflict to respect the cease-fire, to respect human rights, and to allow for the free movement of humanitarian workers and aid. The United States and the United Nations and the leadership of the African Union are working to bring relief to the suffering people of that region. America will continue to strongly support these efforts for peace.

One way to spread peace is to encourage political and economic reform across Africa by opening markets here in the United States. It's important for our people to understand, by opening United States markets we make it more likely there will be peace on the continent of Africa.

AGOA nations are strengthening the rule of law. They are lowering trade barriers. They're combating corruption and eliminating child labor. They're setting an important example for the entire continent, demonstrating that governments that respect individual rights and encourage the development of their markets are more likely to grow economically and achieve political stability.

Like all good partnerships, AGOA has been beneficial to all parties. Free trade between the United States and sub-Sahara Africa has created jobs, wealth, and opportunity on both continents. Last year under AGOA, African exports to the United States increased by 55 percent and African—and American businesses saw a 15-percent increase in our exports to sub-Sahara Africa—that equals almost $7 billion. The most notable gains were made by American companies selling agricultural goods and machinery and transportation equipment.

See, when you sell goods in Africa, it means somebody is finding work here at home. Trade must work both ways. AGOA has been beneficial to the people of the continent of Africa and to the people of the United States of America. That's why this is a good piece of legislation.

Since its enactment in 2000, AGOA has generated over $340 million in investment and created thousands of jobs. Things are happening because of the law we're extending today, positive things for people in Africa and in America. The enactment of this law will help ensure that this mutually beneficial trade continues. Trade and investment from around the world is essential to world peace. The United States and the nations of the sub-Saharan Africa are working together to break down trade barriers around the world—not just between ourselves but around the world.

My trade representative, Ambassador Bob Zoellick, is in Africa right now. He's meeting with his counterparts from across the continent to prepare for the World Trade Organization meeting in Geneva later this month. These are important meetings. They're important meetings for the people of the United States; they're important meetings for the people on the continent of Africa. And the reason why is because we want to advance our shared economic agenda, and it's very important

for our AGOA partners to help make these talks in Geneva a success.

Pass the word on to your capitals: No region has more to gain from free markets than Africa. That's the message. And no region has more to lose from a stalled WTO process than Africa. By working together and by our example, we can show the world that a new global trade agreement can bring greater prosperity to all nations.

Real prosperity is the work of many years. I know that. It's hard work. It's hard to change the status quo. This law encourages the change in the status quo.

I'm so pleased and proud to see the ambassadors from the African nations who are here. Thank you all for coming. You've worked hard to make AGOA a success. You've worked hard to spread the message in the halls of Congress, and your hard work has paid off. I share your optimism about Africa's future. That's what we believe. Those of us who are standing up here believe in the future of Africa. We appreciate the commitment to freedom. We appreciate your understanding that we all have an obligation to spread opportunity throughout all corners of this important part of the world.

And now, it is my honor to sign this important piece of legislation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Roble Olhaye, Djibouti's Ambassador to the United States. H.R. 4103, approved July 13, was assigned Public Law 108–274.

Remarks in Marquette, Michigan
July 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. I'm proud to be here in Marquette, Michigan. I'm proud to be on this beautiful campus of Northern Michigan University. You know, I just heard that William H. Taft was the last sitting President to visit this city. The rest of them missed out on a lot. They should have come. And I'm glad I did come. By the way I'm looking at things, the UP is Bush-Cheney country.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to ask for your help. I'm here to ask you to get your friends and neighbors to register. Tell them they have a duty as an American citizen to go to the polls. When you get them heading to the polls, make sure they pull that George W. lever. The best way to make sure America has strong, consistent, optimistic leadership is to put Dick Cheney and me back in office for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm going to talk about what I intend to do for the next 4 years, but perhaps the best reason to put me back in there is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years. I married a fabulous woman. She is a great First Lady. And traveling with me today is one of our daughters, a newly graduate from college, Barbara Bush. Thanks for coming, Barbara.

I appreciate being introduced by Steve Mariucci. I told him so. [*Applause*] Yes. I told him so. Do you know what he said to me? He said, "You get reelected, and I'm bringing the Lions to the White House." And if anybody can lead that group of men, he can. He's a fine man. I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him citizen of the UP. Thank you, Steve, for coming. I'm proud you're here.

I want to thank Dr. Les Wong and Phyliss for greeting me. And thanks for opening up this beautiful facility. Thanks for working to educate our children too.

I appreciate Steve Trent, a National Guard staff sergeant of the 652d Engineer Company that led the Pledge. I appreciate his service to the United States of America. I appreciate all who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

I want to thank the grassroots supporters who are here. Those are the people that are going to turn out the vote. Those are the hard-working people that are going to do their duty in democracy and gather up the voters and get them to the polls. I want to thank you for what you're going to do and urge you to do so. If you'd like some instructions, if you'd like a go-by, get on the Internet at georgewbush.com and sign up to become a volunteer in this campaign. The stakes are high, and I'm ready to lead the country.

The last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We delivered historic tax relief. Over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We uncovered corporate crimes that cost people their jobs and their savings, so we passed strong corporate reforms. We are bringing the wrongdoers to account. We are making it clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We saw grief and war arrive on a quiet September morning, so we pursued the terrorist enemy around the world. We've captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is served and America is safe.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We have liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When the Vice President and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

We've accomplished a lot on behalf of the American people. You see, I believe it is my job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. It is my job to make the hard decisions and to keep my commitments. And with your help, that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I enjoy campaigning. I like to be with the people. I'm not afraid to ask for the vote, because I know we've got a tough campaign. I'm running against a strong candidate. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I have. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for the No Child Left Behind Act and for the use of force in Iraq. Now he opposes the PATRIOT Act. He opposes NAFTA. He opposes the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. He kind of reminds me of the weather here—[*laughter*]—just wait a day, and it's going to change. Recently, campaigning in the Midwest, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know—I know, but those were his own words. Kind of hard to square that with what he said when he said, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." And now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Back in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm seeking the vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm seeking your vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I want your help because I have a plan to rally the compassionate spirit of Americans so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of our country. Give me a chance to be your President, and America will be safer and stronger and better.

A big issue for every family in America is the tax burden. By providing the largest Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create more jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

This economy of ours is strong, and it's growing stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added 1.5 million new jobs. Here in Michigan, you've added over 29,600 new jobs since February. Your unemployment is 6.5 percent—too high—but it has dropped by more than a full point since December, and it is moving in the right direction.

Across this country, the manufacturing sector is growing stronger. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high. Interest rates are low. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. But whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That is the surest way to end economic growth and to put Americans out to work. This Nation is on the path to progress, and we will not turn back.

To sustain this economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes right now would undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help grow the American economy and create more jobs, I have a better idea than raising taxes. We need to make the tax relief permanent. We ought not to be raising taxes on the American people.

We need to be smart about how we spend the money in Washington, DC. We need fiscal discipline and fiscal sanity. It starts with understanding whose money we spend. We're not spending the Government's money in Washington, DC; we're spending your money. And you deserve fiscally sound Government.

In order to make sure this economy grows and people can find work, we need to stop frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I've made my choice: I will continue to push Congress for reform to end the junk lawsuits that are hurting small businesses and hurting the job creators of America.

In order to make sure people can find work, Americans must have affordable health insurance. And the way to do that is not to have the Federal Government make all the decisions on behalf of the consumers of America. We must not federalize health care in America. The best way to do so is to empower the American

people through association health plans, tax-free health savings accounts. And for the sake of affordable health care, we need to pass national medical liability reform.

To make sure people can find work, to make sure this is the most competitive place in the world to do business, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. Listen, I understand we need to modernize our electricity grid, and we've got a plan to do so. We will encourage more conservation. We will spend research and development monies on how to grow our way out of independence. Listen, I want to be the President who says, "The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." But for the sake of economic security, we need to be developing our own resources in an environmentally friendly way. For the sake of national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

No, the best way to make sure this economy continues to grow is to make sure America is the best place for people to risk capital, to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, to have less regulation and less taxes for the small-business people of America. This administration understands how to create economic opportunity for all Americans. Reelect us, and you'll have a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business President of the United States.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That will not happen on my watch.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved to fight terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for the Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, a barbaric regime was removed from power, and many young girls now go to school for the first time in their lives.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world, a dictator who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator is now in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th taught a lesson I will never forget and America must never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. My administration looked at the facts and the history and looked at the intelligence in Iraq, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and the previous Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. They did so because they saw a threat. And as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. He deceived the inspectors. He did everything he can to deny access to the truth. And so I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend the United States of America. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq. And America is safer today because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task in Iraq and Afghanistan is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. You see, you can't talk sense into these people. You can't negotiate with the terrorists. You can't sit back and hope for the best. We must engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

In a country as big as ours, there's no such thing as perfect security, and threats to our homeland are real. We know the terrorists want to strike the United States again, to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. So we reorganized the Government to better protect the homeland. There's a lot of good people—really a lot of good people—working hard on your behalf. Speaking for everybody here, I want to thank the first-responders of the UP, the firefighters and the police and the emergency teams.

No, we're doing everything we can to defend the homeland, and we'll stay strong and relentless in defeating the terrorists abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more: We must work to change the conditions that gave rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders and the people can decide their own future.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we also serve the deepest ideals of our country. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The world is changing for the better because of American leadership. America is safer today because we're leading the world. Afghanistan was once the home base of Al Qaida. Now terror camps are closed, democracy on the rising, and the American people are safer. Pakistan used to be a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now Pakistani forces are rounding up terrorists, and the American people are safer. In Saudi Arabia, terrorists were meeting little opposition. And today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and the American people are safer. Not long ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed; Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment; and the American people are safer. Not long ago, the dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons of mass murder. And now, the dictator is a threat to nobody, and the American people are safer.

We will finish the work we have begun in Afghanistan and Iraq. These nations have courageous and responsible leaders, people who believe in the future of their countries. And nations around the world are helping. The NATO Alliance, the EU, the United Nations are standing behind the newly liberated peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan. And these good people are taking more and more responsibility. They're beginning to defend themselves because they want to live in a free society.

And these people must hear our voices loud and clear: They can count on America and on our coalition. We promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

And our men and women in the military are keeping America's commitment, and they're taking great risks for our security. At bases across the country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. It's important for those loved ones who have lost a husband or a wife or a son or daughter to know that the best way to honor the memory of your loved one is to complete the mission, is to work for peace and freedom around the world. I've seen the decency of our troops; I know their unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we owe it to the loved ones of our troops to make sure that their mission is fully funded, that they have the best. That's why I proposed what they call supplemental funding to support our military mission. I did so last fall. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, for ammunition, for fuel, for spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That sure clears things up. [*Laughter*] And now, just recently, he offered a different explanation. Yesterday my opponent said he is proud that he and his runningmate voted against funding the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, listen, he's entitled to his view—he's entitled to his view. But Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them and then brag about it. Leaders need to stand up with our military. We need to back them 100 percent. And that is what I will continue to do as the Commander in Chief of a great United States military.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have a strong coalition to help us defeat the terrorists: 60 nations in the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan; we have more than 30 countries with us in Iraq. We will continue to build our alliances and work with our friends in the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

Our Nation is strong because—the Nation is strong because we're prosperous. We're strong because we've got a great military. Yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The other day my opponent said, when he was with some entertainers from Hollywood, that they were the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places right here in Marquette, Michigan. We are strong because of the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose: our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in strong accountability. We believe in parental involvement so no child is left behind in America.

We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society.

We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We've been making progress on building the culture of life here in America. Members of both political parties believe that moms and dads should be involved in important decisions of their minor daughters. Members of both parties came together to pass the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, to punish the violent crimes against mothers and their unborn children. Members of both parties voted to end the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. Republicans and Democrats agree on these issues. Yet on these positions that so many Americans share, my opponent is on the other side.

We also stand for a culture of responsibility in America. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you 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 children with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education right here in Marquette, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult, a time when resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. There were workers in hardhats shouting, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm—he was a firefighter or a policeman—his eyes were bloodshot. He said, "Don't you let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of the United States, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been witness to the character of the Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America.

This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed land, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Superior Dome at Northern Michigan University. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Mariucci, head coach, Detroit Lions, National Football League; and Leslie E. Wong, president, Northern Michigan University, and his wife, Phyliss.

Remarks in Duluth, Minnesota
July 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for inviting me, and thanks for coming. Laura and I last came to Duluth in November of 2000. It was a little colder that day. [*Laughter*] Any day is a good day to be here in this beautiful part of the world, and I'm really glad to be back.

I appreciate the good folks from Minnesota and Iron Ridge and Northern Wisconsin who are with us today. Thanks for coming. And by the look of things, I'm in Bush-Cheney country.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here to ask for your help. I'm so proud you all came. Thanks a lot. Here's what I want to tell you today: To make sure America has strong, consistent, optimistic leadership, send us back to the White House for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Today I want to explain how I want to continue to lead this country, but perhaps the best reason to send me back to the White House is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. I'm a lucky man. I'm a lucky man when she said yes when I asked her to marry me. What a fabulous lady and First Lady she has become. I'm sorry she's not here. But I am proud that one of our daughters, Barbara, is traveling with me today. I love that you're here, darling. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate the fact that the Governor was here. I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor for being here today. Thanks for coming, Governor. I'm proud you're here. I know the State auditor, Pat Anderson, is with us. Thanks for coming, Pat. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank all those who serve the State and serve your local community for your willingness to serve the people.

I appreciate so very much Lieutenant Colonel Joe Repya for being here today. Joe, thanks for coming, sir. I'm proud to have the Minnesota veterans for me. Thank you for your service.

I thank my friend Dan Urshan for being here. He's in charge of the grassroots campaign. His job is to turn out the vote, and so is yours. If you're interested in helping, get on the Internet for georgewbush.com. It's a place where you can learn how to volunteer. See, I'm here to nurture those grassroots. I'm here to say I can't win it without your help. And I appreciate you coming.

I want to thank Bob Lessard, who's the Minnesota Sportsmen for Bush chairman. I'm honored that so many sportsmen, hunters, and fishermen are here. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank the Minnesota Teen Challenge Choir for being here today. Most of all, I want to thank you all. I'm so honored you came. We're going to win.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind the folks that the last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. When we came to office, the stock market was in decline and the economy was headed into a recession. We delivered historic tax relief. And over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we have pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and we will stay on the hunt until justice is done and America is secure.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. America is once again proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When my really fine Vice President, Dick Cheney, and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and the prosperity of America. It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President must make hard decisions and keep his commitments, and that is how I will lead our country for 4 more years.

I'm ready for the race. I look forward to it, and it's going to be a tough contest. Now, I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I have.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If you disagree with my——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If you disagree with my opponent on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. Recently here in the Midwest, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know—I know. But that's what he said. [*Laughter*] A bit hard to square that with my opponent's previous statement when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*]

Now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, and he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Back in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm asking for your vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan and a deep desire to rally the compassionate spirit of America, so every single American has a chance to realize his or her dreams. When the people give us 4 more years, America will be safer, America will be stronger, and America will be better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue in this campaign and a big issue for every family in America is their tax burden——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. By providing the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added more than 1.5 million new jobs. People are going back to work here in America. Here in the great State of Minnesota, the unemployment rate has dropped to 4.3 percent. Across this country, the manufacturing sector is growing stronger, with 64,000 jobs created since January. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. [*Laughter*] But whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. The surest way to end economic growth and put Americans out of work is their plan. This Nation is on the path to progress, and we're not going there.

To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help the American economy and create more jobs for American workers, my message to Congress is this: Make the tax relief permanent. Do not raise the taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to be smart about how we spend your money. We need to set priorities. We need to make sure we don't overpromise with the people's money. The best way to make sure that we're wise with your money is to remember whose money we spend in the first place. It is not the Government's money we spend in Washington; it is the people's money.

And there's more we need to do. We need to stop the frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I will continue to push Congress for reform to end the junk lawsuits that are hurting our small businesses all across America.

In order to make sure people work in America and to make sure this economy is strong, we've got to help more Americans better afford health insurance by giving people better access to health care through association health plans, giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health savings accounts. And to make sure you've got a doctor around here and to make sure the cost of health care goes down, we need to pass medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure America is a good place to invest so people can find work, we need to pass sound energy legislation. I submitted a bill to the United States Congress 2 years ago. They need to get the bill to my desk. It's a bill that will modernize our electricity system. It is a bill that will encourage conservation. It is a bill that encourages alternative sources of energy. But it is also a bill that recognizes we can explore for coal and natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of economic security and national security, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

The Minnesota farmers are doing well. You know why? Because we're selling farm products all over the world. When you're good at something, you ought to encourage it. We're good at growing things. We're good at building things. And we ought to be opening up markets rather than falling prey to the false hopes of economic isolationism. This country needs to have a President that's willing to knock down the barriers so that we can compete anytime, anyplace, anywhere on a level playing field.

What I'm telling you is in order to make sure this economy is robust today and tomorrow, you need to put back in the White House a pro-growth, a pro-entrepreneur, a

pro-farmer, a pro-small-business President, and that's George W. Bush.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved, and I resolved, to fight the terrorists wherever they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy and an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in their life.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world and had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, the dictator is now in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson this Nation must never forget. It's a lesson I will never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. And so my administration, remembering the history of Saddam Hussein, looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and the Congress looked at the same intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our Government.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. The world came together. The world saw a threat and said, "Declare, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, he defied the free world. He refused to comply. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors. What was he trying to hide?

So we had a choice to make—I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq. America and the world is safer because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task in Iraq and Afghanistan is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. You see, you can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with these people. You can't sit back and hope for the best. We must engage our enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

In a country as big as ours, there's no such thing as perfect security, and threats to our homeland are real. We know that the terrorists want to strike the United States again to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. So we have reorganized our Government to better protect the homeland. And a lot of good people—I mean, a lot of good people—are working long

hours to protect you and the American people. I know I speak for everybody here when I thank the Nation's first-responders—the police and firefighters and emergency teams of Duluth, Minnesota.

We're defending our homeland. We're defeating the terrorists abroad. Yet, in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders and the people can decide their own future. By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're also serving the deepest ideals of our country. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The world is changing because of our leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now the terror camps are closed, and democracy is rising, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now Pakistani forces are rounding up the terrorists. They're joining us in the war on terror, and the American people are safer. Three years ago in Saudi Arabia, the terrorists were finding little opposition. Now the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it.

The world is changing for the better. Three years ago, a dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction. He had ties to terrorist organizations. He hated America. He was paying families of suicide bombers. That dictator is no longer a threat, and the American people are safer.

We have more work to do. We're determined to finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Those nations now have courageous and responsible leaders. And nations around the world are rallying to help. The NATO Alliance, the EU, and United Nations are standing behind the newly liberated people of Iraq and Afghanistan. These good people are taking more and more responsibility for their own security. They want to live in freedom, just like you and I love to live in freedom. And those people need to know they can count on America. We promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. When America gives its word, America keeps its word.

Our men and women in the military are keeping America's commitment. They're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and those who sacrifice for our country. I've had the privilege of meeting the family members of those who have been lost in combat. The best way to honor their memory is to complete the work before us.

We've got a fantastic military because we've got fantastic people in the military. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we better make sure they have all they need. Last September, I proposed what we call supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. The legislation provided funding for body armament and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. This was an important vote. In the United States Senate only a

small, out-of-the-mainstream minority* voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it," end quote. [*Laughter*] That really clears it up. [*Laughter*] Now he is offering a different explanation. Yesterday, Senator Kerry said he is proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops. Now listen, he's entitled to his view. But Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have built strong coalitions to make the world a safer place. We've got over 60 nations in the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations are in Afghanistan; more than 30 countries are in Iraq. As your President, I will continue to build our alliances and work with our friends in the cause of peace and freedom and security. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The other day, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like Duluth, Minnesota.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institution that helped to give us direction and purpose: our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools, local control of our public schools, accountability in our public schools, so no child is left behind in America. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which would help millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We're making progress on building that culture of life here in America. Members of both parties believe that moms and dads should be involved in important decisions by their minor daughters. Members of parties came together to pass the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, to punish violent crimes against mothers and their unborn children. Members of both parties voted to end the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Republicans and Democrats can agree on these issues. Yet on the positions that so many Americans share, my opponent is on the other side. That's not the mainstream of this country. We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing 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 are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for

* White House correction.

doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. Workers in hardhats were chanting, "Whatever it takes." I remember working—trying to console people, and either a firefighter or a policeman said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In these times, I have seen the—witness—I have been witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win. And the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have the duty to spread opportunity to every corner of this country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USA (Ret.), Minnesota veterans cochair, and Dan Urshan, Minnesota leadership team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Waukesha, Wisconsin
July 14, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. It's good to be back here in Waukesha. What a beautiful day. Listen, I was talking to Tommy, and I said, "You know, I need to get back to Wisconsin." He said, "You sure do." I said, "Do you know your way around there?" [*Laughter*] So he and I have gotten on this modest little bus here. [*Laughter*] And we're going to travel your beautiful State.

I'm here asking for the vote. I've come back to this important State to say to the people of Wisconsin, I know what I need to do to lead this country. I know what I need to do to make the world more peaceful, America more hopeful. I know what I want to do to make America safer,

stronger, and better. I'm here to ask for your help for 4 more years.

And I couldn't have come with a better escort. You educated him well. [*Laughter*] I picked a good man when I asked him to come to Washington to lead a very important agency. He is a superb leader. He's a great organizer. He's got a clear vision. He cares deeply about the people of Wisconsin and the United States of America. Tommy Thompson is doing a fabulous job on behalf of the American people.

My only regret, and I'm sure it's yours as well, is that Laura is not traveling with me. No, I know, most people are wise enough to say, "Why don't you just go ahead and stay at home and let her carry the burden." [*Laughter*] I was a lucky man when she said yes. She's a great lady and a fabulous First Lady for America. She's campaigning somewhere else, but today I am fortunate that one of our college graduates, one of our daughters, is traveling with me. I'm really proud to introduce Barbara Bush. Made it out of college in 4 years. [*Laughter*]

I know Sue Ann Thompson is with us, and so is Tommy—Tommy's daughter. I appreciate the Thompson family as well for enabling Tommy to serve the country so well. Listen, being in public life isn't easy on the families, and Tommy has got a great family. And I appreciate their supporting him so well.

I appreciate Cheryl Sensenbrenner representing her husband, Jim. The chairman is doing a fine job. He's a good Congressman. I enjoy working with him. I know you're going to send him back, and I know you're going to send me back, so we'll be working together for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend State Senator Mary Panzer, the majority leader of the statehouse, the State senate, for being here today. Thanks for coming, Mary. Mary Lazich as well, who's the State senator. Thanks for the members of the senate and the house and all the local officials who are here to say hello. Turn out the vote. Thanks for serving. But join these grassroots activists in finding people to register, and tell them they've got a duty as an American to show up and vote on election day. And when you get them steered toward the polls, give them a little nudge in our direction. [*Laughter*] They're going to like the message. It's hopeful. It's optimistic. It's positive about the future of this great country.

I appreciate Jim Klauser and Mary Buestrin, all the people who have dedicated themselves to being involved in the political process. By the way, if you're interested in volunteering, we've gone high tech—georgewbush.com. It's an easy one to remember. [*Laughter*] Why don't you just go ahead and log on, and it will show you how you can help in the campaign. I'm serious. It's a—I can't win this without you.

I can't win—and when you're talking to the voters, remind them that over the last 3 years, we have faced serious challenges, and this administration has given serious answers. You might remind the voters that when we came to office, the stock market was in decline and the economy was headed into recession. We acted. We delivered historic tax relief. And over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

When we arrived in Washington, DC—when the great Vice President Dick Cheney and I arrived in Washington, DC—the military was underfunded, and it was underappreciated. You might remember back to those times. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is served and America is safe. We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons

of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

These accomplishments are important to the security and prosperity of America. They should say to the American people, I understand it is my job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. It's the President's job to make the tough decisions and to keep his commitments. And that is how I will continue to lead this country for 4 more years.

I'm working hard because this is going to be a tough campaign. I know it, and you know it. We take nothing for granted. We got a lot of work to do. I've got to take my message out to the people. I've got to rally the volunteers such as yourselves to go to work. I'm looking forward to it. My opponent is a highly experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I've been in Washington. He's been there so long, he's taken about both sides of just about every issue. He voted for PATRIOT Act. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, and he voted for the use of force in Iraq. Now—[*laughter*]—he opposes the PATRIOT Act and NAFTA and the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. If you disagree with John Kerry on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. [*Laughter*]

He came out here to the Midwest, and he said he was the candidate with the conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know. I know—I know. [*Laughter*] I'm just quoting what he said. [*Laughter*] It's hard to square that when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." Now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate. Now in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and set the course, the direction of our economy. I'm here to ask for the vote because I have a clear vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm here asking for your vote—I'm here in this vital State asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and, therefore, opportunity throughout our entire country. I'm here to ask for the vote because I have a plan to rally—to continue to rally the compassionate spirit of the American people so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of our country. When you give me 4 more years, America will be safer, America will be stronger, and America will be a better country.

A big issue for every family, and a big issue in this campaign, is the Federal tax burden. It's a big issue. By providing the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and to helping create jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government could have.

Today I met Scott and Shelly Mueller and their children. They're from New Berlin. They've got four kids. The tax relief that we passed—and we raised the child credit and reduced the marriage penalty and created a 10-percent bracket and reduced all rates. Our view is if anybody pays taxes, all people ought to—if we have tax relief, everybody ought to get tax relief. That's what we thought. That's the fair way to do things. Well, the Muellers saved $2,700 on their taxes in '03. They'll save the same this year. And the reason I bring

them up is oftentimes in Washington, they speak in terms of billions of this and billions of that, and we tend to forget what tax relief means for the families of America, what it means for the individuals. The $2,700 for the Muellers means a lot.

Here's what Shelly said. She said, "We used that money for home improvement projects." See, it's their home, and they're trying to improve their home. That's a positive development. She said, "We just couldn't afford these investment projects on our monthly budget. This is something we're counting on."

Tax relief matters to the people of this country. Oh, some of the sophisticates will say that $2,700 doesn't matter to the Muellers—it doesn't sound like a lot to me. It's a lot to them. That's what counts. And when they have more money in their pocket, the economy benefits.

When people fully understand what they did, they'll understand a big component of the tax relief was to encourage the growth of our small businesses in America. See, 70 percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. Therefore, the tax relief must address the needs of the small-business owners.

Today I met Kyle Stoehr. He's got a manufacturing company. His business is strong—at least that's what he told me, and I take him for his word for it. He said he hired seven new workers. See, that's what's happening all across the country. Small business after small business after small business is gaining confidence about the future, and they're putting people on the payroll. He's planning to invest $400,000 in software and machinery. Because of the tax relief, he's going to save $65,000 this year. See, that tax relief matters to small-business owners. It's helping the small businesses of the United States of America.

Steve Ziegler, he's the president of the InPro Corporation. He's a small-business owner. He makes architectural projects—products. He hired eight workers this year. He's planning on investing money; the tax relief has encouraged him to invest money. The reason I bring up these small-business owners is because it's not Government that creates wealth; it's the small-business owners that are expanding, that are creating the opportunity for Americans from all walks of life.

I don't know if you know this or not, but there are thousands of small businesses which pay tax at the individual income-tax rate level. See, if you're a Subchapter S corporation or a sole proprietorship like most small businesses, you pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And so when you hear them talking in Washington about running up those taxes—kind of taxing the rich—really what you need to be hearing is, they're going to tax small-business owners. And that would be bad for this economy. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on small businesses or on working people in America. Now is the time to make sure we've got permanency in the Tax Code. Now is the time to make sure we don't ruin this economic growth by running up the taxes on the American people.

Tax relief is working. It's working. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. As Tommy said, since last August we've added 1.5 million new jobs. People are going back to work. Here in Wisconsin, the unemployment rate has dropped to 5.1 percent. Homeownership rate is at an all-time high. That's a fantastic statistic, isn't it? We want more people owning their own home. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

Interest rates are low. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are up. The economic stimulus plan that we worked with Congress on is paying off. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

And there's a different view, of course. That's what campaigns are all about. My

opponents looked at this progress and somehow concluded the sky is falling. It doesn't matter whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism—same old pessimism. And they're going to cheer us up with higher taxes—[*laughter*]—more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. The good news is, we're not going to let them do that. We're going to keep taxes low to make sure people can find work and people to be able to realize their dream.

We're going to continue to bring fiscal discipline to Washington, DC. See, it starts with understanding that we're not spending the Government's money; we're spending your money. And we must be good stewards with your money in the Nation's Capital.

I hear it all the time that small-business owners are very worried about some things, and so am I. We got to solve these problems to make sure people can find work. I want this economy not only to be strong today, I want it to be strong 10 years from now. I want this to be the best place in the world to do business so people can find good, high-paying jobs.

We've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I will continue to push Congress to reform the laws of America to end these frivolous and junk lawsuits that make it hard for small businesses to grow their businesses.

Tommy mentioned we've got a plan for better and affordable health care for the American people and for the small-business owners of America that includes association health plans and tax-free health savings accounts. Now, I agree with Tommy. In order to make sure you've got good doctors here in Wisconsin practicing their healing, in order to make sure health care is affordable, we need medical liability reform. We need the Federal Government to make sure that people can have their day in court, but we've got to stop these lawsuits that are driving docs out of business. It's in your interest. It's in the people's interest that we get this done.

Listen, in order to make sure this economy is a place where people can find work, we need an energy plan. I submitted one to the United States Congress. They need to pass that to my desk. It calls for modernizing the electricity system. It calls for the use of alternative sources of energy. It encourages conservation, but we can explore for energy in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of economic security, for the sake of national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we've got some farmers here. Listen, our farm economy is strong, and I intend to keep it that way. That's a good sign for States like Wisconsin. The farming families of this State are making a good living, and one of the reasons why is because they're selling Wisconsin products overseas. If you're good at something, we want people buying it. We're real good at growing things. We're very good at making things. I'm a person who believes that we ought to be opening up markets, not closing markets. Just listen: My view is, give our workers and farmers and entrepreneurs a chance to compete, and we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime.

There's a clear difference in this campaign on how to make sure this is a good place for people to find work. If you reelect me, I'll continue to pursue a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer, pro-small-business agenda, and America will be better off for it.

Our future also depends on our willingness to lead in this world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong. But we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the

world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. After the attacks of September the 11th, I resolved and this Nation resolved to bring justice to the terrorists, no matter where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. We made that resolution. And when you say something, you better mean it. In order for the world to be peaceful, when you say something, you better mean it. And I meant what we said. Afghanistan was a terrorist state. It was a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and many young girls now go to school for the first time.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world. It's important for our fellow citizens to remember, he used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he has tormented and tortured the people of his country. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught us a lesson we must never forget. It's a lesson I'll never forget. And it's this: America must confront threats before they fully materialize, before it's too late. That's the lesson that we must never forget as a nation. And so, remembering that and remembering the past of the dictator, we looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Now, the United States Congress, including members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat.

I went to the United Nations and said, "For years, you've passed resolutions, and for years, the dictator in Iraq has ignored the resolutions." I said, "Why don't we work together to pass a resolution and, this time, mean what we say." See, they had seen the threat. So on a 15-nothing vote, the U.N. Security Council demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. And as he had for over a decade, the dictator deceived the world. The dictator chose defiance. It was his choice to make. He refused to comply. So I had a choice to make: Ignore the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best, trust the word of a madman; or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Although we haven't found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq, and America is safer today because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction. He had that capability, and he could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. After September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

And we've got hard work to do there and important work to do there. Our immediate task around the world and in Iraq and Afghanistan is to bring those terrorists to justice. See, you can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with terrorists. You can't sit back and hope that somehow therapy will work and they will change their ways. [*Laughter*] That's just not the way it is. We must engage the enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We know these terrorists want to strike us again because they want to disrupt our way of life and spread fear. That's what they want to do. So we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland. You just need to know there are a lot of really decent, hard-working people that are spending hours on our mutual behalf to do everything we can to disrupt a potential attack.

We're sharing intelligence like never before. We're running down every lead. And I know I speak for everybody when I thank the police and the firefighters and the emergency teams from the great State of Wisconsin who are serving as great first-responders.

We will stay on the offense. We'll protect our homeland. Yet, in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that the terrorists can exploit. Life in that region is going to be far more hopeful and more peaceful when men and women choose their own leaders. It will be a much better place, a much more hopeful place when the people get to decide their own fate.

You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our own country because, you see, we understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

The world is changing for the better because of American leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now, the terror camps are closed, democracy is rising, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now, we're working with the Pakistani Government to find those killers in remote regions of that country, and America is safer. Three years ago, Saudi—in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were not challenged by that Government. Today, we're working with the Saudi Government, and the Saudi Government is running down Al Qaida leadership, and America is safer. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions of dollars to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libyan chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up its nuclear processing equipment, and America is safer. No, the world is changing for the better. Three years ago, the dictator in Iraq was a threat. He was a threat to us. He was a threat to the free world. He was a threat to the people in the neighborhood, and he was a threat to his own people. That dictator is no longer a threat, and the American people are safer.

I need 4 more years to complete the work. There's more to do to make America a safer place. There's more work to do to make the world a more peaceful place. We will finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Listen, the good leaders have stepped up there, people who believe in the aspirations of their people. And we will support them. And the good people in those countries are taking more responsibility for their own security. They want to live in freedom. There moms and dads want their children to be able to grow up in a peaceful and free society. They can count on us. That's what they need to hear. They need to hear from America they can count on the American people. You see, when we give our word, we keep our word.

I see people who proudly wear our uniform here, and I want to thank you for your service. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our country. I had the high honor of meeting those family members whose son or daughter paid the ultimate sacrifice. The best way to honor their bravery is to complete the mission and make sure America is safer and the world is more free.

Anytime we put our troops in harm's way, they deserve the best training, the best pay, the best possible support. That's why last September, I proposed what we call a supplemental funding request to support our military in its mission. That's more money for the troops—money that would help pay for body armor or vital equipment

or hazard pay or health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. It was money to support them.

In the Senate, only a small, out-of-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, when Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote, here's what he said. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. It sure doesn't clear it up, does it? [*Laughter*] Now he's offering a different explanation. Earlier this week, he said he is proud he and his runningmate voted against the funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, he's entitled to his view, but here's mine: Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them. As the Commander in Chief of this great military, I will see to it they have what is needed to complete their mission.

We are leading the world with confidence and moral clarity, and we're calling on other nations to help us. There are over 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative, nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan, over 30 nations in Iraq—countries committed to the same thing we're committed to, our own security through spreading democracy and peace and freedom. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to build coalitions to make the world a peaceful place. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong; yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The true strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. The other day my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places in Wisconsin, in places just like Waukesha. Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by: courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose: our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools. We stand for local control of our public schools. We stand for accountability in our public schools so no child is left behind in America. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity in their lives. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. The culture of this country is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in a life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'm never going to forget that moment. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember looking in the eyes of either a policeman or firefighter, and he said, "Do not let me down."

Like—as we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of the American people, whatever it takes.

I've also been witness to the great character of this country. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. God bless. May God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the Waukesha County Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to James R. Klauser, chair, Wisconsin Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Mary F. Buestrin, national committeewoman, Republican Party of Wisconsin; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Exchange With Reporters in West Bend, Wisconsin
July 14, 2004

Purchase at Mick's Candyman

The President. This is spectacular, thanks.

Q. What are you getting there?

The President. I'm just getting, you know, about 400 calories a pop.

Q. I thought you gave up on the sweets, sir.

The President. Well, I'm confronted with excellent sweets. I'll be biking this weekend, in other words. Are you a biker these days?

Q. I'm ready to go.

The President. You are? Record that. [*Laughter*]

Employee Dot Bradley. You will enjoy these thoroughly. They're wonderful. Just for the President.

The President. I'm looking forward to it. How much do I owe you?

Owner Davey Bartlett. They are free.

The President. No, they're not free.

Mr. Bartlett. Okay, $5.28 with tax.

The President. How's your business doing?

Ms. Bradley. Wonderful.

Mr. Bartlett. Seventy-two cents is your change.

Ms. Bradley. So good to meet you.

Mr. Bartlett. Nice to meet you.

The President. Appreciate you, candy man, great to see you all. Thanks for saying hi. Good to meet you.

All right, listen, buy something here. [*Laughter*] Here's how the economy works. You're overpaid. My tax relief has left more money in your pockets to spend here.

Q. Can you spot me $5? [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you all. Hey, Tommy—you remember Tommy.

Ms. Bradley. Yes. Hi, Tommy.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. It's always good to see you.

The President. Thank you all. Is anybody going to buy anything here? I'm trying to drum up a little business. [*Laughter*]

Q. As long as you don't leave us behind.

The President. Leave no reporter behind. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:12 a.m. in the Mick's Candyman store. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Discussion at Mid-States Aluminum Corporation in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you. Please be seated. Thanks. Thanks for coming to say hi. Thanks for having me. It's great to be here in Fond du Lac. We're here—I'm going to talk about how I intend to make sure America is a safer and stronger and better country. That's what I want to talk about today. Tell you why we're here at a business, it's because this is a business that is successful. And I'm going to talk about why I think it is successful.

But I also want to answer some of your questions, too. So I'll try to keep my remarks relatively short—which is kind of hard to do. [*Laughter*] First, I regret that Laura is not traveling with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it; yes, most people react that way. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, why didn't you stay home and let her come instead? [*Laughter*] I'm a lucky man that—you know, she was a public school librarian in Midland, Texas. And I asked her to—when I asked her to marry me, fortunately, she said yes. And she's a great First Lady. She's done a terrific job. You know, I like to tell people that perhaps the best reason to put me back in there is so she'll have 4 more years as the First Lady. I'm sorry she's not with me. I love to campaign with her, but, fortunately, one of our daughters, Barbara, is traveling with me today. I want to thank you for coming, Barbara. Thanks for coming. Go ahead and stand up. Thank you. It's truly a lot of fun to travel your beautiful State on a bus and have Barbara by my side.

I also want to thank my friend Tommy Thompson for serving our country so well. Thank you, T. [*Applause*] They still remember you. [*Laughter*] He's done a great job. I've given him a tough assignment—I mean a really tough assignment—and he has done it with a lot of class and dignity. I like to say the people of Wisconsin trained him well. [*Laughter*] But thanks for your service, T. I appreciate it very much.

I want to thank the Colwins and all the folks here at Mid-States for inviting me. It's kind of a pain to have the President come. [*Laughter*] The entourages seem to be a little bigger as time goes on, and I know it's hard to accommodate the crowd.

But thank you a lot. I hope our people were polite. Yes, I hope so, because if not, they're not going to be working for me. But thanks for your hospitality. We'll talk a little bit about Joe's business here in a second. I particularly want to thank the employees for giving us a little time and space here to visit about issues that matter to the country.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the political people who do your duty. We have a duty in this country to vote. And I want to thank you for encouraging people to vote. Thank you for registering people. Thank you for garnering the vote and turning it out. And when you get them to turn out, you might kind of give them a nudge our way. [*Laughter*]

I've got some things I want to do. I'm here in this State asking for the vote. There's more to do to make sure America is a safer place and a stronger place and a better place.

My biggest job is to make sure America remains a safe place. That's the most important responsibility I have as your President. And it's a task at hand because we face an enemy which has a dim view of the world, and it's an enemy which hates America because of our love for freedom. These are people that you just cannot reason with. You can't negotiate with them. Therapy is not going to work with them. [*Laughter*] They're coldblooded people. That's the way they are. And we have a solemn responsibility to the American people to bring them to justice. We must deal with them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here at home. That's our job. That's our responsibility. That's our most solemn duty, is to protect the homeland.

I want you to know there are a lot of good people working hard to protect America. You've heard about the threats. They're real. These people are—these people are still—lurk. And we've got to be correct 100 percent of the time in America, and they've got to be right once. That's the challenge at hand. And we got a lot of really good people—I mean good people—working hard, long hours to run down any threat, to uncover suspicious activities to protect us. And I know you'll join me in thanking the first-responders all across this State and all across our country, our police and fire and emergency teams.

And the best way to protect America is to stay on the offense and use every resource we have at our disposal to bring people to justice. That's the short-term strategy. And that's what we're doing, and that's what I will continue to do as your President. I'm not going to be shaken. I'm not going to have my vision clouded. I know exactly the job we need to do.

About two-thirds of known Al Qaida leadership has been brought to justice. And that's positive, and that's good news. There's still others that are out there. And that's why we're working with other nations to share intelligence, to cut off their money, and to get them, bring them to justice.

Now, the other thing about being the President is when you say something, you better mean it. One thing that's important about this job—so when I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant it. In other words, part of making America is secure is to deny the terrorists safe haven. And that's why I said to the Taliban—those are the folks that were running Afghanistan at the time—"Give up your—give up Al Qaida. Get rid of the terrorists camps." They defied us. And so we sent a coalition of troops led by a fantastic United States military to liberate the people of Afghanistan.

It's hard work. It's not easy work. But America has done hard things in the past. And this is necessary work. And I want you to think about Afghanistan today, 3 years—compared to what it was 3 years ago. Three years ago, we had people living in a country run by barbaric, dim-viewed ideologues, so backwards that they wouldn't let young girls go to school; so backwards

that they would whip women in public; so backwards that if you had a view different from their own, you would face serious consequences. That's the country—and so weak that they were becoming infested by Al Qaida.

Today, Afghanistan has got a strong President. They're going to have elections this fall for the Presidency. Young girls are going to school. The country is being rebuilt, and we've got an ally in the war on terror.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that this country must deal with threats before they fully materialize. In other words, before, we could say—before September the 11th, it was assumed that when we saw a threat, you know, we may have to deal with it, may not have to deal with it, because we never dreamt the threats would actually come to our own homeland. Now, we know the nature of the enemy, and we know the capacity of the enemy. And therefore, when we see a threat, we've got to deal with it.

First choice is diplomatically. That's the first choice the—any President must do—is say, "Let's see if we can't convince a country, for example, to change its ways." I saw a threat in Iraq. I'll tell you why I saw the threat in Iraq. First, they had a leader that hated America, a declared enemy of this country. Secondly, they had attacked their neighbors. Thirdly, they had used weapons of mass destruction on their own people. Fourthly, there were terrorist connections inside of Iraq; I mean, there was terrorist organizations. For example, Abu Nidal was a known terrorist, and his organization found safe haven there in Iraq, as has other people. A guy named Zarqawi, whose name is in the news—there was a car bomb today in Baghdad. I suspect Zarqawi ordered it. I don't know, but that's the nature of Zarqawi. See, he'll kill anybody, anywhere, anytime to try to create fear and confusion.

At any rate, we looked at the intelligence presented to us, and we saw a threat. Now, I want you to remember that the United States Congress looked at the very same intelligence—members of both political parties looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. We remember the lesson of September the 11th. We knew threats must be dealt with before they fully materialize, and we saw a threat. The U.N. Security Council looked at the same intelligence, and it saw a threat.

Now, you might remember, in September of 2002, I went to the United Nations. I said, "You've called the man a threat over and over again. You've had resolution after resolution after resolution after resolution. We hope you don't become an empty debating society; we hope your word means something." So—and they listened. And we passed another resolution on a 15-to-nothing vote. In other words, nations of the world came together and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." And that's the history. In other words, we put together a—we tried to convince him diplomatically. So the word spoke—world spoke, and we said, "Let inspectors go in and see whether or not he's conforming to the request of the free world." And history has shown that he was deceiving. There was a systematic deception, campaign of deception going on. In other words, we knew that he was deceiving the inspectors, and we wondered why. What did he have to hide? What did the man who had used weapons of mass destruction, what did the man who declared his hatred for America, have to hide?

In other words, I had a choice to make at this point in time in history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best? Do I trust the actions of a madman? Or do I take the action necessary to defend America? And given that choice, I will defend our country every single time.

It's been hard work; it's been really hard work. And we've lost brave troops, and we mourn for every troop. And in order to make sure that those who have sacrificed

for a better world and a safer America, to make sure their sacrifice means something, we will complete our mission in Iraq. Because a free Iraq is in this country's interests. A free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East is in the interests of the United States of America. It's in our security interests that freedom take hold in a part of the world where there's hopelessness and resentment—the ingredients necessary for the enemy to attract terrorists, killers. That's what we want.

See, the long-term solution in this fight against an ideology that is opposite of ours is to spread democracy and freedom. That's the long-term solution. And that's what you're seeing taking place. The world is changing because of the leadership of the United States of America. Think about the world 3 years ago. Afghanistan was troubled; it's now free. We got a great leader in Iraq named Prime Minister Allawi. He's a tough guy, and he believes in the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people. And Iraq is going to be a free society, and what an example that will serve. Imagine people looking—in the neighborhood and saying, "Gosh, they actually listen to what I think. I have a chance to raise my child in a relatively peaceful society. I don't have to be brutalized by a tyrant all the time."

Let me tell you this quick story about why I feel so strongly about what we have done and we're doing. Seven men came to see me in the Oval Office. First of all, coming into the Oval Office is a pretty powerful experience. And it's such a nice place, I'd like to stay there for a while. [*Laughter*] Anyway—you know why? You can get positive things done for the country and the world. That's the only reason to hold the office, is to lead the country toward a better tomorrow.

Anyway, these guys come in—seven of them—all seven had had their right hands chopped off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had been devalued, and he needed somebody to blame. That's what tyrants do. And he blamed these seven small-business men. You say, why these seven? Well, I'll tell you. One guy, for example, sold dinars to get dollars to buy gold so he could make jewelry. And so I guess they must have looked at who was selling Iraqi currency to cause this—to blame the people for the cause of the devaluation. Anyway, not only were their right hands cut off, they had X's in their heads carved by their—by the Saddam boys.

Fortunately for them, there was a movie made about their plight, and the movie was seen by a guy in Houston, Texas, named Marvin Zindler, Big 2 News. He was—if you've ever lived in Houston, you can't escape Marvin Zindler. He's a great American, is what he is. He's a news guy who started a foundation at some point in his career to help others. And he flew them to Houston, Texas, and they had new hands fitted, the latest prosthesis. And they're coming, now, to the Oval Office. And they walk in this fantastic place—I mean, they were overwhelmed with emotion. A guy said, "Thank you." I said, "You don't need to thank me. You need to thank the American people; that's who you need to thank. You need to thank the people that understand the great power of freedom and liberty to transform lives."

It was a wonderful contrast, wasn't it, the contrast between a compassionate nation that believes in the worth of each individual as opposed to a nation run by a tyrant who's willing to chop somebody's hand off because he had a bad day. And that's what we've changed. We've changed that dynamic in the world. People in that part of the world are going to see a hopeful tomorrow when they see a free Iraq emerge. Three years ago, nobody would have dreamed that a democracy would be rising in Iraq. Today, a democracy is rising in Iraq, and America will stand with those democrats until the job is complete.

Just a couple of other points I want to make to you about how this administration is leading the world to make it a safer

place for all of us. Pakistan was a place where terrorists could—where they had—Pakistan was the only country, by the way, that recognized the Taliban at the time, and Al Qaida could move freely throughout Pakistan. This is 3 years ago. Today, the Pakistan Government is determined to rout out Al Qaida out of their country. We've got an ally in the war on terror in Pakistan.

Saudi Arabia—there wasn't much pressure on Al Qaida 3 years ago. Today, Saudi Arabian Government is focused on making sure the Al Qaida leadership and other terrorists are brought to justice. They're now an ally in the war on terror.

Libya—Libya was a country which had terrorist ties and was developing weapons programs, which we discovered, and made it clear to the Libyan leader that there was a better alternative to developing weapons of mass destruction. Because the United States speaks clearly and means what it says, he got the message and is now disarming. As a matter of fact, I was in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the other day looking at a lot of the processing equipment we had brought back to the United States of America. Three years ago, Libya was dangerous; today, Libya has disarmed.

No, the world is changing because the United States of America is leading. And there's more to do. There's more work to be done. If you give me 4 more years, America will be a safer place because the world will be a freer place. I'm running again because I want America to be a stronger and better country as well.

Let me start first with "better." We're a better country when we educate every child. The No Child Left Behind Act is a great piece of reform. It said we'll spend more Federal money, but in return, we expect results. That seems like a reasonable thing to ask, isn't it? We want to know whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract. That shouldn't be that hard a question. Are you able to teach a child how to read at the third-grade level, and if not, what are you going to do to change so that child can read at the third-grade level?

I'll tell you what we've done. We've raised the bar because I believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. We're challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. In other words, if you believe certain children can't learn, they won't. It's just as simple as that. If you've got low expectations, you're going to receive—you'll achieve mediocre results.

The No Child Left Behind Act has got great faith in the local folks to chart the path to excellence. It's got strong sense of accountability, and it raises the bar. A better America is an America in which every child receives an education early, before it is too late. It's precisely what this administration will continue to push for.

A better America is an America that understands the strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. That's where our strength lies. I've talked about our military; I'm going to keep it strong. You're about to hear me talk about our economy, which is strong and getting stronger. But that's not the true strength. The true strength of this country is the fact there are thousands and thousands of fellow citizens who love a neighbor just like they would like to be loved themselves, and it doesn't require a Federal law.

That's why my Faith- and Community-Based Initiative is a vital part of a better America. In other words, I need to be your President for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion, which exist all across the State of Wisconsin.

Let me give you an example: If you happen to be hooked on alcohol or drugs, you need help. And sometimes you can get the right help from a counselor, a government-sponsored counselor—nothing wrong with that, by the way. But sometimes—as a matter of fact, a lot of times, in order to change your ways, you have to change your heart. In other words, if you change your heart, you're more likely to change your

habits. Government is not love. Government is law and justice. Love comes from our religious congregations of all faiths, people have heard the call to love a neighbor. And therefore, when we're talking about how to help people get off drugs or alcohol, this Government of ours and this country of ours must not fear welcoming faith-based programs into the delivery of services which will help lives. We ought not to fear faith in America; we ought to welcome faith. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you all.

Finally—I'm watching closely to make sure somebody doesn't fall out; I might get speaking too long—[*laughter*]. Finally, a stronger America starts with making sure we've got a place where people can find work—good, solid jobs. That's what a stronger America—when you hear me say "safer, strong, and better," I'm talking stronger—means a place where people can find a job and do their duty as a mom or a dad to provide for their family. That's what I'm most interested in when I talk about stronger America.

We are a strong America. Let me tell you what we've been through. Let me remind you right quick. We have been through a recession; that's when things go backwards. Ask any small-business owner what it's like to try to run a business in a recession, and they'll tell you it's difficult. It's hard, hard work.

We start coming out of recession, and the enemy hit us. And it affected our economy. The attacks of September the 11th affected our economy; it just did. It affected our way of thinking about how we must defend ourselves, and it affected the economy. You might remember, banks closed down, airplanes couldn't fly. I mean, a lot happened that rippled throughout our economy, that cost people their jobs.

And then, just as we were recovering from that—listen, we are a resilient country, and the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well here, which I think makes us really unique in the world. And then we found out we had some of our citizens who did not tell the truth, some of our corporate citizens. And that shook us; make no mistake about it. When you're in an economy that requires good accounting—good, honest accounting—and you find out that some of them fudged the numbers, it affected our confidence; it just did. We passed tough laws. You're now seeing on your TV screens that people are now being brought to justice, because we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America in order to make sure—[*applause*].

And finally, you heard me talk about the decisions I made in order to make America a safer place. When you hear on your TV screens "America is marching to war," it's difficult to make investment. It's a negative thought. I know that. In other words, people need to be optimistic. If they're going to invest, they need to be optimistic. And it wasn't optimistic times for a while. I know that. But we've overcome all that. Why do I say that? Because our economy is growing, and it's growing strong. And right here in Wisconsin, you've got a 5.1-percent unemployment rate. That means people are working. That's way below the national average. This economy is ginning here. There's more to do, but it is strong.

I think one of the reasons why is because of the tax relief we passed. And we're going to talk about some of that tax relief right quick. Let me just remind you what was in the tax relief package. If you're—first of all, we said, "If you pay taxes, you're going to get relief." In other words, everybody that pays taxes should get tax relief. To me, that's the most fair way to do things, not try to kind of pick and choose winners in the Tax Code. The best way to provide fairness in tax relief is to reduce the rates of everybody who pays. And that's what happened, as you recall.

Secondly, we raised the child credit. If you're a mom or dad, you get a little extra tax relief. Thirdly, we reduced the marriage penalty. It's kind of a strange Tax Code

that penalizes marriage. We're trying to encourage the opposite here in America. We want people to be married, and to penalize marriage doesn't make much sense.

We created a 10-percent tax bracket. We provide expensing deductions for new small businesses. In other words, we said, "If you invest, you get to write off more money." In other words, you save more money. We said to small businesses, "We want you to invest."

But I want you to understand something very important in this Tax Code, in these tax cuts. By far, the majority of small businesses pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate. You see, they're called Subchapter S corporations. Like all the people who work here at Mid-States, you're working for a Subchapter S corporation. And they pay tax at the individual income rate. So do sole proprietorships. So when you hear me talking about cutting individual income taxes, we also cut the taxes on thousands of small businesses too. And you know why? Most small businesses create—most new jobs are created by small businesses in America. That's the reality. And therefore, if you want people going back to work, you've got to stimulate the small-business sector.

And now, Joe's business right here is a Subchapter S corporation. Joe, why don't you stand up again? He's the president and CEO. First of all, this is Joe's business. Now, you notice he said "associates," because he's a great CEO. He makes sure everybody understands. But he's the guy that put up the money. That's what we want in America, by the way. We want people owning things. We want people owning their own homes. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. That's fantastic news for our country. People own something, they have a stake in the future of the country.

And so, Joe, thanks for inviting us to your business. Tell us what you do.

[*At this point, the discussion continued.*]

The President. Let me tell you something. Why—why did you hire 73 people? Just to be a nice guy?

Joe Colwin. Because we're continuing to grow.

The President. There you go. The markets are growing. This is happening all across the country. Small businesses—did the tax cuts help? I'm kind of like a lawyer—I'm not one, you'll be happy to hear—nothing wrong with a good lawyer, don't get me wrong. I'm leading the witness. [*Laughter*] Did the tax cuts help? He's a Subchapter S corporation. In other words, we cut his taxes. Why? Because if he's got more money in his pocket, he's going to plow it back into the business, which means you're likely to keep your work. In this case, 73 more people found a job; that's what's important.

Mr. Colwin. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*] Pretty simple math.

The President. It helps. Tax relief helps.

Mr. Colwin. It does.

The President. Now, are you going to make investments this year?

Mr. Colwin. We're going to continue to make investments this year. We are going to make a minimum investment of $1.6 million in continued fabrication equipment. And in this room here, we are going to invest in excess of $6 million.

The President. Wow, that's good.

Mr. Colwin. And that's 14 million——

The President. Yes, let me explain what that means. See, that's really good news. But let me tell you what investment really means. He just said he's going to buy fabricating equipment.

Mr. Colwin. That's correct.

The President. Yes. Somebody has got to make it. See, when you hear him say, "I'm going to invest," that means he's purchasing something. And somebody has got to make that. One of your fellow workers is going to have to make that in another place, which means that person is more likely to keep a job. It may be a new hire, see. In other words, his investment may

be that which is necessary for the person to hire somebody else. It may just be that extra product that this particular company has to make in order to meet his demand that encourages them to hire somebody else. I don't know who you're buying it from. It would be a good chance to put a plug in for them. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Colwin. It's all over—it's all over.

The President. Well, that's important. And see, what you need to hear—look at and think about is the amount of investment that's taking place in America, because there's a lot of decisionmakers like Joe. Joe just told us he's going to invest at least a million six in new plant and equipment. There's a lot of Joes all over America making that same decision. And that's how the economy grows. And the tax relief plan we passed said to Joe: "We're going to help you make the decision, because if you make the decision to buy plant and equipment this year, you get a little extra tax break." Isn't that right, Joe?

Mr. Colwin. That's correct.

The President. Now, you're supposed to be doing more talking than I am. [*Laughter*] It's your business. [*Laughter*] Let me tell you something. It's got to do your heart good to hear an entrepreneur who's confident enough to say, "I've hired people, and I'm investing." That's what we've got to hear. That's what's happening all over America.

Good job, buddy. Yes, sir. Thanks.

And so some questions you've got to ask in this campaign is, who understands that the role of Government is not to create wealth but to create an environment so small businesses grow? Now, you're going to hear talk in this campaign about, "Well, I'm going to increase the Federal spending, but don't worry, I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich." We've heard that kind of language a lot in American politics. But I'm here for a reason. I want you to understand who "the rich" is. It's the people who work in this company, because when you're talking taxing the rich on the individual income-tax rates, you're raising taxes on Subchapter S corporations. And if this company has less money in its pocket, you're less likely to keep a job and have the benefits you expect for your families.

People need to be aware of this talk out of Washington, DC, that says, "Oh, don't worry, we're just going to tax the rich." That's not the way it works in the Tax Code. The big rich dodge taxes, anyway. It's companies like this who end up paying more taxes, and that would be wrong for our economy. We need to make sure these tax cuts we've passed are permanent and that Congress doesn't raise the taxes.

A couple other points I want to make about making sure Joe feels comfortable investing. We've got too many junk and frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs in America. We need legal reform in this country; I'm telling you. Yes, the small-business people, what worries them—I'll tell you what worries them: trying to fight off a junk lawsuit in court. And Congress has got a role to play. We need class-action reform, for example. And yet, the Senate is controlled by the lawyers, and we can't get it out. I'm going to continue working for it. I think it's necessary to make sure this is a place for people to be able to find work; that is, reform is necessary.

I'll tell you what else is necessary is medical liability reform. One of the things that—one of the—I hear it from small businesses all the time: "I'm having trouble making sure my people working with me get good health care." The costs are going up. That's why we've got what we call associate health care plans. This will enable people to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so small businesses have got the capacity to buy insurance like big businesses do. In other words, if you're able to spread risk, you get a better deal for your employees. Or health savings accounts—these are tax-free alternatives to the Federal Government running the

health care system, which I am absolutely against.

Let me tell you what else is a problem: these frivolous and junk lawsuits against the doctors. Listen, if you get hurt, you ought to have your day in court. Make no mistake about it. Nobody is saying you shouldn't. But when there's lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit by some lawyer trying to hit the jackpot, we've got a problem. Because guess what's happening? These docs are having to pay higher premiums, which means you're having to pay higher rates. And a lot of docs have just had it. They're tired of practicing medicine.

There can be balance in the system. There can be fairness in the legal system. And you need a President who understands that. I'm going to continue to make—to battle for medical liability reform at the Federal level so people have got access to good and affordable health care.

Two other points I want to make, then we're going to talk to Tim Rice. Loosen up, buddy. [*Laughter*] Two other points. You can't run a business if you don't know if you're going to have reliable energy supplies. That's just the way it is. For this country to keep jobs here at home, we've got to make sure we're the best place in the world to invest capital and do business. And until we get an energy policy, there's going to be doubt in the minds of the investors. I'll tell you why. If you're a manufacturer and you're worried about the reliability of electricity, you're not going to be confident in investing in the future. If you're worried about the cost of natural gas, it's going to make you less willing to invest.

I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that says we'll do a better job of conserving energy—and we need to do that, and we will—we need to look for alternative sources of energy, and we're doing that. And we need to make sure that we—but we need to make sure we use our energy sources at home in a wise way. We can burn coal in clean ways. We can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. If we expect people to work here in America, if we expect for this to be a place where people are willing to invest capital—people like Joe—we need to have an energy strategy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

And finally, I know there's a lot of talk about trade, and there should be. It's an important discussion. But let me remind you, just to make sure you put the facts in perspective here. America has opened up its markets for years. Presidents from both political parties said it's a good thing for our consumers to have more products coming into the United States. You know why? If consumers have more choices, consumers are going to get better quality at better price. That's how the marketplace works. And so we've been a country that said, "Sure, come on, sell your goods here, compete." The more competition it is for your demand, the better deal you're going to get. That's just the way it is in the marketplace. "Please come and compete."

The problem is, we haven't said the same thing to other countries. In other words, the job of the President—and this is exactly what I'm doing—is to say, "Our market is open. You open yours." All I'm saying is, give our workers and farmers and ranchers and manufacturers and entrepreneurs a level playing field, and we can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace.

I'm running to make America a stronger place, and I've got a vision as to how to make sure this is the best place for the Joe Colwins of America to succeed and, therefore, his associates to succeed with him. That's what this is all about.

Now let me introduce you to Tim Rice. Tim, thanks for coming. Tim is a guy who works here at Mid-States, right? How long have you worked here for, Tim?

Tim Rice. I started in May, sir, following graduation from the University of Wisconsin.

The President. Congratulations on getting out of college. Barbara just graduated too.

Mr. Rice. Thank you, sir.

The President. He started in May. It's a pretty good sign, isn't it? The economy is growing; otherwise he wouldn't be starting in May. He might have been starting in May of 1997.

And so, what were you doing before?

Mr. Rice. Prior to that, I spent 4 years in the United States Air Force, active duty, and then went to school.

The President. Thanks, yes. I know I'm prying into your business, but are you making more money now than you were?

Mr. Rice. Absolutely. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's good. Like, one dollar more? Two times more?

Mr. Rice. Two times more.

The President. Yes, he's making two times more money. What he did was he got an education and found a higher-paying job. Let me tell you, the reason I want—this is an interesting story—is because there is a direct corollary between higher wages and education. We're going to talk about what it means to have—be retrained for the jobs of the 21st century in a minute. But it's essential for our country to understand that the job base is changing as our economy changes, and that requires people to get education. And one of the focuses of my administration has been and will continue to be to make sure people are trained for the jobs of the 21st century.

Now, Tim went back to college, a 4-year degree, and now he makes double what he was making before. People have got to understand that means he's a more productive worker, and he's ready for the new jobs. Let me tell you something about Tim. He saved $2,400 in tax relief in '03, 2,400 in '04—is that correct?

Mr. Rice. That's correct.

The President. And so, like, what are you doing with all that money? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Rice. I spent 7 years working and going to school before I graduated. I didn't see a lot of my family. I was able to take 3 months off of work before I graduated just to go to school and spend time with my family.

The President. That's good. If you're a dad, your most important responsibility is to love your children with all your heart and your soul. That's what he just told us; isn't it? I thank you for that.

Let me tell you something about this tax relief plan. The reason I've saved these examples for the end, it's important to know that parts of this tax relief are going to expire. And the reason I've asked Tim and Deb and others to come is because the Members of Congress and the Senate sometimes forget that when we're talking about tax relief, we're actually talking about it affecting people's pocketbooks in a positive way. See, I know that 2,400 doesn't sound like a lot to some of them in Washington. Ask Tim if it's a lot. I asked him. And he said, "You bet it's a lot." And if they don't pass tax relief, his tax burden is going to go up by $1,100. In other words, that's $1,100 less money in his pocket for he and his family to decide what to do with it.

Here's what I think about tax relief. I think you set priorities. I think you're wise with the people's money. But I think you've got to understand that Tim can spend his money far better than the Federal Government can.

Thanks for coming. Go ahead. Thanks, Tim.

Deb Winterhack is with us. All right, Deb. Let her go.

Deb Winterhack. Hi.

The President. Married?

Mrs. Winterhack. Married.

The President. How many children?

Mrs. Winterhack. I have three—one in college, one on their way to college.

The President. See, I told her I thought she was fooling me when she told me. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Winterhack. Yes, well, I feel it. [*Laughter*]

The President. Are they here?

Mrs. Winterhack. No, they're at Williamsport Baseball Tournament.

The President. Really?

Mrs. Winterhack. Yes, starts today.

The President. You're a Little League mom?

Mrs. Winterhack. I'm a Little League mom.

The President. I was raised by a Little League mom. [*Laughter*] The difference is, is that my mother's hair turned white. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Winterhack. Mine probably did too. [*Laughter*]

The President. No, no. All right, tell us what you do and what you were doing. She works——

Mrs. Winterhack. I'm at—I'm an admissions director here at Fond du Lac at ManorCare, HCR ManorCare. Previously, I was a web technology salesperson in Beaverton, Wisconsin, so totally took my web technology to—totally out in left field to health care. So I just wanted to get into health care. I just loved it.

The President. Yes, let me tell you something about health care. I'm sorry to interrupt, and you can tell us how you got into health care. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Winterhack. That's okay.

The President. We haven't rehearsed this too well—[*laughter*].

Mrs. Winterhack. No, I just met him. [*Laughter*]

The President. She's doing the fox trot, and I'm doing the twist. [*Laughter*] Anyway—they still do the twist? [*Laughter*] I know, a little odd. There's a lot of jobs in health care. I remember going down to North Carolina where there's—where the textile industry reigned, and then the textile industry couldn't compete. People started losing jobs in the textile industry. But guess what happened? The health industry started to expand—better-paying jobs. And the challenge in this case in North Carolina and the challenge elsewhere is going to be to take people who have got one set of skills and train them for the jobs that now exist. That's the real challenge.

I am a big backer of the community college system in America. And I think we ought to help people go to community colleges to train for the jobs of the 21st century. Community colleges provide education that is accessible and affordable. And guess what happens at community colleges? They change their curriculum to meet the needs of the times. And that's what we're going to continue to use community colleges for in a wise way.

What happened with you?

[*Mrs. Winterhack made further remarks.*]

The President. See, a lot of corporations do the responsible thing and train people for the jobs—they took Deb—she was obviously a smart person and capable person and motivated person. What Government can't do is say, "Deb, go motivate yourself." That's up to you. That's something Government cannot do. She wanted to improve her salary.

Mrs. Winterhack. The salary went up quite a bit, so—well, $8,000. So that was a great jump for me.

The President. She became a productive worker for the jobs which now exist and are expanding. If people are looking for work, think about the health care industry. Now, you're going to have to go back and get some schooling. But there's help all across our Government. There's all kinds of assistance to help people get reeducated, and that's a good use of taxpayers' money, by the way.

The thing about Deb is, is that—two things happened to her: One, she retrained and gets more money; and two, the tax relief came along, which means she's got more after-tax money in her pocket. She's got more of her own money to spend. And if Congress does not make the tax relief permanent, she's paying an increase of $900 next year, and that doesn't make any sense.

So thanks for coming. You got anything else you want to say? Here's your chance.

Mrs. Winterhack. Four more years. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's good. Thank you. Glad I called on you. [*Laughter*]

All right, we've got Mark and Wendy Bodden, the last family that's with us. Thanks for coming. We're honored you all are here. Who do you got with you?

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. The reasons I've asked the Boddens here—here again, this is an example of what I'm talking about, why tax relief matters. You see, a lot of times they throw around numbers in Washington, but they forget the stories behind the numbers. I've asked them to come because I want the Members of the United States Senate and the Congress to understand the effects of bad policy on these people. It's bad policy to be raising their taxes right now. You can find every excuse in the book, believe me—this needs to happen, that needs to happen, this, that, or the other. I think it's important that they have enough money so that they're able to realize their dreams.

It's not unrealistic. We've got plenty of money in Washington. Listen, we can reduce our deficit in half if we're wise—over 5 years—if we're wise about how you spend—we spend your money. We can reduce the deficit in half and still fund the war on terror and protect the homeland. We just can't meet every single political promise that people feel comfortable throwing out. And it's a dangerous time—it's an election year—and you're going to hear every promise in the book. That's what you're going to hear.

If these people saved—how much did you save in '03 and '04?

Mr. Bodden. I believe it was $1,700.

The President. Yes—$1,700 in '03, $1,700 in '04. Now, that's like extra money. So what did you do?

Mr. Bodden. Well, it's very important to us that our children attend a Catholic school for education, and we put it into tuition.

The President. Did you? Good. That's good.

Mr. Bodden. Very happy. Thank you for that.

The President. That's a wise use of extra money, isn't it, educating your children. By the way, if Congress doesn't respond, the child credit is going down, the marriage penalty is going up, and the 10-percent bracket is gone, which means these people are going to have to pay $700 additional tax. In other words, the tax burden goes up by $700. That doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense from an economic perspective. See, the more money you have in your pocket, the more you're going to spend. And when you spend it, you ask for an additional good or a service. You heard what Joe—Joe feels confident he's going to spend additional. So are other consumers with more money in their pocket.

It also doesn't make sense because these people are saving for their kids' education. They're paying for their kids' education. Congress must listen to the voices of people like Mark and Wendy. Got any voice to tell Congress? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Bodden. We appreciate the extra money. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, well, that's good. I want to thank you for coming. The reason I've asked these good folks to come—thanks for coming—is I just wanted to make it—I just wanted people to have a sense for why I made the decisions I made and ask Congress to join me—a sense for how to make America a stronger place. I understand how this economy works, and I've got great faith in the entrepreneurs and consumers of our country. And I believe that the consumers make better decisions, oftentimes, than the Government makes. And that's why the tax relief package came at the right time. And that's why it's important to reject raising taxes on people right now.

In order to make sure America is a stronger place, we've got to have good, sound tax policy. Joe needs certainty in the Tax Code. We need good legal reform, good health care, good trade policy. Most of all, you need to have a President who understands that the role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur and small-business man and farmer can flourish, and that is me.

All right, let me answer some questions. I hope you've got a sense that I want the job for 4 more years, and I've got a plan to make sure the country is safer, stronger, and better. That's really what I'm here to tell you, that I know where I want to lead this country.

Let me answer some questions, and then we're going to get back on the bus and take it up the highway. Who has got a question? Yes, sir. Yell it—oh, there's a mike.

USA PATRIOT Act

Q. The PATRIOT Act——

The President. PATRIOT Act.

Q. The PATRIOT Act is due to expire——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——coming next year. And I find that an important tool for protecting America. And in Wisconsin here, we have Senator Russ Feingold, as you're aware, the only Senator to vote against the PATRIOT Act. Wondering if you can tell us all here the importance of the PATRIOT Act and what we can do to help get that renewed.

The President. Let me—that's a great question. A couple of things that are very important for you to understand about the PATRIOT Act. First of all, any action that takes place by law enforcement requires a court order. In other words, the Government can't move on wiretaps or roving wiretaps without getting a court order.

Now, we've used things like roving wiretaps on drug dealers before. Roving wiretaps mean you change your cell phone. And yet, we weren't able to use roving wiretaps on terrorists. And so what the PATRIOT Act said is, let's give our law enforcement the tools necessary, without abridging the Constitution of the United States, the tools necessary to defend America.

Secondly, the PATRIOT Act now allows intelligence gathering and law enforcement segments of the FBI to discuss cases with each other. You're not going to believe this—at least I didn't believe it—that the FBI, the branch involved with intelligence—in other words, who might be coming into the country, who might be—who somebody suspects might do us harm—could not discuss a case with the law enforcement division of the FBI. There was a wall between the two, which meant we could not share information, readily share information.

The most important way to protect the homeland is to be able to get good intelligence and share that intelligence with those responsible for protecting the American people. And yet, the laws prevented us from doing that. And the PATRIOT Act wisely broke down that law so that those people responsible for defending you or finding information to defend you can better do their jobs. This was a practical application of law that did not take anybody's rights away.

And the PATRIOT Act is indispensable for the defense of this country. You ask anybody involved with law enforcement; they will tell you that the law protects the constitutional rights of our citizens and, at the same time, enables them to better do their job. We need to have the PATRIOT Act renewed so that the people of America can be better protected by the hard-working folks of this country. I appreciate that question.

Yes, sir. It's going to be a duo. Why don't you both ask the questions at the same time, and I'll answer the one I want to. [*Laughter*]

Promoting Job Growth

Q. I'm wondering, when you're elected in November, how are you going to continue job growth over the next 4 years?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. Were you asleep? No—[*laughter*]. That's an unfair question. No, I know. Good tax policy, fiscal discipline in Washington, DC, fair trade policy, legal reforms, good health care policy, and job training is the best way to make sure America is a place where people can find a job. That's what you've got to figure out—how to create the environment for job growth and opportunity so people can find work.

Okay.

Support for U.S. Troops/War on Terror

Q. Small-business owner, entrepreneur, and an Army veteran, went to school with the G.I. Bill, put all—everything I learned in the Army into work, into the business. But it breaks my heart when I see all the soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq doing fantastic things, as you mentioned when you initially came out here—they come home; they put the television on; and they just see horrible news of what's going on, a completely different perspective of what they have done during their tour of duty. What can I do as an American citizen to show my appreciation? I tell them every single time, "Thank you for your service," whenever I see them in uniform. But what can I do to go that extra mile to show my appreciation to them?

The President. I appreciate you saying that. Look, the best thing you can do is what you're doing. And there are a lot of people like you who understand the stakes and the hard work. Thanks for saying that. And it's really to thank people in the uniform. It really is. It's—and you can't—I can't tell you how far that goes when you take time out of your life to say, "Thank you for your service." That's the best thing you can do. I could be self-serving—the best thing you could do is put me in again, but it's—but, no, I appreciate that spirit. And, listen, what's going to matter in the long run is that these troops come back and realize they've made a significant contribution to this country's safety and to peace and freedom.

Let me remind you all of something, speaking about what we're doing. You know, there were a lot of skeptics after World War II as to whether or not what America was doing would work. What we were doing was trying to rebuild Germany and work for democracy in Germany. What we were doing was trying to rebuild—or help Japan rebuild herself and there be a democracy there. After fighting these countries and after losing lives in a war against them, the United States of America—at least my predecessors—made the decision to rebuild those countries into democratic nations or at least to help them rebuild themselves. That was the decision we made. And there were a lot of skeptics. There were a lot of people who said it couldn't be done. The plans weren't working. And it took a long time, and it was hard, hard work.

You know, there were skeptics who said, "Well, the Japanese, they'll never be able to self-govern. After all, they're not Anglo-Saxon, or they're not Methodists, or I don't know." There was a lot of skepticism about whether they could self-govern. And there's still that skepticism today. There are some who I'm confident doubt whether or not a Muslim nation can self-govern. We don't doubt that in America. You see, we understand liberty. Thankfully, my predecessors did not fall prey to pessimistic attitudes after World War II, because today Germany and Japan are allies in the war on terror.

It came home to me very vividly when I was having dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi, who, by the way, loves Elvis—anyway—[*laughter*]. And so we were—guess what we were talking about? We were talking about how to keep the peace. The Prime Minister of a former enemy is sitting down with the President of the

United States talking about how to keep the peace. Had my predecessors fallen prey to the pessimism about the ability of liberty to change societies for the better, I don't know whether I'd have been having that discussion. We were talking about Kim Chong-il in North Korea and the danger he poses to free societies in the Far East. That's because people after World War II had great faith in what America believes and what America stands for.

It's really important for the families of the service men and women overseas to hear the message that the work that their loved ones are doing are essential to America's freedom and to peace, to long-term peace, because free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of the people. Societies which are not free are those which breed resentment and hatred, and it gets bottled up and sometimes it doesn't manifest itself overnight, but it will manifest itself. And now it's manifesting itself in the form of terror.

Now, let me—just one other thing I want to share with you, now that I got me going here. [*Laughter*] This is called a filibuster. Anyway—[*laughter*]—not really. Anyway, the battle is a battle of ideology. Think about the Taliban. It's an ideology that is radical in nature, that doesn't believe in women's rights, human rights, human dissent, political dissent. It's dim. It is backward. These people have hijacked a religion. I don't think they're religious people. I don't think you order suiciders to kill innocent men, women, and children if you're a religious person. I think your heart has been corroded. But that's the—and the alternative of that is freedom. That's the alternative, is a free society.

Now, these radicals use terror as a weapon. They know our good hearts. They know America has a—a country of conscience. We're really decent people, very loving people. And they know we hate the death of innocents. But that's why their terror tool is so effective, because they'll kill anybody, anytime. See, they're trying to shake our will. That's what they're trying to do. They're trying to drive us from the world because they want their dim vision of the world to spread.

They don't know our country. We will not be intimidated by these types. We will do our duty. We will remember the lessons of the past. And someday, an American President is going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about how to keep the peace. And they're going to say, "Thank God this generation didn't fold under pressure, had a clear vision."

All right, little guy, what you got? Here's your chance. You've got something for me?

Support for the President

Q. [*Inaudible*] I love you.

The President. I think he said, "Four more years." I'm not sure.

Yes, ma'am.

2004 Election

Q. Thank you for coming to Wisconsin, Mr. President. And we know that you're in a tough race for reelection, very, very tough, and the future of America is at stake. What can all of us here do to help you and Dick Cheney be sure to be reelected?

The President. Thank you very much. Listen, I'll tell you what you can do. Thanks. We are in a tough race, and that's okay. I like to get out and campaign. I mean, I think a good, healthy debate about vision and philosophy is important. And I think it's important for people to get out—outside of Washington and ask for the vote.

And that's what I'm doing now, and it's what I'm going to continue to do to election day. I've got the energy; I've got the drive; I've got the will to be your President. And I need your help. And the help you can do is register people to vote. And don't be afraid to find discerning Democrats and independents. There's a difference of philosophy that is emerging. People see a clear difference—clear difference of attitude,

clear difference of vision, clear difference of how to get there. And register people. And then when we're coming down the stretch, get them to vote.

Listen, the race in 2000 in Wisconsin was very close, if you really think about it. Not many votes per precinct separated me and my opponent. And so, obviously, the more people per precinct we get to the polls, the easier it is to carry the State of Wisconsin, which is a crucial battleground State. It's a crucial State. I'm going to spend a lot of time here, thankfully. It's a good place to come. Thank you.

Yes, sir.

Energy

Q. Mr. President——

The President. I thought for a minute we had John Glenn here. [*Laughter*]

Q. You know what, Mr. President, I've been accused of that before. [*Laughter*]

The President. He's a good man.

Q. Thank you. You touched on energy a little earlier in your speech, and I'm just wondering what your views are on renewable energy such as ethanol, biodiesel, wind power.

The President. Yes, I may—when I talked about alternative sources of energy, that's what I was referring to. As a matter of fact, it is a grand vision to think about a President saying—reading the corn harvest and saying, "Oh, they're up, and now we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." I mean, it would be a fantastic moment for any President to know that we can grow our way out of dependence.

And I'm a believer in ethanol—said so in the 2000 campaign, and it's an integral part of the energy bill. And I'm for spending money on research and development for biomass, and it makes sense. And maybe someday, wind energy will be competitive.

As a matter of fact, really what you're asking about is, can we—at least the way I put it is, can we manage our way through the short term until technology changes how we use energy? And I think we're talking about maybe a decade. Remember, I put out the hydrogen fuel cell alternative, asked for Congress to spend money for research and development. Someday, American automobiles will be powered by hydrogen. And that's going to be a fantastic change, which will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We're in a transition period. Someday, hopefully, we'll find a better way to use nuclear power that people have confidence in. Someday, our clean coal technologies will give people more confidence in burning coal. In other words, we're making changes as to how we use energy and how we supply energy. And we're in a period of transition, and I believe technology is going to change. And the fundamental question is, are we able to grow our economy until it does? And I think we can do so in a balanced way.

But, no, I can't think of anything better for the future than to say, "Gosh, the corn crop is up, and now we have to buy less foreign sources of energy." But in the meantime, we're hooked. We import over 60 percent—or about 50-something percent of our energy supplies. And that means we've got to have a short-term energy policy that makes sense until technology changes.

And that's what you're seeing; you really are. You're seeing a changing world. And it's going to be an exciting time for people to be driving different kind of automobiles. It's just going to happen. It's just a function of when. And our job is to speed up the "when" by research and development money.

Yes, sir.

Visit to Fond du Lac

Q. Mr. President, on behalf of the city of Fond du Lac, I'm the president of the city council——

The President. Thank you, Councilman. Thank you for serving.

Q. We are totally honored to have you here today, and you're welcome back anytime you want to come.

The President. Thank you, Councilman.

Q. My question——

The President. I thought it was going to be the classic, like, where's the key? [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, we gave one to your dad when he was here in '92.

The President. That's why I'm asking, you know? [*Laughter*] I don't—I'm not sure the message.

Q. I wasn't on the agenda. I tried.

The President. Okay, good. [*Laughter*]

Insurance Costs for Small Businesses/Health Care Reform

Q. My question is, I'm a commercial lender for a bank in Oshkosh, and I see a lot of small-businesses' financials, and their biggest expense is the increase in insurance costs.

The President. Yes.

Q. Do you have anything in mind to reduce the medical insurance and other insurance costs going forward?

The President. Yes, I do. I mean, for example, you heard me explain the association health care plans. Now, what that means is, is that a company like Joe's can pool his risk with other like companies that exist in other States. You can't do that now. Like, if you're a restaurant owner here at Fond du Lac and you have 20 employees, you're now going to the marketplace and you've got to buy insurance for your 20 employees. And therefore, you're not able to pool risk. In other words, the more people you can—you insure, the better premiums you get because you're spreading risk.

And so we've got to let the restauranteur here or the Joes across the country pool risk. In other words, they can lump together as an association and then go to the insurance company and say, "Look, we've now got not 20 employees, insure a million employees." And that's a better way to be able to control risk than the alternative, which is to have the Federal Government try to control price, which means, they're the decisionmakers. You don't want that, believe me.

Secondly, we've got what's called health savings accounts. These are all set up for small-business owners, by the way, to make a better deal for their employees. You put money in tax-free; you accumulate money in the account tax-free; you withdraw it tax-free—all to pay ongoing medical costs, ordinary medical costs and, as well, is you buy yourself a catastrophic plan.

So, in other words, on an annual basis, you're contributing tax-free or the company contributes for the employee, so the employee is the decisionmaker. It's in the employee's interest that they make wise decisions. In other words, you don't want to purchase too much health care. In other words if you go to the doctor here, doctor there, doctor—into the office—so you start asking questions, "Do I really need this?"

And so the employee—the customer makes the decisions. The customer shops. And if you don't spend more than you put in, that's your money. You roll it over. So you've got catastrophic to take care of major medical expenses, and you've got tax incentives to encourage you to make the right decisions.

And thirdly, medical liability reform is the way to control costs.

Two other things I want to talk about. One of the things we've done is we've expanded what's called community health centers all across the country. These are very—it's a wise use of taxpayers' money. It's like primary care facilities for people who can't afford insurance. It takes people out of the emergency rooms and puts them into a primary care facility so they get the help they need.

And the other thing is—that Tommy and I are working on is we're trying to modernize health care, which is going to save people a lot of money. This is now—still a system in which people carry paper files

from one appointment to the next. Sometimes they literally don't carry them, but your files are on paper. And it leads to medical error when things are handwritten, particularly if a doc has handwritten it. [*Laughter*] Or something is amiss in the files. And yet, most businesses these days are able to put their files on the—use the Internet to be able to have better efficiency with their files and paperwork, better cost savings when it comes to recordkeeping.

And so what Tommy and I are working on is what they call electronic medical records. Everybody is going to have an electronic medical record that you'll be able to carry with you, that you'll be able to send to whoever you want to send. It will cost—it will reduce cost in the health care system, and it will reduce errors in the health care system. And it makes eminent sense for the health care industry to get into the 21st century. It's stuck in the past.

So there are some—there are ways right there, practical ways to work on the cost of health care so that health care is more affordable to the small-business owners in America. And we're making progress. There's a battle in Washington; I readily concede it. And the battle is, do the consumers and docs make the decision, or does the Government make the decision? And it's a philosophical argument. And you know where I come down. I'm on the side of the consumers and the marketplace for best controlling the cost of health care.

Yes, you've got a question? Let her rip.

Right To Vote

Q. Okay. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. Hi.

Q. I'm 18, and this will be my first time I can vote.

The President. Okay, let me stop you right there. I'm the first guy to ask for your vote. [*Laughter*] Remember that when you get in the booth. [*Laughter*]

Q. All right, so this will be my first time being—Presidential voting. And I was wondering, since everyone has the right to vote, do you think there should be something so that everybody has to vote, so then you get more of a majority?

The President. Yes, no, I appreciate that. I just don't think it's going to work, you know—compulsory voting. I wish everybody would vote. But it's a right—it's a right. It's like the right to worship the way you want to worship. It's a right. I just don't think compulsory voting would work. I'm not sure what the penalty is.

I mean, it's—so, therefore, the thing we've got to do—thanks for bringing this up because it gives me a chance to remind people about their solemn duty, in my judgment, to go to the polls. Of course, I want everybody to be for me. I know it's not going to be the case, but I'm still urging people to vote. I want there to be widespread voter participation. It is—here we are working in Afghanistan, convincing the people of Afghanistan to go vote; we ought to be doing the same thing in our own country.

So I—both candidates—I'm confident my opponent is doing the same thing, and it's the right thing to do. Part of traveling the country is to say, "Listen, you have a duty. Get your neighbors to go vote. Please, go vote."

And so thanks for bringing that up. But, no, I don't see how you can get compulsory voting because I'm not sure what the consequences.

Yes.

Usama bin Laden/War on Terror/ Intelligence Capabilities

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Yes, ma'am.

Q. Do you have an updates on the whereabouts or possible capture of Usama bin Laden?

The President. Thank you for bringing that up. I tell you, if I knew, I wouldn't tell you. [*Laughter*] I'd be telling our forces which are stationed over there. He's on the run. He is, best guess, in the remote regions of Pakistan or Afghanistan, up there

in kind of the—in the mountainous regions there, best guess. I really don't know.

I do know that the organization is—got the ability to kind of exist without his physical presence. In other words, there's command—there's commanders that are able to rise up even though we may capture a previous commander. Khalid Sheik Mohammed no longer is—somebody took his place. They tend to be decentralized at times. This guy, Zarqawi, operating out of Iraq, we call him an affiliate of Al Qaida. We're not sure he has sworn allegiance to Al Qaida, but he gets instructions from Al Qaida. They deal with Al Qaida. We've intercepted an e-mail, as you might remember, of Zarqawi to Al Qaida types in remote parts of Pakistan—I think it's where the e-mail came from. At any rate, it talked about how Zarqawi was to incite Shi'a-Sunni violence in Iraq so that a civil war would stop the advance of freedom. In other words, there was a dialog between the two.

My point to you is, is that there are these kind of loosely affiliated cells along with direct chains of command that we're dealing with all over the world. And we've got a lot of intelligence cooperation. I mean, in order—this is a—I remember after September the 11th, this is a different kind of war. I remember specifically telling the country that. Sometimes you'll see action; sometimes you won't see action. It's a different kind of a contest. It requires good intelligence.

Let me talk about our intelligence right quick. Listen, I thought we would find stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction because the Agency thought we would. And we didn't. But what we have known and found is that Saddam Hussein had the capability of producing weapons. In other words, he had the capacity, and he was a sworn enemy.

And so the fundamental—listen, I'm—I know we did the right thing. We did the right thing for our security for the country. But the question the country must ask is, how do we make sure we have the best intelligence possible? That will be the next important discussion in Washington, DC. And I welcome it. Look, I want great intelligence. I can't do my job, we can't find people hiding in remote caves unless we've got good intelligence. That means more human intelligence; it means better electronic intelligence. We want to be able to listen to people better. It means to make sure there's better coordination inside Washington. And I'm convinced that out of the recent investigations will come a better system so that this President and future Presidents will be able to do as good a job as we possibly can for the American people.

Let me also remind you, however, that the CIA has had some great successes. Let me tell you one right quick, because I want the CIA agents who work for America to understand how much I appreciate their sacrifice and service and dedication. A.Q. Khan was a citizen of Pakistan who was a prominent scientist. A.Q. Khan went in the business of selling secret nuclear information, know-how, processing, to countries like Libya, Iran, and North Korea, and we caught him. And we penetrated his network—we—these are brave citizens of the United States—penetrated his network and exposed it to the world. And one of the great proliferators of weapon of mass destruction technology is no longer a threat to the United States and the free world. We've got some really good people working hard for the American people.

Yes. Go ahead and yell it out.

Minimum Wage

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Restaurant Group, of which we are—we have 370 employees throughout 10 restaurants. Senator Kennedy's minimum wage increase amendment that he's proposing is detrimental to small business. As a family-owned small-business owner, labor costs is one of our most—it's our most detrimental cost. And as labor costs go up, we are forced to cut jobs,

raise prices, and it's a domino effect. I want to know your opinion on the minimum wage.

The President. My opinion is, is that I think there is a reasonable level to which we can raise the minimum wage and, at the same time, make sure small businesses are not penalized. And Mitch McConnell is working on such an idea on the Senate floor, and I'm going to continue working with Mitch.

No, I understand what you're saying. It's very important that we have a wage policy which does not price people out of jobs. And so I'm confident that if there is a minimum wage increase, it will, one, be reasonable, and two, will make sure small businesses aren't hurt.

Yes, sir.

Marriage/Education/Faith-Based Programs

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for making this country stronger and making me a better dad in helping to support my family as well.

The President. Thanks. Yes. You know what: I can't make you a better dad. That's up to you. Thanks for saying that, but it's really your job.

Q. I'd like to also thank your daughter for giving you up for 8 years.

The President. Thanks, yes. [*Laughter*] Thanks for saying that.

Q. I'm executive director of a faith-based organization, and we direct—try to redirect the lives of delinquent and at-risk youth from the inner city. And we get a lot of young men from Milwaukee. I want to thank you for your efforts and leadership on faith-based organizations, but particularly, we have a dear gentleman in this country, a comedian, Bill Cosby, who has really taken some leadership interest and throwing some different punchlines towards the community and the inner city and looking at the social culture of our cities. And as a compassionate conservative, I'd like to get your views and your vision on how to work with the social culture and lead that inner city into a brighter future.

The President. Yes, I think that, first of all, I believe that families are a very important part of a stable future. And I believe that it's very important for Government to promote and stand on the side of families.

You know, we're having a debate in Washington, and it needs to be a very sensitive, thoughtful debate as to the nature of family. I have made my position clear. I believe that a traditional marriage—marriage between a man and woman—is an important part of stable families. [*Applause*] Thank you. I, again, to repeat, I want this debate to be a thoughtful debate. It needs to be a sensitive debate. But I feel strongly about what I just said.

Secondly, the Government must work to strengthen family. Part of our welfare reform law was to encourage families to stay together. We put money aside—Tommy worked on this; it's a very important part of the law—to encourage people to stay together. Part of a stable society anywhere, whether it be in rural America or inner-city America, is for families to stay together.

Secondly, education. You know, a lot of inner-city schools are schools that, for some reason or another, quit on kids. They just shuffle them through. Maybe people said, "They're too hard to educate, therefore, let's just move them through." There's no doubt in my mind, when implemented, the No Child Left Behind Act is going to say to each child: "We believe in your worth. We believe in your talents." There's extra money, by the way, for Title I kids. "We're raising the bar. We're going to measure to determine whether or not you've got the skills necessary to read and write and add and subtract. And if you don't, we'll correct them early." That's what the message is. I think that's going to help make inner city a much more hopeful place, just like it will make rural America a much more hopeful place.

Thirdly, many of the kids that you talk about need love. And I think it's the role of Government to encourage loving institutions to be more likely to interface with those who need help. What the—let me just tell you what it means. It means we're opening up Federal monies to grants to faith-based institutions. There was an argument in our country that said we couldn't do that, see. We couldn't do that. It would blur the line of church and state. Listen, I strongly believe in the separation of church and state. The church shouldn't be the state, and the state shouldn't be the church. On the other hand, I do think it's important for people in positions like I'm in to say, "Does the program work?" In other words, "Does it have a social objective?"—for example, mentoring kids who need help. They need love in their lives. That's an objective. And therefore, we ought to ask how best to achieve the objective. And if it's a faith-based program that is better able to do that objective, I don't see anything wrong with making Federal monies accessible to that faith-based program.

And it must be done—the program must be done without causing the program not to be able to practice its faith, see. How can you be a faith-based program if the Government says you can't practice faith? You can't be. And one of the interesting challenges we have faced is that faith-based programs were fearful of interfacing with Federal bureaucracies because the bureaucracies say, "Well, you can't have the Star of David on the wall or the cross on the wall. You can't have that." And so we have tried to change the culture in Washington.

So there are three practical steps there: strengthening families, better education, and then unleashing the great compassion to help people such as yourself save lives. And it's working.

Let me tell you something: The faith-based programs are beginning to take hold, and they're taking effect. We're getting more Federal money into the hands of the faith-based folks, what I call the social entrepreneurs, which are beginning to change people's lives in an incredibly positive way. And it's important to stay with the program because—as I can repeat; it sounds like a trite saying but it's not—the strength of the country is in the hearts and souls of the citizens.

There are a million kids whose mom and dad is in prison—a mom or dad is in prison. Those are kids who've got a future that may not look so bright to them. It can be brightened by love; I'm telling you. It can be brightened by a mentor. It can be brightened by somebody who comes in their life and say, "I love you, brother. What can I do to help you? How can I help you realize a better tomorrow?" Now, that sounds like a heavy lift—million mentors—but when you think about how many churches there are and synagogues there are and mosques there are and community programs there are, we're not talking about that many people.

And my job is to rally the people of the country and, at first, to understand the proper relationship between the Federal Government and the strength—you know, you hear people say, "Oh, the great strength of the country is our Government." No, that's not me. I don't believe that. I think Government is an indispensable part of our country, but the great strength is the people's hearts. And as your President, I will continue to call upon people to serve their country by loving their neighbor. That's one of my most important jobs.

Yes, buddy, last question. We've got to go up the road. A couple of questions. Fire away. Go ahead. Well, maybe they don't want you to ask the question.

Education

Q. Will you send more money for education——

The President. Send more money in education——

Q. ——to help the kids get their lives—to help them go to college and get the money to help the people?

The President. Yes. Very good. He wants to know about education funding. I think that's what it was, right? [*Laughter*] Or just money in general? Well, the best way to send money to the people is to let them keep their own money in the first place. We've increased Federal spending for elementary and secondary schools by over 40 percent since 2001, which is a hefty increase. In other words, we're doing our duty. What's changed is we've said now, "Show us whether or not the money is actually working." See, before we'd send money and then they wouldn't ask the question. Now we're asking that question, "Can a child read, and if not, why?"

In terms of Pell grants and education grants that help people, deserving people, go to college, we've increased that spending as well. We're doing our job. But I want to remind you when it comes to public education, the primary funder of public schools are the States and local jurisdictions. That's the way it has been in the past, and in my judgment, that's the way it ought to be. And the Federal Government can help with Title I students or IDEA funding, which is for disabled students. But it is the primary responsibility of your State government to make education the number one priority.

When I ran for Governor of Texas, I said education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. The primary responsibility of the State is to make sure that the public school system runs well. And the primary obligation of the State is to fund the schools so they go well. And the Federal Government provides a complementary role. That's the way it is now, and that's the way it is, so long as I'm going to be the President.

One final question, and then I've got to hit the bus.

Public Service

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to welcome you to Wisconsin as well. And as an older mother of many children, we've tried to—we've had a number of kids that were interested in going into politics that were really turned off for a few years, but because of gentlemen like Tommy Thompson and yourself, we now have a son in politics, and we're very proud and also working for your benefit. Also, I heard you say that you'd like to return to Wisconsin. We have a great city about 40 miles from here, on the shores of Lake Michigan—Sheboygan—and we'd welcome you there with open arms.

The President. Thank you. Let me talk about service. Thanks for bringing it up. There's obviously a proud mom, and that's neat that one of her children has chosen to go into public service. I encourage people to run and to go into public service. But I recognize not everybody is suited for it, and some people just aren't interested. But there's all kinds of ways to serve. It's just not—you don't have to be a candidate to serve. You can serve by loving your neighbor. You can serve by mentoring a child. You can serve your community by just walking across the street to a shut-in's home and saying, "What can I do to make your day better?" There are all kinds of ways to serve.

I'm proud of your son for running. I think it's great. It's very important for people to step up and put their hat in the ring and get out there and mix it up. It's an exciting life. I mean, it's a—you've got to have a Type A personality, I recognize, but—[*laughter*]. Let me tell you something. I enjoy it. I enjoy being with people. I love the people of this country, and I love being with you today.

Thanks for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:18 p.m. in the factory. In his remarks, he referred to

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003.

Exchange With Reporters in Oshkosh, Wisconsin
July 14, 2004

President's Visit to Wisconsin

Q. Mr. President, your reaction to the crowds and the towns?

The President. Very, very warm and very hospitable reaction. A lot of people coming out, for which I'm grateful.

Q. What did you get?

The President. Vanilla custard. It's highly recommended. I'm recommending vanilla for Hillman [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

Q. You are dripping. You need a napkin.

The President. I'm going to get one in a minute. Would you like some?

Q. No, thanks.

The President. I'm trying to get you a little national publicity.

Q. I think I've got all I need. [*Laughter*]

The President. I enjoyed talking to you, girls. Enjoyed talking to you. Thank you. All right, let's go back to work.

Q. First a candy store and now ice cream, sir?

The President. I'm loading up, carbo-loading for the weekend. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:50 p.m. at Leon's Frozen Custard. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage
July 14, 2004

I am deeply disappointed that the effort to pass a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as being between a man and a woman was temporarily blocked in the Senate.

Activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are not letting up in their efforts to redefine marriage for the rest of America—and neither should defenders of traditional marriage flag in their efforts.

It is important for our country to continue the debate on this important issue, and I urge the House of Representatives to pass this amendment.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the "Project BioShield Act of 2004"
July 14, 2004

During this time of threat to the homeland, I commend Congress for passing the "Project BioShield Act of 2004." This legislation will strengthen our ability to protect Americans against biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological threats. It will speed the Government's ability to turn promising scientific discoveries into necessary countermeasures, provide for rapid stockpiling of critical new drugs and vaccines, and allow the Food and Drug Administration to make treatments available quickly to Americans in emergency situations. By bringing researchers, medical experts, and the biomedical industry together in new and innovative ways, we will not only help protect the homeland but also gain insights into other diseases. This will break new ground in the search for treatments and cures, while strengthening our overall biotechnology infrastructure. I look forward to signing this vital piece of legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 15.

Remarks in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin
July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. It's good to be here in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin. Thank you so much.

We've been having a great bus tour. I've been traveling all across this important State asking for the vote. I'm here to ask for your help. What a fantastic trip we've had. I did stop at Leon's Custard Shop. I also stopped in West Bend at Mick's Candyman Store. It's been a day of great excitement and high caloric intake. [*Laughter*] But I love being back here. It's good to see the Cheeseheads coming in. I know it's not the time of year, but I probably need to come back next fall, don't I? One thing is for certain: The Green Bay area is Bush-Cheney country.

I'm here to ask for your help. Give me 4 more years; this country is going to be safer and stronger and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry Laura is not traveling with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] I interpret that to mean, "Too bad she didn't come and you didn't stay at home." [*Laughter*] I don't blame you. She's a fabulous woman. I'm really proud of her. She's a wonderful First Lady. I'm going to tell you what I intend to do for 4 more years, but perhaps the best reason to put me back in is so she'll be the First Lady for 4 more years. Fortunately, however, a member of my family is traveling with me today. I want to thank one of our daughters, Barbara, for coming today. Thank you for being here, Barbara.

I'm also traveling today with a great American, a person who served our country so well in my Cabinet, and a person you trained very well as your former Governor, and that's Tommy Thompson.

You've got a really fine Congressman from this area. Congressman Mark Green is a decent, honorable man, and I appreciate his wife, Sue, joining us today. Thanks for coming, Sue. I'm glad you're here.

State Treasurer Jack Voight is with us as well. I want to thank the mayors who

are here. I want to thank those who serve at the State level and at the local level for your willingness to serve your communities. I appreciate so very much the grassroots activists who are here.

I'm going to thank my friend Dennis Miller, who's joined us today. I appreciate my friend Wayne Newton for joining us today. Thanks for coming. I know Brian Noble is here. Thanks for coming, Brian. I appreciate you being here to help warm up the crowd.

But most of all, I want to thank you all for being here. It means a lot. I need your help. They have a—get on the web page and call up georgewbush.com. It's a place where you can find out how to volunteer to turn out the vote. Get your neighbors to register. We have a duty in this country to vote. Gather the people up and encourage them to do their duty. You might suggest they vote Bush-Cheney while they're heading to the polls.

And when you're gathering up that vote and when you're talking to your friends and neighbors, tell them that this administration has faced serious challenges over the last 3½ years, and we've given serious answers.

We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession. We acted. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is done.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We have liberated 50 million people. Today, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

I'm running with a great American in Dick Cheney. He's a solid, solid citizen. And when he and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and prosperity of our country. You see, it's the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The President has to make hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that is how I will continue to lead our country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to the race. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to taking our positive and hopeful message all across the country. And it's going to be a tough race.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*] [*Laughter*]

The President. My opponent is an experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I have.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, he's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. If you disagree with the Senator on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. Recently, in the Midwest, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know—I know. [*Laughter*] That's what he said. [*Laughter*] It's kind of hard to square that with his previous statement when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*] Now he has

a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, and he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course on the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm here asking for the vote and your help because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to rally the compassionate spirit of America, so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of our country. I'm asking for the vote because with your help, America will be safer and stronger and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family is their tax burden. By providing the largest Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we have added more than 1.5 million new jobs. Here in this great State, your unemployment rate has dropped to 5.1 percent. The manufacturing sector is growing stronger, with 64,000 new jobs created since January. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. [*Laughter*] But whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——more Federal spending——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——and economic isolationism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The surest way to end economic growth and put Americans out of work is their plan. The Nation is on the path to progress and opportunity, and we're not going backwards.

To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would now undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help grow the American economy and create more jobs for American workers, I've got a better idea than my opponent's plan: Congress needs to make tax relief permanent and not raise taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure our economy continues to grow, we've got to be smart about how we spend the money that you send to Washington, DC. We need fiscal discipline. We need to make sure Congress doesn't overpromise and underdeliver. It all starts with understanding whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It's not the Government's money we spend; it's the people's money we spend in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure people can find work and people are willing to invest so small businesses can thrive and grow, we need to stop frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my

choice: I will continue to push Congress for reform to end the junk lawsuits.

In order to make sure that Americans can find work not only this year but in the coming years, we must make sure Americans have affordable health care. And that means giving people better access to association health plans and giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health accounts. It means making sure that the customer is in charge of health decisions, not the Federal Government. And to make sure the healers are able to do their work and people can afford health care, we must have medical liability reform at the Federal level.

Listen, to make sure we continue to grow our economy and people can find work, we need an energy policy. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. It's a plan that modernizes our electricity system. It's a plan that encourages alternative sources of energy. It is a plan that encourages conservation. But it's also a plan that recognizes we can explore for energy in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I suspect we may have some farmers here. This farm economy is strong in Wisconsin, and that's good news. And one of the reasons why is because we're selling farm products all around the world. You see, the job of the President is to open up markets. We need a level playing field when it comes to trade. This country can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere with free trade and fair trade, and that's exactly how I will continue to lead.

I've got a plan to make sure this economy continues to grow so America is stronger. It's a plan that understands the role of Government is not to create wealth but to create an environment where the small-business owner can flourish, where the farmer and rancher can make a living. My plan is pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business, pro-farmer. Give me 4 more years, and this economy will continue to grow.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved and I resolved to bring justice to the terrorists, wherever they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, now young girls go to school for the first time in their lives.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world, a dictator who had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget and a lesson this country must never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. I remembered that lesson. I remembered the past behavior of Saddam Hussein, and my administration looked at the intelligence and we saw a threat. The United States Congress, including members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The

previous administration and the Congress looked at the same intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, I went to the United Nations. And after deliberation, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. And as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein made the choice. He refused to comply. The free world had spoken, and he refused to comply with the request of the free world. Knowing what I knew about him, remembering the lessons of September the 11th, I had a choice to make: Either to trust a madman or to defend the United States of America. And given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, I believe we were right to go into Iraq, and America is safer for it. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important work to do in that country. We've got hard work to do. Our immediate task in places like Iraq and Afghanistan is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. See, you can't talk sense into the terrorists. You can't negotiate with the terrorists. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We must stay on the offensive. We will engage the enemies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

Listen, there's no such thing as perfect security in America. The threats are real to the homeland. We know the terrorists want to strike us. They want to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. We've reorganized our Government to better protect the homeland. You just need to know there are a lot of really good people at the Federal level, at the State level, and at the local level doing everything possible to protect our fellow citizens. And I know I speak for everyone here when I say thanks to the police and the firefighters and the emergency teams of the great State of Wisconsin.

We'll defend our homeland; we'll be relentless in our pursuit of the terrorists abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East—the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentments that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders and the people can decide their own future.

By serving the ideal of liberty, by standing true to our beliefs, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we also serve the deepest ideals of our country. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

America is leading the world, and the world is changing because of our leadership. Just 3 years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. And now, there's a democracy rising in that troubled part of the world, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder and terror. Now, the Pakistan Government has joined us in the war on terror, and Pakistan forces are rounding up the terrorists, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists found little opposition. Now, the Saudi Government has joined the war on terror, and they're bringing to justice Al Qaida terrorists, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American

people are safer for it. The world is changing for the better. Three years ago, the dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons of mass murder. And now, that dictator faces justice, and the American people are safer for it.

We will finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. A free society in Afghanistan and Iraq makes America more secure. Free societies are peaceful societies. And the good people in those countries are standing up for a free society. They have got good, strong leadership now. You see, these people want to be free. And therefore, the security forces in Iraq, made up of Iraqis, are now going after the terrorists that are trying to stop the advance of freedom. And the peoples in those countries can count on America. We promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

Our men and women in the military are keeping America's commitment, and they're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases around our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I recently met with Rita and Ken Jerabek. Their son, Ryan, died in service to our country. They died so America would be more secure. I told the Jerabeks the best way to honor the memory of their great son, Ryan, was to complete the mission. A free society in Iraq will make the world a better place. I'm honored that Rita and Ken are with us tonight. God bless them.

When we put our troops in harm's way, it's important they have the very best we can give them. We owe it to our troops, and we owe it to their loved ones. Last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, and fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against that legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. Now he is offering a different explanation. Earlier this week, he said he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops. Now listen, he's——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's entitled to his view. But Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them. I will continue to stand with our troops and make sure they have what they need in order to complete the mission. As Commander in Chief, I am proud to lead a great military full of decent and honorable citizens.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan; over 30 nations involved in Iraq. And I appreciate the contributions from those countries. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of foreign countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The other day, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We are strong

because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose: our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools, local control of our public schools, accountability in our public schools so no child is left behind in America. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and 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 are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, where the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. Workers in hardhats chanted, "Whatever it takes." A fireman or a policeman—I don't know which one—grabbed me and said, "Do not let me down." As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been witness to the character of our Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us; we welcome it. And we know that for our blessed land, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. in the Resch Center at Brown County Veterans Memorial Complex. In his remarks, he referred to comedian Dennis Miller; entertainer Wayne Newton; and Brian Noble, head coach, arenafootball2's Green Bay Blizzard.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments
July 14, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. In addition, I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 language proposal for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 budget would not be increased by these requests.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 15.

Remarks on Signing the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act
July 15, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House.

[*At this point, the lights in the room flickered.*]

The President. Thanks for coming. [*Laughter*] Welcome to the White House. [*Laughter*]

We're taking an important step today to combat the problem of identity theft, one of the fastest growing financial crimes in our Nation. Last year alone, nearly 10 million Americans had their identities stolen by criminals who robbed them and the Nation's businesses of nearly $50 billion through fraudulent transactions. The bill I'm about to sign sends a clear message that a person who violates another's financial privacy will be punished.

The Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act also prescribes prison sentences for those who use identity theft to commit other crimes, including terrorism. It reflects our Government's resolve to answer serious offenses with serious penalties.

I appreciate the members of my administration who worked on this important piece of legislation, particularly Cabinet members John Snow and John Ashcroft. I appreciate the Members of the Congress who worked hard on this legislation: Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Jon Kyl, Senator Dianne Feinstein; and Members of the House, Chairman Senator Jim Sensenbrenner and John Carter from the great State of Texas. I want to thank the other Members of Congress who are here, members of both political parties. Thank you for coming. I thank those who are on their staffs who have worked hard.

The crime of identity theft undermines the basic trust on which our economy depends. When a person takes out an insurance policy or makes an online purchase or opens a savings account, he or she must have confidence that personal financial information will be protected and treated with care. Identity theft harms not only its direct victims but also many businesses and customers whose confidence is shaken. Like other forms of stealing, identity theft

leaves the victim poor and feeling terribly violated.

But the losses are not measured only in dollars. An identity theft—thief can steal the victim's financial reputation. Running up bills on credit card accounts that the victim never knew existed, the criminal can quickly damage a person's lifelong efforts to build and maintain a good credit rating. Repairing the damage can take months or years.

Government has a responsibility to protect citizens from these crimes and the grief and hassle they cause. It's a solemn responsibility of our Government. I want to thank the Members of Congress for recognizing that responsibility.

This good law is part of a broader effort we've waged in recent years. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the FBI, and Secret Service are working with local and State officials to crack down on the criminal networks that are responsible for much of the identity theft that occurs in this Nation. The Federal Trade Commission is training local law enforcement in the detection of identity theft. The Commission has set up the ID Theft Data Clearinghouse, which keeps track of complaints across the country and provides those records to prosecutors seeking to take down organized rings.

Last December, I signed the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, which established a national system of fraud detection so that identity thieves can be stopped before they run up tens of thousands of dollars in illegal purchases. Thanks to this law, victims can make one phone call to alert all three major credit rating agencies to report the crime and to protect their credit ratings.

The law I sign today will dramatically strengthen the fight against identity theft and fraud. Prosecutors across the country report that sentences for these crimes do not reflect the damage done to the victim. Too often, those convicted have been sentenced to little or no time in prison. This changes today. This new law establishes in the Federal criminal court the offense of aggravated identity theft. And someone convicted of that crime can expect to go to jail for stealing a person's good name.

These punishments will come on top of any punishment for crimes that proceed from identity theft. For example, when someone is convicted of mail fraud in a case involving stolen personal information, judges will now impose two sentences, one for mail fraud and one for aggravated identity theft. Those convicted of aggravated identity theft must serve an additional mandatory 2-year prison term. Someone convicted of aggravated identity theft, such as using a false passport in connection with a terrorism case, would receive an additional prison sentence of 5 years. In addition, judges will not be allowed to let those convicted of aggravated identity theft serve their sentence on probation.

This law also raises the standard of conduct for people who have access to personal records through their work at banks, government agencies, insurance companies, and other storehouses of financial data. The law directs the United States Sentencing Commission to make sure those convicted of abusing and stealing from their customers serve a sentence equal to their crimes.

What I'm telling you is, this is a good law. And I appreciate you working hard to see to it that it made it to my desk. Because of this act of Congress I sign today, the guilty will be certain to be punished. That's good for our consumers. It's good for our economy. And it's good for the cause of justice.

Welcome to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. H.R. 1731, approved July 15, was assigned Public Law 108–275.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and Mongolia
July 15, 2004

President Bush and President Bagabandi today declared a new era of cooperation and comprehensive partnership between their two democratic countries based on shared values and common strategic interests. They welcomed the progress in implementing the Joint Statement of January 31, 2004 and looked ahead to future consultations and collaboration. The two sides agreed to work towards maintaining regular consultations at all levels. They also expressed satisfaction that the relationship between their two countries continues to grow and strengthen. President Bagabandi's visit illustrates the important progress we have made in our bilateral relationship and in our mutual participation in the larger community of democracies.

The United States welcomed the recent free and fair elections in Mongolia as another manifestation of Mongolia's strong and abiding commitment to democracy.

President Bush expressed the United States' strong support for Mongolia's democratic and economic transition and reforms and welcomed Mongolia's progress toward becoming a mature and stable democracy and a private sector-led free market economy. He congratulated President Bagabandi and the Mongolian people for qualifying for eligibility for the Millennium Challenge Account, a new approach to achieving sustainable economic growth that rewards countries for past performance and provides incentives for continuing dynamic policy reforms. President Bush congratulated the Mongolian people on their commitment to democracy as expressed in their recent elections and noted confidence that the election process would be successfully completed in a free, fair and transparent manner consistent with Mongolia's constitution.

The two Presidents agreed that a democratic, secure, and prosperous Mongolia that promotes friendly relations with its neighbors and is an active participant in regional and international economic, political, and security forums is essential to ensuring peace and stability in Asia. The United States supports Mongolia's efforts to integrate itself into regional and international economic and financial structures.

President Bush and President Bagabandi also noted their common support for the permanent, thorough, and transparent dismantlement of nuclear programs on the Korean Peninsula. The United States acknowledges Mongolia's efforts to gain internationally recognized and legally binding nuclear weapon-free status to further enhance confidence-building measures in North East Asia.

President Bush welcomed Mongolia's commitment to combat international terrorism and applauded Mongolia's participation in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq, including its peacekeeping commitment to the Multinational Force in Iraq. The United States and Mongolia agreed to continue working to advance Mongolia's contribution to international peacekeeping efforts. President Bush reaffirmed the U.S. willingness to continue bilateral programs of technical assistance consistent with Mongolia's long-term developmental goals. President Bagabandi expressed Mongolia's deep appreciation to the United States for its long-term support and economic assistance. The two Presidents agreed that the establishment of a free, democratic Iraq is important to democracy, peace and stability in the Middle East and the United Nations should play a leading role in the process.

The two Presidents agreed to actively promote bilateral trade and investment and noted signing of the United States-Mongolia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement during President Bagabandi's visit. The Presidents expressed the hope

that this would lead in due course to a closer bilateral economic and trade relationship.

The two Presidents recognized that a U.S.-Mongolia relationship based on mutual respect and equitable partnership is in the national interest of both countries. They pledged to deepen and strengthen this important relationship and to work together to promote global freedom, peace, democracy and prosperity.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Legislation To Implement the United States-Morocco Free Trade Agreement
July 15, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents prepared by my Administration to implement the United States-Morocco Free Trade Agreement (the "Agreement" or the "FTA"). This Agreement enhances our bilateral relationship with a longstanding partner in the North Africa and Middle East region. The Agreement will benefit the people of the United States and Morocco, illustrating to other developing countries the advantages of open markets.

This Agreement is a strong demonstration of my Administration's commitment to opening markets, leveling the playing field, and expanding opportunities for American workers, manufacturers, businesses, farmers, and consumers. In negotiating this Agreement, my Administration was guided by the negotiating objectives set out in the Trade Act of 2002. The Agreement will expand Morocco's market for U.S. manufactured goods, agricultural products, services, and investment. As soon as this Agreement enters into force, tariffs will be eliminated on virtually all manufactured goods traded between our countries.

The Agreement provides U.S. producers of beef, poultry, wheat, corn, soybeans, and other agriculture products with increased access to Morocco's market, while complementing Morocco's agriculture reform program. In addition, the Agreement provides the opportunity for U.S. producers to adjust to increased imports from Morocco, if necessary.

New opportunities for U.S. services firms will be opened, U.S. investment will be protected, and U.S. companies will be able to participate in government procurement opportunities on the same basis as Moroccan firms. This Agreement has some of the strongest intellectual property protections ever contained in a U.S. trade agreement with a developing country.

The United States and Morocco have agreed to cooperate on environment and labor issues and to establish mechanisms supporting those efforts. Negotiation of this Agreement has promoted adoption of a new labor law in Morocco. This Agreement has also helped lead to improved domestic environmental laws in Morocco, and a number of additional cooperative projects have been identified for future work.

The approval of this Agreement will be another important step in implementing our plan for a broader Middle East Free Trade Area. Indeed, this Agreement offers the United States an opportunity to encourage economic reform in a moderate Muslim nation, as we have done with the Jordan FTA and the recently concluded Bahrain FTA. Leaders in Morocco support a reformist and tolerant vision that includes

free parliamentary elections, the sale of state-owned businesses, the encouragement of foreign investment that can be connected to broad-based development, and better protection of the rights of women and workers. It is strongly in the interests of the United States to embrace these reforms and do what we can to encourage them. Passing this Agreement is a critical step in that direction.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 15, 2004.

Remarks at the National Training Conference on Human Trafficking in Tampa, Florida
July 16, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks a lot, John, for your service and your kind introduction.

It's always good to be with Jeb. [*Laughter*] He's a great brother and a fine Governor. And I know my daughter Barbara, who is traveling with me today, is proud of her Uncle Jeb. Thanks for coming, Barbara. We're glad you're here.

I appreciate you inviting me to this important conference. Human trafficking is one of the worst offenses against human dignity. Our Nation is determined—determined—to fight that crime abroad and at home. And that's what we're here to talk about today. I am especially pleased that Jeb has today signed into law a bill making the sexual trafficking of minors a felony in the State of Florida. I appreciate his leadership.

I want to thank Claude Allen, the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, for joining us today. Hey, Claude, thank you for coming. Paula Dobriansky, who is the Under Secretary of the Department of State—thank you, Paula, for your dedicated service. Asa Hutchinson is the Under Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security—thanks.

In order to make sure the Federal laws we're going to discuss are enforced, you've got to have good, strong U.S. attorneys around the United States. Paul Perez is a strong U.S. attorney here in Tampa. Paul, thank you for being here. I appreciate your coming.

I want to thank all the State and local folks who are here, the local officials and the local law enforcement officials. I appreciate the faith-based and community organizations who are here. Thanks for your compassion and your love.

I met Lan Pham today when I got to the airport. Where are you, Lan? Oh, there she is. You'd have thought you'd have got a better seat than that. But there she is. [*Laughter*]

The reason why Lan came out to greet me at Air Force One is she volunteers 5 days a week at Catholic Charities. She is a soldier in the Army of Compassion. She is a reminder that the greatest strength of this country is the heart and souls of our fellow citizens, people who are willing to help people who hurt. Lan is such an example. She is involved with the rescuing of innocent victims that have been brought here and have been harmed. You know, the great strength of America is the fact that we've got millions of our fellow citizens who heed a call to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves—on an hourly basis—and Lan is such a person.

I am honored to be with the courageous men and women who are serving on the frontlines in the fight against human trafficking. You've got a tough job, but it's

a necessary job. You're hunting down the traffickers. You're serving justice by putting them behind bars. You're liberating captives, and you're helping them recover from years of abuse and trauma. The lives of tens of thousands of innocent women and children depend on your compassion. They depend upon your determination, and they depend upon your daily efforts to rescue them from misery and servitude. You are in a fight against evil, and the American people are grateful for your dedication and service.

Human life is the gift of our Creator, and it should never be for sale. It takes a special kind of depravity to exploit and hurt the most vulnerable members of society. Human traffickers rob children of their innocence; they expose them to the worst of life before they have seen much of life. Traffickers tear families apart. They treat their victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder.

Worldwide, at least 600,000 to 800,000 human beings are trafficked across international borders each year. Of those, it is believed that 80 percent are women and girls and that 70 percent of them were forced into sexual servitude. The United Nations believes that the trafficking of human beings is now the third largest source of money for organized crime, after arms and drugs. We've got a problem; we need to do something about it.

The American Government has a particular duty, because human trafficking is an affront to the defining promise of our country. People come to America hoping for a better life. It is a terrible tragedy when anyone comes here only to be forced into a sweatshop, domestic servitude, pornography, or prostitution. It is estimated that between 14,500 and 17,500 victims of trafficking cross our borders every year. U.S. law enforcement has documented cases of Latvian girls trafficked into sexual slavery in Chicago; or Ukrainian girls trafficked in Los Angeles and Maryland; or Thai, Korean, Malaysian, and Vietnamese girls trafficked in Georgia; or Mexican girls trafficked in California, New Jersey, and here in Florida. Many of the victims are teenagers, some as young as 12 years old. Many victims are beaten. Some are killed. Others die spiritual and emotional deaths, convinced after years of abuse that their lives have no worth. This trade in human beings brings suffering to the innocent and shame to our country, and we will lead the fight against it.

Last year, at the United Nations, I called on other governments to pass laws making such abuse a crime. And many have risen to the challenge. In the past year, 24 nations have enacted new laws to combat trade in human lives. Thirty two are now in the process of drafting or passing such laws. As a result of these efforts, this year nearly 8,000 traffickers were prosecuted worldwide; 2,800 have been convicted.

America is actively helping nations that are willing to engage in this fight. Since taking office, my administration has provided more than $295 million to support antitrafficking programs in more than 120 countries. We're taking the lead. We are helping other governments to develop laws to combat abuse, to create special law enforcement units to investigate trafficking cases and to rescue victims. We're helping them build emergency shelters and develop long-term rehabilitation and vocational training programs.

At the U.N. last year, I pledged $50 million to support these efforts in the year 2004. Today the Department of State has announced it has identified the final $25 million to meet that pledge, funds that will support antitrafficking programs in Brazil and Cambodia and India and Indonesia and Mexico, Moldova, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. Every nation that fights human trafficking has a friend in the United States. And it's important for them to know that.

America is also confronting nations that profit from or tolerate human trafficking.

We are helping nations, and we are confronting nations. Those countries face potential sanctions that include the loss of U.S. military and economic assistance as well as the loss of support from the World Bank and the IMF, and this approach is yielding results.

Last year, after the Department of State released the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report, 10 nations avoided sanctions by moving quickly to pass new antitrafficking legislation, to train police officers. They launched domestic information campaigns and established victim protection programs. This year, we have created a Special Watch List of 42 problem countries that require scrutiny. Every nation that is complicit in human trafficking can know that the United States Government is watching, and there will be consequences if they don't act.

As we fight the trade in human beings abroad, we have also launched an unprecedented domestic effort to deal with this problem at home. Our approach combines aggressive law enforcement action—that means putting people in jail—with compassionate outreach to the victims. Over the past 3 years, we have more than doubled the number of new trafficking investigations underway. Last August, for example, a Federal District Court in New Jersey sentenced two women to 17½ years in prison, the maximum time allowable, for bringing four Mexican girls into the United States and forcing them into prostitution in Plainfield, New Jersey—17½ years of hard time. The message to traffickers is becoming clear: If we catch you, you're going to spend time in jail.

This year, the Department of Justice, under General Ashcroft's lead, successfully prosecuted the largest human trafficking case in U.S. history, convicting the ringleader of a criminal gang that had smuggled more than 200 Vietnamese and Chinese nationals to work as slave laborers in a garment factory on American Samoa.

Since 2001, we've charged 110 traffickers. That's triple the number charged in the previous 3 years. We're beginning to make good, substantial progress. The message is getting out: We're serious, and when we catch you, you'll find out we're serious. We're staying on the hunt.

We're also taking unprecedented action to help the victims, and that's a really important part of the strategy. One of the ways traffickers keep women and girls enslaved is by telling them they will be arrested and deported if they try to run away. We're removing that tool of coercion by treating the victims of trafficking not as illegal aliens but as refugees. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act carried a special class of visas called T-Visas that allowed trafficking victims to remain in the United States and receive the same services and counseling that are provided to refugees.

Often, these women have been terribly brutalized. And when they escape from their nightmare, they should find the protection and generous heart of America. So we're calling upon and rallying the armies of compassion in our society to help. Since taking office, this administration has provided $35 million in grants to 36 local groups that are helping those who have suffered at the hands of traffickers. We're using Federal monies to help spread compassion.

Today, the Justice Department is awarding 4.5 million to nine organizations that are running shelters where victims can take refuge while they seek further help. This is a good and proper use of Federal taxpayers' money. Earlier this year, the Department of Health and Human Services helped Covenant House establish a nationwide, toll-free, 24-hour hotline to report incidents of trafficking. Victims and those who know about their plight can call 1–888–373–7888. Spread the word. One speech alone is not going to get the number out. [*Laughter*]

America will not tolerate slave traders who bring women and children into our country for abuse. We will not tolerate

American citizens abusing innocent children abroad. Sex tourism is an estimated billion-dollar-a-year business worldwide. No American should have any part of it. We're working with governments in Southeast Asia to crack down on pedophile sex tourism. And many nations in that region have made substantial progress.

We also face a problem only 90 miles off our shores, where the regime of Fidel Castro has turned Cuba into a major destination for sex tourism. A recent study by the Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University found that Cuba has, quote, "replaced Southeast Asia as a destination for pedophiles and sex tourists." As restrictions on travel to Cuba were eased during the 1990s, the study found an influx of American and Canadian tourists contributed to a sharp increase in child prostitution in Cuba.

The regime in Havana, already one of the worst violators of human rights in the world, is adding to its crimes. The dictator welcomes sex tourism. Here's how he bragged about their industry: "Cuba has the cleanest"—this is his quotes—"Cuba has the cleanest and most educated prostitutes in the world." He said that because sex tourism is a vital source of hard currency to keep his corrupt government afloat. My administration is working toward a comprehensive solution to this problem: The rapid, peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba. We have put a strategy in place to hasten the day when no Cuban child is exploited to finance a failed revolution and every Cuban citizen will live in freedom.

We have taken action to stop American tourists from participating in the sexual abuse of children in Cuba or anywhere else in the world. In 2003, I signed the Protect Act, which allows U.S. law enforcement to prosecute Americans who travel abroad and engage in sex with minors without having to prove prior intent. The Protect Act expands the statute of limitations to the life of the victim for crimes involving the abduction and physical or sexual abuse of children in virtually all cases. The Protect Act imposes strict new penalties, doubling the maximum sentence for U.S. citizens who travel to foreign countries to sexually abuse children. We've also launched information campaigns in foreign countries to inform American travelers of penalties back home for sexually exploiting children abroad.

See, stopping this abuse requires going after the criminal gangs who supply the sexual predators. But we cannot put them out of business until and unless we deal with the problem of demand. And so that's why we are going after the unscrupulous adults who prey on the young and the innocent. Last summer, the Department of Homeland Security launched Operation Predator, a comprehensive effort to protect children from international sex tourists and traffickers and pornography and prostitution rings. That's why Asa Hutchinson is here. This operation has resulted in more than 3,200 arrests nationwide.

I appreciate the good work of all the men and women at every level of government who are working hard to protect women and children and bringing the predators to justice. I told you earlier, it takes hard work. I know it does. There's a lot of people working long hours to enforce the law and therefore make our society a more compassionate place.

All the steps I've outlined today are important; yet, the success will depend on the courage of those individuals, people like Anna Rodriguez. Where are you, Anna? Yes, thanks for coming. She is a victim advocate. I think some of you might have met her earlier today. A few years ago, Anna was working for the Collier County Sheriffs Department when she was called to what appeared to be a routine domestic violence call. Upon arriving at the scene, she noticed a 19-year-old woman named Maria crying quietly in the corner of the apartment. After some coaxing, Maria told Anna Rodriguez her story.

She had been kidnaped from her family in Guatemala. She had been smuggled into the United States. She was being kept as a slave. She was forced to work without pay in the tomato fields of central Florida and then raped at night.

At first, Anna was told by her superiors there was nothing she could do for Maria except turn her case over to the INS. She didn't give up. Anna Rodriguez obviously has a huge heart. Thanks to her persistence, Maria was rescued and her captor is now in prison.

See, Maria became the first adult recipient of the new T visa created under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Because of good law passed, she remains in the U.S. and is working to rebuild her life with the continuing support of her friend Anna Rodriguez.

I hope out of this conference comes a determination to stand behind the Anna Rodriguezes and the thousands of other dedicated police officers, prosecutors, social workers, local officials who stand on the—side by side with the victims of human trafficking every single day, who want to rescue them in the name of a compassionate America.

We're working to make sure you have the support you need in Washington, DC—you've got a Governor who's supporting you here in Florida—because of the struggle against human trafficking is more than a fight against crime, see. This is more than a criminal justice matter. It's a struggle for the lives and dignity of innocent women and children. And that's why all of us must be dedicated to the strategies that will enable us to prevail.

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and talk about this important subject. Again, I thank you for your work of compassion and decency.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:48 a.m. at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General John Ashcroft, who introduced the President; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Remarks in Beckley, West Virginia
July 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you all. What an honor to be here. Thanks for inviting me. And thanks for coming. Turns out I'm the first sitting President to visit the great town of Beckley, West Virginia. I don't know what the other Presidents were thinking—this is a beautiful place.

And I'm so glad to be here. Listen, I'm here to ask for your vote. I've got more to do for our great country, and I'm here to ask for your help. What you need to do is to call your friends and neighbors up and make sure they're registered to vote. Tell them they have a duty here in this great country to participate in democracy. And when you get them headed to the polls, you might just tell them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country for 4 more years. With your help, I was proud to carry the great State of West Virginia in 2000, and with your help, we'll carry it in 2004.

My only regret is that Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] Kind of, why don't you stay home and let her carry the load.

[*Laughter*] The reason why is she's a great First Lady and a fabulous woman. I'm going to give you a lot of reasons why you need to put me back in office for 4 more years, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

She's not here, but one of our daughters is with us. Barbara is traveling with me today, and I'm so proud of Barbara. Thanks for coming, darling.

I appreciate very much Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito. I appreciate her service. I appreciate her friendship. She's a breath of fresh air in the United States Congress.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I appreciate you coming. I appreciate the great hospitality.

I want to thank Susan Landis. I met Susan at the airport today. The reason I did is because she is an active volunteer in your community. You know, the strength of America is in our hearts and souls, and Susan represents the thousands in this part of the world who take time out of their lives to volunteer. She volunteers for Make It Shine beautification project. She works in food pantries. She represents the best of the country. Thanks for coming, Susan.

And when you're taking people to the polls, or when you're trying to convince them to vote for us, remind them of this: The last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers.

Remind them that we came to office with a stock market in decline and an economy headed into a recession. But we acted. We delivered historic tax relief. And over the past 3 years, America has the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network. And we will stay on the hunt until justice is served and America is safe.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, so we acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

I'm running with a really good man, Dick Cheney. When we came to office, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resource and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and prosperity of America. You see, it is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. The President has to make hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that is how I will continue to lead our great Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm ready for the race. I'm looking forward to the contest. I like campaigning. I like to get out with the people. And this is going to be a tough race. That's why I'm here to ask for your help.

I'm running against an experienced United States Senator.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington a long, long time——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voted for the PATRIOT Act. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for No Child Left Behind Act, and he voted for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT

Act, NAFTA, and the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. If you disagree with my opponent on almost any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day.

He recently even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know it—I know it. That's what he said, though. [*Laughter*] It's kind of hard to square with the previous statement when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*]

Now he's got him a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Back in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm here asking for your vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend the peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm here asking for your vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm here asking for your vote because I have a plan and a strategy to continue to rally the compassionate spirit of this country, so every American has a chance to realize the great promise of America. We are going to win, and after 4 more years, America will be safer, stronger, and better.

A big issue for every family in America is the Federal tax burden. By providing the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government could have.

This economy of ours is strong, and it's growing stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added 1.5 million new jobs. Here in the great State of West Virginia, the unemployment rate is 5.2 percent. That's down more than a full point since last summer. The manufacturing sector of our country is growing stronger. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. [*Laughter*] Whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism.

The surest way to end economic growth and put Americans out of work is to adopt their plan. This Nation is on the path of progress and opportunity, and we are not going back.

To sustain this growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes right now would undermine growth and destroy jobs, just as the economy is getting stronger.

To help grow the American economy and create more jobs for West Virginia workers and American workers, I have a better idea: The Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent. The Congress does not need to raise taxes on the working people of America.

We've got money to spend in Washington. We just need to set priorities. We need spending discipline in the Nation's Capital, and that starts with understanding whose money we spend. We don't spend the Government's money; we spend the people's money.

I've got a plan to make sure this economy not only grows this year but in the

years to come. We've got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for small-business owners to expand. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I will continue to push Congress to end the junk and frivolous lawsuits that hurt the small-business owners of America.

In order to make sure we've got jobs not only this year but in the years to come, we've got to make sure Americans have better health care and more affordable health care. That means association health plans and giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health savings accounts. And for the sake of reasonable costs in health care and for the sake—for the availability of health care, we need to have medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

To make sure we grow our economy, we must reject economic isolationism. We must be a confident nation. See, here's what I believe: If there is a level playing field, American workers, American entrepreneurs, American farmers and ranchers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

And in order to make sure this economy is strong today and strong tomorrow so the people of West Virginia can continue to find jobs, we need a sound energy policy. I submitted an energy plan to the United States Congress. It's stuck. Here in West Virginia—you know this—a vital part of an energy strategy is coal. When I campaigned in this State in 2000, I said that we would have coal as an integral part of our national energy strategy and that I would push clean coal technology. I have met that promise. And I will continue to support clean coal technology so powerplants can burn West Virginia coal and America can be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

There is a difference of opinion in this campaign. My opponent calls coal a dirty energy source.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Last year, he supported a bill that the Department of Energy estimates would cost up to 50,000 jobs in the coal industry over the next two decades. He voted against Senator Byrd's legislation to save the mining industry in this State. On the campaign trail here in Beckley, Senator Kerry said he plans to declare energy independence for our country, but you cannot be independent without West Virginia coal.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved, and I resolved, to fight the terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state. It was a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to the school for the first time in Afghanistan.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world and had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget, and it is the lesson

America must never forget. America must confront threats before they fully materialize. Remembering the past behavior of Saddam Hussein, remembering the fact that he hated America, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. I want you to remember that the previous administration and Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our country.

In 2002, I went to the United Nations. The U.N. Security Council demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply. He deceived the inspectors. He would not allow for the inspectors to find out what he had. So I had a choice to make: Either ignore the warnings of September—lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action to defend the United States. Given that choice, I will defend America.

Although we have not found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, I believe we were right to go into Iraq, and America is safer today because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have an important and difficult work to do. Our immediate tasks in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. You see, you cannot talk sense to the terrorists. You can't negotiate with terrorists. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We will engage the enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

In a country as big as ours, there is no such thing as perfect security. And the threats to our homeland are real. We know the terrorists want to strike us. They want to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. We reorganized our Government to better protect our homeland. You just need to know, there's a lot of really good people at the Federal level, at the State level, at the local level working hard on your behalf. We're doing everything we possibly can to run down intelligence leads and to disrupt a potential threat to the United States of America. And I know you join me in thanking the police and firefighters and emergency teams of Beckley, West Virginia, for their hard work.

For the next 4 years, we will defend our homeland; we will defeat the terrorists abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders, when the people decide their own future.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're brining hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our country. You see, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

America is leading the world. We're leading the world, and the world is changing for the better. Three years ago, Afghanistan was home to Al Qaida. Now, the terror camps are closed, democracy is rising, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now, the Pakistan Government is committed to

bringing Al Qaida to justice, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Saudi Arabia—in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were moving with little opposition. Now, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and the American people are safer for it. Three years ago, there was a proliferation network run by A.Q. Khan. The CIA discovered the plot. We have disrupted it and dismantled the organization, and the American people are safer for it. Three years ago—just 3 years ago—Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it.

The world is changing because of American leadership. The dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons. He could have passed them on to terrorists. Now he's sitting in a prison cell, and the American people are safer for it.

We will finish the work in Afghanistan and Iraq. Free societies in that troubled part of the world are in the interest of the United States of America. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies will serve as an example for other people and other troubled countries. Afghanistan and Iraq now have strong leadership, people who have stepped up and are willing to battle the terrorists for the good of the people in those countries. These people are counting on us. They're counting on the United States of America to support them in their ambitions for liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

We've got a lot of fine troops here from the West Virginia National Guard who have served our country with distinction, and I want to thank them for their service. At bases across our country and the world, I have had the privilege of meeting those who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. I have met with the loved ones of those who have sacrificed, paid the ultimate sacrifice. I have assured them, to honor the memory of their loved one, we will complete the mission.

And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. I'll make sure our troops have the best. They deserve the best. And that's why last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators—2 of the 12—are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain his vote, Senator Kerry said this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. Now he's offering a different explanation. Earlier this week, Senator Kerry said he is proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And yesterday, he said that his vote against funding for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan was complicated. No, there's nothing complicated about supporting our troops. As the Commander in Chief of a great United States military, I will make sure they have what is necessary so they can do their jobs.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. And we've got others to help us. We've got a vast coalition of nations working together, and that's good. There are over 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. More than 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I'll continue to work to build alliances and to work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The night before he came to Beckley, my opponent said that a bunch of Hollywood entertainers conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found right here in Beckley, West Virginia.

Our Nation is strong—our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose: our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

Listen, we stand for high standards in our public schools. We stand for local control of our public schools. We stand for accountability in our public schools so no child is left behind in America. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal help for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We reject the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. We stand for institutions like marriage and family which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. We stand strongly for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms.

My position and my record stands in stark contrast to my opponent's record of voting against the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Listen, as a sportsman, I understand that gun ownership carries serious responsibilities. When someone uses a gun to commit a crime, they should be prosecuted and sent to jail. Over the past 3 years, Federal prosecutions of crime committed with firearms have increased by 68 percent. The way to make our communities safer is to lock up more gun-toting criminals, not to restrict the constitutional liberties of law-abiding citizens.

And we're building a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of our country is changing 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 are 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 worried about the quality of education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high, when the challenges are difficult—a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm—I can't remember if he was a firefighter or a policeman—and he said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend our country, whatever it takes. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

In these times, I have also been witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in this country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

We have a duty to work to spread opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed Nation, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. Proud you're here. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. at the Raleigh County Armory Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Funding for the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

July 16, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In order to ensure the most effective counter-proliferation capabilities of the United States and respond effectively to the ongoing threat of terrorist activity, I am notifying the Congress of my intent to transfer $10 million from funds provided in Public Law 107–38, the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Acts on the United States, to the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (the "Commission").

These funds are necessary to support the essential activities of the Commission in assessing the capabilities and challenges of the intelligence community regarding the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996
July 16, 2004

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beginning August 1, 2004, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Message to the Senate Transmitting a Protocol Amending the Netherlands-United States Convention on Taxation
July 16, 2004

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington, D.C., on March 8, 2004. Transmitted for the Senate's information is an exchange of notes with an attached Understanding, which provides clarification with respect to the application of the Convention, as amended, in specific cases. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocol.

The Protocol would bring the existing Convention into closer conformity with current U.S. tax treaty policy. As modified by the Protocol, the Convention would be similar to tax treaties between the United States and other developed nations. The Protocol was concluded in recognition of the importance of the United States' economic relations with the Netherlands.

The Protocol would modify the treatment of certain cross-border dividend payments and would modernize the Convention's anti-treaty-shopping provisions. The Protocol also would liberalize provisions in the existing Convention regarding the mutual recognition of each country's pension plans. Other provisions in the Protocol update the Convention to take account of changes in law in the two countries over the last 10 years. The exchange of notes with an attached Understanding provides guidance to taxpayers and each government regarding the intended interpretation of certain provisions of the existing Convention, as amended.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol,

and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
July 16, 2004.

The President's Radio Address
July 17, 2004

Good morning. Every day in America, parents struggle to raise their children in a culture that too often glorifies instant gratification and irresponsible behavior. During this time of great change in our Nation, Government must stand with families to help them raise healthy, responsible children.

Yesterday, the Federal Government released its annual report called "America's Children in Brief." This report collects a broad range of statistics that tell us about the promises and challenges facing America's young people. The good news is, is that we have made significant progress during the past decade. Strong families and communities are instilling responsibility and character in our children, and we are seeing encouraging results.

Violent crime among our teenagers has decreased dramatically. From 1993 to 2002, the rate of teens committing violent crimes dropped 78 percent, and the rate of teens becoming victims of violent crimes dropped 74 percent. Among our youth, smoking and illicit drug use have declined. Teen birth rates have fallen to the lowest levels ever recorded, with the greatest progress occurring among African American teenagers.

Studies tell us that children raised in a household with married parents are far less likely to live in poverty, fail at school, or have behavioral problems. Fortunately, after a decades-long downward trend, the percentage of children living with married parents has remained steady since 1995. And through our proposed Healthy Marriages Initiative, my administration is committed to ensuring that more of our children grow up in a stable home with a married mother and father.

We are headed in the right direction, but we still have work to do, so my administration is acting to encourage teens to make healthy choices. Although teen drug use has decreased, we can and must do more. We know that random drug testing in schools is effective, and it allows us to identify kids who need help. In my most recent budget, I proposed spending an additional $23 million for school drug testing. And although teen birth rates have declined, about 3 million of our teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases each year. So we've requested a doubling of Federal funding for abstinence-only education programs. We have also requested $25 million for our Character Education Initiative. This program will encourage schools to develop curricula that promote good character and help children develop a sense of responsibility to their community. Today I urge the Congress to act on all these important initiatives.

When parents, schools, and government work together, we can counter the negative influences in today's culture and send the right messages to our children. As yesterday's report shows, we are making progress in changing the culture of America from one that 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. The decisions our children make now will affect their health and character for the rest of their lives. And when they make the right choices,

they are preparing themselves to realize the bright future our Nation offers each of them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:16 a.m. on July 16 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Ricardo Lagos of Chile and an Exchange With Reporters

July 19, 2004

President Bush. We'll answer a couple of questions. First, I'll say something; the President will say something. I'll call upon an American correspondent; he'll call upon a Chilean correspondent; and we'll do this two times.

First, *bienvenidos*. I'm glad you're here, Mr. President. Ricardo Lagos is a very wise man, who is—understands the politics of South America very well and is very worldly, and so I always enjoy visiting with him. He's a man of good advice and sound counsel. And so I'm looking forward to our continued discussions over lunch.

One of the things that has worked well is the free trade agreement with Chile, and we talked about that today. It turns out, Chilean exports to the United States are up, but United States exports to Chile are up as well. And that's a positive development. It's good for the people of Chile, and it's good for the people of the United States. And our relations are strong, and they're important relations.

And so, Mr. President, welcome. I'm glad you're here. I'm looking forward to our continued discussions.

President Lagos. Thank you. Well, let me tell you that I am extremely happy to be here again, to be able to discuss and talk with President Bush about what are the major areas in the region. Also, we were update on the later developments in the Middle East.

And at the same time I think, as President Bush have say, our free trade agreement has been working in the right direction. And we're extremely happy to see that. Later on, we would like also to see what do we have in the next APEC meeting in November and what are the trade discussions in the Doha round next month—next week.

And I will say that so that from the point of the view of the region, President Bush has been able to have a lot of commitments to the region, and we were discussing also our own commitment in Chile with regard to Haiti, what we are doing in the region. And I think that it's very important, as President Bush has told us, in a sense, that the U.S. is going to continue backing, helping the Haitian people. In Spanish?

President Bush. Si.

[*At this point, President Lagos spoke in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

President Bush. Pues, la primera pregunta de el hombre de AP.

President Lagos. I will translate. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thank you.

President Bush. That would be you.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States Recommendations on Intelligence

Q. Thank you. The Acting Director of the CIA says he sees no need to create a Cabinet-level National Director of Intelligence. Does he speak for you and your administration when he says that, Mr. President? And speaking of the CIA, can you give us an update on when you expect to name a new Director?

President Bush. The 9/11 Commission will issue a report this week and, evidently, will lay out recommendations for reform of the intelligence services of the United States. I look forward to seeing those recommendations. They share the same desires I share, which is to make sure that the President and the Congress gets the best possible intelligence.

I have spoken about the reforms. Some of the reforms, I think, are necessary: more human intelligence; better ability to listen or to see things; and better coordination amongst the variety of intelligence gathering services. And so we'll look at all their recommendations, and I will comment upon that, having studied what they say.

Director of Central Intelligence Nomination

Q. And the new Director appointment?

President Bush. Still thinking about it. Let you know when it's going to happen. I wouldn't—I know there's intense speculation over time; people get their hopes built up. And still—still taking a good, hard look.

Riggs Bank Investigation

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Yes.

Q. ——from Chile. We've been hearing a lot in the past few days about the Riggs investigation that found out hidden accounts of Senator Pinochet. I understand two Senators that are working in that committee are asking the Justice Department to take legal actions. Is that possible? What consequences can that have?

President Bush. Well, I think the people of Chile must know that there will be a full investigation. It's important for the facts to be *en la mesa*, as we say, on the table, and—so that we know what course of action may or may not be needed. And that's what you're seeing. You're seeing a transparent society dealing with allegations and/or—and the Riggs Bank is being fully investigated, and they'll be investigated in a very open way.

And the President brought this issue up. Of course, he's concerned about it as well. He wants to know the truth. And I appreciate that, and we'll make sure that people do know the truth. And that's what you're seeing. You're beginning to see the process of truth-finding.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Q. Sir——

President Bush. Esteban.

Iran

Q. Thank you. We're hearing now that eight of the September 11th hijackers passed through Iran before attacking the United States. Do you think there's a September 11th link to Iran?

President Bush. Well, listen, we want—of course, we want to know all the facts. Acting Director McLaughlin said there was no direct connection between Iran and the attacks of September the 11th. We will continue to look and see if the Iranians were involved. I have long expressed my concerns about Iran. After all, it's a totalitarian society where free people are not allowed to exercise their rights as human beings.

I have made it clear that if the Iranians would like to have better relations with the United States, there are some things they must do. For example, they're harboring Al Qaida leadership there, and we've asked that they be turned over to their respective countries. Secondly, they've got a nuclear weapons program that they need to dismantle. We're working with other countries to encourage them to do so. Thirdly,

they've got to stop funding terrorist organizations such as Hizballah that create great dangers in parts of the world.

No, this has been an issue that I have been concerned about ever since I've been the President. As to direct connections with September the 11th, we're digging into the facts to determine if there was one.

Chile's Role in Haiti

Q. ——from Chile. What do you think about the role that Chile is playing in the reconstruction in Haiti and as observer of the political referendum in Venezuela?

President Bush. Listen, the Chilean response in Haiti was rapid and important. President Lagos is a decisive man, and when he saw a problem, he went to the people of Chile and explained the problem and responded. And I want to thank him for that. It was—Chile is making a very important contribution to the stability and, hopefully, the prosperity of Haiti. And we spent a lot of time talking about, today, about how the United States can continue to not only stay involved but to help. And I find it very interesting that the United Nations is sending a very distinguished citizen from Chile to Haiti to help stabilize that country so the people of Haiti have a chance to live a hopeful life.

And that's going to require security measures, and as the President mentioned—I think you said in Spanish—there's a donors conference tomorrow—it's a very important conference, and that we will be attending, along with Chile, to see if we can't set priorities for the people of Haiti * so they have a chance to live a good life.

And the second part of the question was?

Chile's Role in the Venezuela Referendum

President Lagos. Venezuela.

Q. About political referendum——

President Bush. Oh, Venezuela, yes, again, this is a—Chile plays a very important role in our neighborhood, and the referendum in Venezuela is an important referendum. And the referendum must be conducted in a honest and open way. And the influence of President Lagos is a very important influence, because he has made it clear that for the credibility of the current Government, they must welcome observers, they must encourage observers, and they must not interfere with the process, so that the people of Venezuela have a chance to express their opinion without fear of reprisal.

And so again, I want to thank my friend Ricardo Lagos for playing a very constructive role.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John E. McLaughlin, Acting Director of Central Intelligence; and Juan Gabriel Valdes, U.N. Special Representative and head of the U.N. Mission in Haiti. A reporter referred to Chilean Senator Augusto Pinochet, former President of Chile.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad bin Badawi of Malaysia

July 19, 2004

President Bush. We'll have just two statements. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Abdullah. Thank you very much.

* White House correction.

President Bush. We just had a very wide-ranging discussion. I appreciate the Prime Minister's friendship. I want to thank him for his leadership. I want to thank him for the cooperation on counterterrorism efforts.

We talked about how we can work together to improve the economic condition of both our countries, as well as the Middle East. He had some very interesting suggestions about the Middle East. We talked about the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and I assured him I am fully committed to the development of a Palestinian state that can live side by side with Israel in peace.

We talked about Iraq, and I told him I was pleased with the progress being made in Iraq. And the Prime Minister had some helpful suggestions. So, all in all, it's been a very constructive meeting.

I was pleased to hear that there are 7,000 Malaysian students in U.S. schools, and I think that's a constructive sign, Mr. Prime Minister. And I wish them all the best, and I know they'll be treated well here in the United States.

So welcome, sir.

Prime Minister Abdullah. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for accepting me to come here to call on you in spite of your very busy schedule.

But I would like to say this, that our bilateral relation between the United States and Malaysia is certainly very strong. You cannot judge our bilateral relations simply on the basis of what you hear—that we may have some differences on Iraq or on Palestine. But the foundation of the bilateral relation has remained strong all the time. And our economic cooperation is excellent, I must say, and our education programs, and we have some other cooperation in defense and many areas of cooperation, which has made our relation with the United States—our relation is very, very, very strong.

And we believe—and I believe that more can be done, and we have already improved a lot. And today I have this assurance from the President, himself. And I am certainly grateful you have been able to explain to me so many aspects of the issues pertaining to Palestine and Israel. There's nothing better than to get from the President of the United States, himself, on all these issues because he is very much involved. And management of all these problems and issues relating to this Palestine and Israel and so—other issues too.

And we talked about Islam, and we believe that the Muslim countries can be helped to better understanding the unique capacity-building. And we are also trying to do whatever we can. I think this capacity-building can help to reduce poverty, the condition of poverty, and with that, deprive the terrorists of their own agenda to hijack these people, and to support them.

And at the same time, I'd like just to tell you that Malaysia is ready to send a medical team, a sizable medical team to Iraq.

President Bush. That's great. Thank you.

Prime Minister Abdullah. And we hope to be able to also participate in reconstruction of Iraq and do whatever job we can to help.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks in a Discussion at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

July 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Please be seated.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to serve this Nation for 4 more years. And I've got a reason. I've got a reason. I want to continue to make this a safer and stronger and better place for every citizen.

We've got a little different format today. It's an opportunity for me to interface with some of your citizens about why I've done some of the policies that I've done, give them a chance to explain to you how these policies might have helped. Oh, I know, you're probably here thinking I'm going to spend most of the time attacking my opponent. I've got too much good to talk about.

It's very important for the people of this important State to know that we're going to carry the State of Iowa. And I need your help. Listen, there's a place you can go on the web page—I mean, on the Internet called georgewbush.com. And you need to get on there if you want to figure out how to help. So you can get on there, and you can register to vote, or you can figure out ways to help people register to vote, or you can sign up to work in your neighborhood. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do, because we've got a plan to make sure this country is a better place. And I want your help to convincing people from all walks of life, Republicans and discerning Democrats and wise independents.

I am sorry that Laura is not with us.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, "I wish she'd come and you'd have stayed at home." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, however, our two daughters came today, and I'm proud—I'm really glad they're on the campaign trail with me. It's makes the days a little shorter and the trips a lot more fun.

I want to thank the good people here at this wonderful community college. Norm, I want to thank you. Thanks for having me, Norm, here at Kirkwood. I'm going to talk a little bit about community colleges. They're an integral part of making sure America's future is hopeful, as we want it to be. Thanks for opening it up. It's not easy to host the President. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the mayor; Mayor Paul Pate from Cedar Rapids is with us today. Thanks for coming, Mayor. I know Chuck Gipp is here. I want to thank Chuck for coming as well, the majority leader of the house of representatives. I want to thank all the other State and local officials. Most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank you all.

It's very important—it's very important for the people of this country to understand the stakes that we're confronted with, to understand the challenges we face. The enemy declared war on us, and you've just got to know, nobody wants to be the war President. I want to be the peace President. I want to be the President that after 4 years, 4 more in this office, I want people to look back and say, "The world is a more peaceful place. America is a safer country." Four more years, and America will be safer and the world will be more peaceful.

But in this world, you just can't hope for the best; you have to lead. You have to make the hard decisions to make sure America is a safer place and the world is a more peaceful place.

It's very important never to forget the lessons of that fateful day which changed

American history. Let me tell you some of the lessons that I have learned and will continue to apply as your President. First, the terrorists, these radicals who use terror to scare us and frighten us and shake our will, are nothing but a bunch of cold-blooded killers. You cannot talk sense to them. You cannot negotiate with them. They must be brought to justice, in order to make the country more secure. This country is a peaceful country. This country is a country that yearns for freedom and peace. But when the enemy hit us, we resolved—we as a nation resolved—to stay firm and diligent, to do whatever it takes to defend our security.

The second lesson I learned and America must always remember is that when the country says something, we better mean it. In order to make this world a more peaceful place, when we say something, we better act on what we say. And so I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists, themselves." That's a part of making sure America is more secure. It's one thing to resolve to bring the terrorists to justice—and we are. Al Qaida is slowly but surely being dismantled because of our brave troops and because of our allies. But I also recognized that you cannot allow these radicals, these people who have hijacked a religion, nonreligious people who have hijacked a great religion, to find safe haven.

And so we said to the Taliban that was running Afghanistan, "Get rid of them. Join our side." They refused, of course, and so I had the tough decision to make—and that is to enforce our word in order to make the world a better place. And we did, and we removed the Taliban. And there are no longer Al Qaida training camps. As a matter of fact, Afghanistan is going to hold Presidential elections. And you need to be proud of the fact that your Nation liberated a country so that many young girls now go to school for the first time in their lives.

A second lesson of September the 11th is this very important lesson that I will always remember and I hope the country will always remember, that when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes; that we can no longer, when we see a threat, we can no longer hope for the best. We used to think we could hope for the best, until September the 11th changed it all. And now we must deal with it. The military will always be our last option—the last option. But we must deal with threats.

And so I just want to step back and remind you all of the facts. Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He is a person who had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He is a person that was allowing terrorists to exit and enter his country, and he provided safe haven for terrorist organizations like that of Abu Nidal or Zarqawi. In other words, he was a danger. Everybody knew he was a danger. After all, the United Nations Security Council had said he was a danger in resolution after resolution after resolution.

I looked at the intelligence—I looked at the intelligence, and it said Saddam Hussein was a threat to the United States. Members of the United States Congress of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they came to the same conclusion I came to. Then the U.N. Security Council, yet again, looked at the intelligence and said, "The man is a threat." They also said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what was said by the free world. The world came together and said that. And so we said, "Okay, fine, we'll give him one last chance. It's his choice to make; he gets to make the choice." And he deceived the inspectors. These people who have been over there studying what went on have made it clear. I saw that happening. And then—at least we thought it was happening; it's been verified that it was happening. "What did he have to hide," the free world was saying to themselves. "Why would he not allow inspectors in?" See, he was a threat. He

made the choice, not the United States of America. He defied the world.

And I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best? Do I trust the word of a madman? Or do we take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

For a while, we were marching to war; now, we're marching to peace. The world is becoming more peaceful. I told you about Afghanistan; it's a free society. No one would have thought 3 years ago—remember what the world was like 3 years ago? Three years ago, Afghanistan was a troubled area run by the Taliban. Three years ago, Iraq was run by a sworn enemy of the country who was torturing his own people; he had mass graves by the thousands for the people in his country. And today, Iraq is run by a person who believes in the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people, a strong leader named Prime Minister Allawi, a person who wants there to be a free society in Iraq.

And I'm going to tell you something, this is an historic moment. A free Iraq will change the world. A free Iraq will not only make America's short-term security interests better; it will make our long-term security interests better, because the way to defeat the radicals who promote terrorist activity to frighten us and drive us out of the world is to spread freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies. Because we have led—because we have led, 50 million people that once lived in tyranny are now free, and the world is better for it.

Three years ago, Pakistan recognized the Taliban, and Al Qaida was able to transit their country without worry. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. They're chasing down Al Qaida leadership in the remote regions of that country, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Saudi Arabia wasn't that worried about Al Qaida. Today, Saudi Arabia is chasing down the Al Qaida leadership. They are bringing them to justice. America is safer for it. Three years ago—3 years ago, Libya—Libya was a friend of the terrorists. Libya had weapons of mass destruction programs. Libya was a danger. Today, Libya has dismantled her programs, and America is safer for it. In three short years, because America has led with friends and allies, the world is changing for the better. The world is becoming a more free place, and therefore, the world is becoming a more peaceful place.

I want to make a couple of more points about our foreign policy and what I intend to do over 4 years. First, let me share an interesting story with you. It's one that has touched my heart deeply. Seven men walked into the Oval Office from Iraq. First of all, coming to the Oval Office is a—it's a pretty powerful experience, American or Iraqi. [*Laughter*] It's the kind of place where people stand outside the door, and they say, "I can't wait to get in there and tell him what for." [*Laughter*] And they walk in, and they get overwhelmed by the Oval Office and say, "Man, you're looking pretty, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

So these seven come in; all of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed somebody to blame. This story was picked up and put on TV, and a fellow in Houston, Texas, saw it, a guy named Marvin Zindler. He flew them down, at his—I guess at the expense of a foundation he's put together, and they got new hands. And now they're coming to the United States to see me. I can't tell you what a powerful moment that was. A guy grabbed a pen, and he wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. What a stark contrast between the brutality of a dictator and the great compassion of a free country. He told me, he said—one of those men said, "Thank you, Mr. President." I said, "You don't thank me." I said, "You thank the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States and their loved ones."

We have done the hard work, and there's more hard work to do. But this world is a more peaceful world. And when you give me 4 more years, it's going to be even more peaceful than it is today. We're making progress. We're making progress.

By the way, to whom much has been given, much is owed. Not only are we leading the world in terms of encouraging freedom and peace, we're feeding the hungry; we're taking care of, as best as we possibly can, the victims of HIV/AIDS. No, this is a strong nation, but we are a compassionate nation. And this country ought to be proud of the great heart, the collective heart of the American people. I sure am.

One other point I want to make; then I want to talk about our economy and how to make sure America is a stronger place. We will—we've got great allies. Listen, Great Britain is leading, Poland, Italy. There are 60 countries working on the Proliferation Security Initiative. There are 30 countries in Iraq, 40 countries—nearly 40 in Afghanistan. We've got people working well together. But you need to know something about me: I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We need to make sure the country is a stronger country. That starts by making sure the economy continues to grow. Right quick, we've been through a recession. We've been through an emergency. We've been through a war. We have been through corporate scandals, and we're growing—and we're growing. The economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. And I think one of the reasons why is because I understand the role of Government is not to try to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur, the small-business person, the farmer can thrive. And we have done just that.

The unemployment rate here is 4.3 percent. That's good. The people of this State are working. Our economy is growing at nearly the fastest rate in 20 years. Homeownership rate is at the highest ever. That's what we want in America, isn't it? We want people owning their own home. We want people owning their own piece of property. Manufacturing is up. And I believe one of the main reasons why is because we cut the taxes on the working people here in the country. We let people keep more of their own money. I like to say, when the American people invest, save, they help create new jobs, which shows they can spend their money far better than the Federal Government can.

So the question is, what are you going to do over the next 4 years to make sure the job growth continues? Here's what we're going to do. We're going to make sure tax policy is fair and consistent. We're not going to let them raise the taxes on you. And I'm going to talk to a couple—we're about to talk to a couple from Cedar Rapids that will help me make my point. By the way, we're about to talk to a small-business owner. You'll find that much of the progrowth program that I promoted in Congress is aimed right at the small-business sector of America. Do you know why? Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by the small-business owners. We've got to make sure the small-business sector is healthy in this country.

In order to make sure we continue to grow, we need sensible energy policy in America. You know something? Driving in this—through this part of the world, which I have done before, I might add, quite a few times—I'm better for it—[*laughter*]—it just reminded me once again, wouldn't it be wonderful for somebody to walk up and say, "Mr. President, the corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." So any reasonable energy policy is to encourage research and development to make sure we can use ethanol better and biodiesel better. It makes sense. It makes sense.

We've got to make sure that we conserve energy better. But listen, we can do things in environmentally friendly ways that we couldn't do 20 years ago. For the sake of

national security and economic security, we need to be developing the resources we have here at home to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

You can't have a healthy economy if everybody is getting sued. We need legal reform in this country. We need to make sure people aren't constantly—you ask these small-business owners what it's like to fear a lawsuit, and they're going to tell you, it makes their future uncertain. And with an uncertain future, it makes it more difficult to risk capital.

We need good trade policy. I came to the people of this State and said, "I will work to open up markets for Iowa farmers." I said two things during the campaign. I said, one, we'll promote ethanol, alternative sources of energy. We have done that. And the second thing I said is, we will work to open up markets for Iowa farmers. When you're good at something, we ought to be encouraging it. We're good at growing soybeans. We're good at growing corn, and we're now selling it all around the world.

The temptation is to say, well, you know, we better shut her down; we better have economic isolationism. That would be bad for Iowa. To make sure that we got jobs in the future, we need to be confident. Now look, we've opened up our markets for foreign goods. That's good for consumers. It just wasn't me. It was Presidents before me that made that decision. See, if you have more goods coming in, you have more choices. And when you have more choices as a consumer, you're going to get better quality at better price. That's how the marketplace works. What we need to do is make sure other countries treat us like we treat them. We've got to make sure we have a level playing field for Iowa's entrepreneurs and farmers.

Two other quick points: One, we've got to have reasonable health care, affordable health care. That's why I support association health plans, health savings accounts, and medical liability reform. Listen, no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. Ask your docs what it's like to have the legal system look like a lottery. It doesn't do the consumers any good; it doesn't do the providers any good; it doesn't do small-business owners any good to have a legal system that is not fair and balanced. We need medical liability reform.

So last night on the Truman Balcony, guess who was up there? Chuck Grassley. He said, "Would you mind mentioning my name?" [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] I just did. [*Laughter*] He said, "When you go to Iowa, remind them of a promise you made and I made and we kept, and that was to reform Medicare." We reformed Medicare not only to help our seniors—and it's a good bill, and it's going to make a big difference in the lives of the senior citizens of this country—we also reformed Medicare to make sure that Iowa's rural hospitals are treated fairly. So when you see the Senator, you tell him I mentioned his name.

Finally, I want to work hard for 4 more years to make sure the country is a better country. There's two ways to do—there's a lot of ways to do that; let me talk about two. One, we must continue on education reform. We must make sure that every child—every child—can learn to read and write and add and subtract. And we're making great progress; we really are. We've raised the standard. We've raised the standard. And in return for increased Federal money, we're now asking this question, "Can you read?" That's not an unreasonable question to ask, is it? No. We want every child reading at the third-grade level. And it starts by asking, "Show us whether you can."

See, the system oftentimes quit on people. They just shuffled them through. It's what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. And guess who got left behind oftentimes? Families—kids of families who don't speak English as a first language—that's pretty easy to quit on them, isn't it? You walk into a classroom—"Oh, these are the

hard-to-educate; just move them through." And that doesn't work. Or how about inner-city, African American kids, oftentimes they're just moved through. We've stopped that practice in Washington, DC. We said, "We'll increase the money, but we're raising the bar, because we know every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. And now, we want you to show us."

And not only do we want to make sure people are literate in the fourth grade, we're going to make sure people are able to have access to community colleges and to make sure that community colleges continue to teach subjects which are relevant. We're about to talk to a fellow Iowan who went back to school at a community college, and as result of continuing education, now makes more money than she did in her previous job. I mean, education is crucial to make sure the economy continues to grow, and it's crucial to make sure we're a better America.

Now finally, one of the most important initiatives that—I think one of the most important initiatives that we put forth was the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative. I'll tell you why. You see, some of the problems that people face are really problems of the heart. And Government can't change hearts, but hearts can be changed by loving individuals who are inspired by something greater than Government.

Take, for example, alcohol and drug abuse. We want to save people's lives in America, and sometimes it requires a higher power to help change somebody's life. You change their heart; they change their habits. And Government, therefore, ought not to fear welcoming and opening up grants to programs whose sole being is based upon faith.

In the past it wasn't that way. In the past, they'd say, we can't have an interface with Government and faith. And, by the way, many in the faith community say, "Why do I want to interface with Government? Bureaucracies cause me to lose my mission." We've changed that attitude in Washington. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to promote this Faith- and Community-Based Initiative so that we help save more lives and provide more hope for the American people.

I'm running because I want to make sure America is a safer and stronger and better place. And that's why I'm here, to ask for your help.

Now, let me tell you something. I met John today, John Bloomhall. There he is. Stand up, John. [*Applause*] Yes, that's kind of nice, scattered round of applause for him. I've asked John to come because he is the president and chief executive officer of Diamond V Mills. Accurate?

John Bloomhall. Yes, correct.

The President. Let me say one thing about how his company is structured, to put this in context. His company is what's called a Subchapter S corporation. As a matter of fact, 90 percent of small businesses—about 90 percent—are either called Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. And what that means is they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. So part of our tax policy, as you might recall, was to reduce income taxes at the individual income-tax level, including all income tax rates—not just some, not just the politically favored. But the view was, if you pay tax, you get relief.

So what does your company do?

Mr. Bloomhall. We—it's yeast fermentation; we manufacture a animal feed ingredient for animal feeds.

The President. Good. Are the animals eating it this year?

Mr. Bloomhall. A lot of it. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's good. [*Laughter*] Are they eating enough of it to—like, have you hired anybody?

Mr. Bloomhall. Yes, we've added five net new jobs this year.

The President. Yes. See, let me stop you there. Most new jobs are created—started by small businesses. John just stood up and

said, "Five net new jobs." Now, that's not a lot, when you think about it. It's a lot for the person who got the job. [*Laughter*] And by the way, there are a lot of Johns in this country who have their own business. There's a huge number of small businesses. They're adding five employees here, five there.

Keep going.

Mr. Bloomhall. Well, we've got 124 employees worldwide. They're the best and the brightest, because as we can save taxes and reinvest it in our business—in capital, in the equipment to automate our manufacturing lines, in science—we hire Ph.D.'s, real good-paying jobs. And we can grow jobs and investment in our country better than the Government can by collecting taxes.

The President. I didn't tell him to say that. But I couldn't have said it any better myself. John said, "Investment." One of the things in the tax relief plan that we passed, it says to small businesses, "We'll encourage you to invest by allowing you what they call bonus depreciation." These are fancy tax words; I'm trying to simplify it. It says, "You invest in planned equipment; you get a tax break for doing so."

Are you going to invest, do you think, this year?

Mr. Bloomhall. Yes, we're investing about 1.3 million this year.

The President. Yes. What do you—when you say "invest," what does that mean? Are you buying things?

Mr. Bloomhall. Primarily capital investment in our plant and equipment.

The President. Like what kind of plant and equipment?

Mr. Bloomhall. Automation equipment so that our employees are not doing the manual jobs; they're doing the thinking jobs. They create greater value to us; we can pay them more; and everybody wins.

The President. Okay. Now, listen, this is a very interesting lesson here, because I think it will explain why we insisted on tax relief and why part of the tax relief was aimed at small businesses. He just said, he's going to invest a million dollars in new plant and equipment. And so when he buys new equipment with that million dollars, that the tax relief has encouraged him to do, somebody has got to make the equipment, see. So he has made a decision that affects an employee—not only his own company, because they have become more productive and he can pay them more, he just said—but an employee in somebody else's business who is making the equipment that John has said, "I want to purchase."

It's these—all these decisions by small-business owners have the cumulative effect of encouraging economic vitality and growth. That's what we're here to understand. And therefore, if we raise the taxes on John, he's not going to make these decisions. It will change his decisionmaking thought process—I presume. Now, I'm not a lawyer, you'll be happy to hear. That's the other team. This is the pro-small-business team.

So anyway, raising taxes—and so let me say something to you so you hear—in the campaign, you'll hear, "We're going only to tax the rich." That's what you'll hear. Now, this is from a fellow who has promised about $2 trillion of new spending thus far. And only taxing the rich, first of all, creates a huge tax gap, which means buyer beware. You see, if you can't raise enough by taxing the rich, guess who gets to pay next? Yes, the not-rich. [*Laughter*] That's all of us.

On the other hand, when you say you're going to raise those rates at, say, $200,000 or more, that's who he's talking about right there. When you're talking about raising those individual rates, I want our fellow citizens to remember, he's raising taxes on small businesses like John's. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on the small-business owners of America. Thanks, John.

We got the Schlotterbacks with us—Mike and Kathie. Hi, Mike, what do you do?

Mike Schlotterback. I'm a photographer. I have a photo studio here in town called Fisheye.

The President. Anybody needs some photos developed, take it right over to Mike. [*Laughter*] And Kathie, a mom?

Kathie Schlotterback. Yes.

The President. How many kids you got?

Mrs. Schlotterback. Two girls—two daughters.

The President. Oh, yes. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Schlotterback. Lindsie and Cora.

The President. Good to see you all.

Let me tell you something about the tax relief. Some people look at it, and they say, "Oh, tax relief, what's it mean?" I'm going to tell you what it means. Let me tell you what it meant to Mike and Kathie. They saved $1,700.

Mrs. Schlotterback. Correct.

The President. The tax relief we passed—remember, we raised the child credit. So if you got kids, you get a little tax relief, because we want to make it easier for people to raise kids. We reduced the penalty on marriage. What kind of system is it—I don't think it's a very wise Tax Code to penalize marriage. We're trying to encourage marriage in America. And we reduced all rates, and they saved $1,700. That may not seem like a lot to some of the big shots in Washington, but ask them if it's a lot to them.

Mr. Schlotterback. Yes, we were able to take that money which you sent us——

The President. No, no, no, I didn't send it to you. It's your money to begin with.

Mr. Schlotterback. That's right, absolutely.

The President. You just got to keep—you just got to keep more of your own money.

Mr. Schlotterback. Right, right. But these two girls are our top priority, and so we took that money, bought a computer, set up a home office. It allows me to work a little more from home and spend time with these girls.

The President. Yes, that's interesting, isn't it? One of the ways we got to make sure this economy continues to grow is to make sure there is broadband technology throughout the entire country, so people like this good man, people like Mike, can work out of home if they want to or can bring educational information into their home. I mean, this is a tale of the changing economy we're in. Here's a fellow who owns his own business, and he can work out of his home, doing his duty, just like Kathie is, to love their children with all their heart and soul.

Now, let me say something about this. They saved $1,700 in '03, $1,700 in '04. But some of this tax relief is getting ready to expire, see, which means his taxes go up. That's what that means. So when you hear all this stuff about the tax cuts are going to expire, you need to think tax increase—because this couple isn't going to save $1,700 the next time. As a matter of fact, they're going to save something substantially less than that. That will mean they have less money in their pockets, less after-tax disposable income, which is their money to begin with. Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent and not raise taxes.

Where's Dawn? Dawn, where are you? Cayton. Oh, there she is, yes. You were trying to hide.

Dawn Cayton. I'm in red.

The President. Oh, yes, you're in red. This is an interesting story. I feel like—kind of like a talk show host here. [*Laughter*] So I met Dawn, and I said, "What do you do?" And she said——

Ms. Cayton. I'm a registered respiratory therapist with St. Luke's Home Care Services here in Cedar Rapids.

The President. Very good. She is in health care. What did you do before?

Ms. Cayton. I was a mom, but I always worked part-time to help out. I taught gymnastics at Twisters, and I also worked in a hotel a couple nights a week doing night audit.

The President. Okay. And then what happened? You decided to——

Ms. Cayton. Go back to school.

The President. Okay, let me stop you. Actually, right here at Kirkwood, she came back to school. Why? Why did you decide to go back to school?

Ms. Cayton. What motivated me was, my oldest daughter was going into eighth grade, and all of a sudden I realized we had 5 years before she was going to college. And I had always helped out here and there, but I needed to really retrain myself so I could go out and make a lot more money.

The President. Yes. This is a really interesting story. First of all, Government can't make somebody, say, go back to school. That has to come from inside a person's soul. And she said, "I want to go back to school." Government can help, through Federal loans, in this case, I think. But this is something people need to hear, because in order to make sure the economy continues to grow, there's a constant kind of—people have to constantly be educated to meet—to have the skills for the new jobs that are being created.

Health care is a field that is growing all across America, and they're looking for workers. We have a shortage of health care workers, and these workers need to be retrained. Community colleges are a fantastic place for people to be retrained for the jobs of the 21st century. Give me 4 more years, and we will continue to invigorate our community colleges, to help people like Dawn gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are being created.

Was it hard to go back to school? I want people listening out there to listen to this story. Because I know somebody's going to say, "I don't want to go back to school. I don't have the energy to go back to school. I kind of think I need to go back to school so I can make more money." Was it hard to go back to school? Tell the truth.

Ms. Cayton. Seriously——

The President. Yes, seriously. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Cayton. I thought about it for one year before I actually did it——

The President. So it was a little hard, otherwise you would have dug right into it.

Ms. Cayton. Right—but, no, I had the support of my family. My husband, Marlin, did all the laundry. [*Laughter*]

The President. Marlin, if we stay in this room any longer, you're going to have a lot to do.

Ms. Cayton. And I have two girls, and they understood; you know, it was a sacrifice for them too, because sometimes I couldn't go to their things, because when you're in the medical field you are in clinical practice as well, so I was at different hospitals, basically getting my schooling.

The President. There are jobs available all across the country. Sometimes people need to be—to gain new skills. There is money available and help available for people to go to community colleges. And when you get new skills, you make more money; you become a more productive employee. That's the kind of economy we're in. I really thank you for sharing that with us. Congratulations.

Ms. Cayton. Thank you.

The President. Okay. I want to talk about—before we all start falling out here—[*laughter*]—I want to talk about one more interesting story. Listen, we've got a lot of strength to this country. Our military is a strength. We'll keep it strong. I will keep it strong. I will work with Congress to do that—which means, by the way, we're going to make sure the people who wear the uniform have got all they need. We owe it to the families, don't we, to say, your son or daughter or husband or wife are getting all you need. That's why that vote on the supplemental last fall was an interesting vote. It kind of explained a different philosophy.

I called it up. I said, "Congress, support these troops. We've put them in harm's way; support them." And the Congress did. We had a good vote. Twelve Senators voted

no on the 87 billion, 2 of whom I'm running against. [*Laughter*] And my view is, is that when you put people in harm's way, they deserve the best. No excuses, by the way.

Secondly, the economy is strong, but the true strength of the county is the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the strength of America, and I recognize that. I recognize that the role of Government is to promote and to foster this strength.

Today I met Dr. Jim Bell. This is an interesting story. He's what I call a social entrepreneur. He is—he is cofounder of His Hands Ministries. He is a doctor who operates a free clinic in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that provides help to people who need medical help.

Why did you do this?

Jim Bell. It was because we're just answering the call.

The President. Yes. It's a faith-based ministry.

Dr. Bell. We're a Christ-centered ministry. And we understand that even as our economy improves—and it is in Cedar Rapids—that there's always going to people who fall between the cracks and that are going to need help. And not only are they going to need help physically, but we believe that our greatest measure of success is seeing a changed life for Christ. I've never been called a social entrepreneur before. I've been called a lot of things.

The President. Do what now?

Dr. Bell. I've never been called a social entrepreneur before.

The President. Well, you are now. Yes, well, it's kind of—you are. First of all, the reason why is entrepreneurs are self-starters. They're motivated by something other than Government law, for example. You don't start your business—you can't pass a law that says, you will start your own business. You decide to start your own—you decided to start your own faith ministry to heal people because you heard a call, you see. And you stepped out, and said, "I've got the courage necessary," you and your cofounders. I presume there's somebody else?

Dr. Bell. Yes.

The President. Yes, okay, the two of you said, "What can we do?" And they started this ministry. It's a fabulous ministry, isn't it?

There's Jim Bells all over America. He's not alone. There's hundreds of thousands of people who have asked themselves, "What can I do to save a life?" And if we had more Jim Bells in the world saving lives, America would be a more hopeful place, wouldn't it? Think of this issue—and I'll get back to you in a minute.

You know there are about a million children whose mothers and fathers—who have a mother and father in prison. Those are kids who wonder whether or not America's promise belongs to them. They think that. Imagine if we could find a mentor for each one of those children. That's the mission. That's one of the goals we're on, is to encourage programs, community-based—you don't have to be a faith-based program, although it turns out faith-based programs are pretty good places to find people who want to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Government can help. We're not a competitor of Jim. We complement Jim with what's called community health centers. We've been expanding them. I think this is a really good role for Federal taxpayers' money, is to put primary care facilities for the indigent and the uninsured available to keep them out of emergency rooms.

But I really appreciate Jim's program. Anything you need from us—like better liability law? Are you protected under liability law?

Dr. Bell. We are, and we could sure——

The President. Yes.

Dr. Bell. I almost wanted to start talking about medical liability when you were talking about that earlier.

The President. Good.

Dr. Bell. But the partnership that you mentioned is one of the best things that

we found in working with Government. And they're going to start a community—they're working on starting a community health center here in Cedar Rapids too, with Federal funding.

The President. Yes.

Dr. Bell. Not only that, we also have found great friends in partnering with our Government organizations here in Cedar Rapids. And I think the most important thing for us is that we know that we have an administration behind us, is very sentimental towards what we do.

The President. I am sentimental. You know why? Thank you, buddy. I'll tell you why: Because we can change America, one heart and one soul at a time. And Jim recognizes he can't save every soul and help every life, but he can help 1,000, which is what he's done.

The true strength of this country is found in the hearts of people like Jim Bell. Now, he's not going to like hearing me say that, see. He just wants to be anonymous and go about his business. I can look at him in his eyes and tell that. [*Laughter*] But that's what makes him such a great steward.

We got some time for questions, maybe? Unless everybody is about ready to fall out—it's up to you. [*Laughter*] You want me to answer some questions for a while? Yes, what you got? You got a question right there.

The Presidency/Freedom

Q. Do you like being President?

The President. Do I like being the President? So much so that I want to do it for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'll tell you why—I'll tell why. This is a job where you have a chance, working with others, by the way, and working with our country, to say the world is a better place; to use the influence of the United States of America to spread freedom and peace not only for our own sake but for the sake of others.

And I mentioned to you, little fellow, I think—we're just beginning. I talked about five countries that have changed over the past 3 years, that have made a difference, and your life is going to be better for it. Your life is going to be better because somebody your age can live in a free society in a part of the world that doesn't know freedom.

See, Americans have this great faith in our ideals. And it stems from this: We don't think freedom is America's gift to the world; we know that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Anybody got a question? How about here in the end zone? Yes.

HIV/AIDS Initiative

Q. [*Inaudible*]—HIV will work here?

The President. Right. Very good question. Obviously, you're a knowledgeable person. ABC method is the method to—used in Uganda to reduce the number of HIV—incidence of HIV/AIDS, and it's worked. There's three components to it: Abstinence—which, by the way, works every time—[*laughter*]—be faithful, and use condoms. Now, those are—that's what ABC stands for. And it is a method that says that countries must seize the initiative and educate their people about the dangers of HIV/AIDS as part of a prevention program. And it's working. And it's—it's applied everywhere, including the United States; I mean, it makes sense. We do it a little differently in the United States, but nevertheless, it is a strategy that is working.

The second aspect, by the way, of the HIV/AIDS Initiative is to make sure that we get antiretroviral drugs to those poor souls who are suffering from this devastating disease. What's interesting when you talk to the experts, there's something called the Lazarus effect. In other words, people who have had no hope all of a sudden see their neighbor take an antiretroviral drug, and their lives begin to improve, and then they start asking the question, "Gosh,

maybe I ought to do this for myself." Now, we don't have the cure for AIDS, but antiretrovirals surely improve the quality of life.

And the third aspect of our strategy is to help the orphans of those—you see, what's happening in our lifetime on the continent of Africa, there is a pandemic. We're losing an entire generation of people. We have 14-year-old young girls raising their brothers and sisters.

And I made the decision—and fortunately, a lot of Members of Congress joined—that we can afford to help, and we should be doing more. And we are. We've got a 15 billion, 5-year program to help save lives. I believe it is in—I know it's in our interests to do so, and I know it's in our heart. In other words, we've got to work here at home too. Don't ever get me wrong, when I talk about foreign initiatives; we're not neglecting the homefront. But with this pandemic raging, I believe we have a duty and an obligation.

Thanks for asking the question. It was a great question. We're making a difference. The United States is leading.

Yes, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir. Yes, I'm for that.

Yes, sir. Man with the baby—how old is that baby?

Q. Twelve days.

The President. Twelve days? Baby probably think it's in an incubator. [*Laughter*]

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, I'll get a picture. Is that the question—can I?

Iraqi Reconstruction

Q. How do we get our friends in the media back there to report the positive, good things there are going on in Iraq?

The President. You know history—the question was, how do we get friends in the media to promote the good things in Iraq? Well, that's up to them to do that. One thing we will always honor is a free press here in America. It makes us a better country for it.

History will judge. Let me tell you something interesting about Iraq and history. I read a lot of history. I love history, and I'm reading about—I'm getting clips from the post-World War II period. And there was a lot of discussion right after World War II as to whether or not Germany could be free, whether or not the reconstruction effort was worth it, whether or not the plans and strategies we had in place were working, whether or not they really—had a well thought out strategy to help rebuild Germany. Same in Japan. There was a lot of wondering whether or not Japan could conceivably self-govern, whether or not the reconstruction efforts were working—a lot of doubters, by the way, during that period of time.

And fortunately, my predecessors—predecessor—was optimistic and believed that people yearned to be free and that no matter how hard the work is, that people would eventually become self-governing—it's in their interest—this understanding that no matter the culture in which people live, moms and dads want their children to grow up in a peaceful world and have the very best for their children. And they were diligent and optimistic, and now I can sit at a table with somebody like Prime Minister Koizumi—the leader of a country against whom my dad fought and many of your dads fought as well—and talk about peace. See, he is a partner in peace. He is a friend because a predecessor didn't give up on understanding the power of liberty to change the habits of men and women for the better.

Some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected Iraqi official, talking about how to keep the peace, and America will be better off for it.

Yes, little fellow. All right—yes, I'll sign it. I'll be there in a minute. He wants a card signed.

Yes, ma'am. Yes, what you got?

President's Pets

Q. What kind of pets do you have in the White House?

The President. I can't stand these tough questions. [*Laughter*] "What kind of pets have we got in the White House?" [*Laughter*] Thank you for asking that question. We have got two. We had three, and unfortunately little Spot has passed on. It was a sad moment. She is—interestingly enough, Spot was born in the White House, when Mother and Dad were there. And curiously enough, Spot passed away in the White House, a happy dog. [*Laughter*] She was happy. We were sad. We loved her dearly—15 years old, I want you to know.

Now we have—we got two left: The cat—the cat's got about nine lives and nine names. [*Laughter*] I just call it Willie. Is that all right? Yes. The girls love Willie. And then the alltime great dog, Barney. [*Laughter*] Barney—Barney is a near-4-year-old Scottish terrier. Gosh, I'm glad you asked. [*Laughter*] He's a fabulous little guy.

Yes, sir, and then you're next.

Former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV

Q. Did Ambassador Wilson lie?

The President. Did Ambassador Wilson lie, is that what you asked? Well, you need to ask the press that question. [*Laughter*]

Yes.

2004 Presidential Election

Q. Do you think you can beat John Kerry?

The President. Do I think I can beat John Kerry? I do. I do. I need your help, though. I know you're not old enough to vote, but you can put a sign in the yard. And you can go to your neighbor, who may not have made up their mind, and say, "I'll pick up your newspaper for a week—if." [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir, what have you got?

Immigration Reform

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That's okay, I get the drift. You're trying to figure out how you can get a permanent residence card? Yes. Well, we have a system that I know—first of all, I hope you think it is interesting that you get to come, as a person newly arrived, and ask the President a question. That's our system. It's an open system. I think it's a great thing about America. I love that aspect of the country. And we've got to be a welcoming country, but we've got rules, of course. A nation must have rules.

There is a system that determines whether or not you qualify for asylum. And there's a system that then says that if you're here, if you've got a job, you can stay here for a period of time. But we have rules, and we've got to honor those rules. And it's very important for those who have been here legally not to have somebody who hasn't been to jump ahead of them in line for citizenship purposes. But you're welcome here, and we hope you—you know, good luck. I mean, I think that was your question.

Yes, ma'am.

Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Q. [*Inaudible*]—missionary. How can we get more—[*inaudible*]—all the paperwork is so hard.

The President. Great question. The question is, is that she is a inner-city missionary program that gets overwhelmed by the paperwork. Well, I think there are—there are groups involved that help people with papers. In other words, there's kind of a—a better way to put it, a centralized overhead group that will help you with your paperwork. You need to call our faith-based shop in Washington, DC—seriously—and ask, because there are programs that help people such as yourself become unburdened by the paperwork and legal and accounting requirements.

Okay, a couple more and then we'll get out of here. Yes, ma'am.

Freedom of Religion/Prayer

Q. I just got back from Mexico——

The President. Hablo Espanol?

Q. Si, yo hablo poquito Espanol.

The President. Okay, I can hear that. That means, "I speak a little Spanish." [*Laughter*]

Q. It made me realize how truly blessed this country is. I think that a lot of people don't understand how truly blessed we are until we see the poverty. But we spent about 10 days praying for this country. But I guess my question to you, Mr. President, is, do you find the importance of actually dedicating a moment in time on your knees in prayer for this country and for the next coming-up election?

The President. That's a great question. Let me just talk about religion and politics. First—first—first, it is essential that this country never abandon the principle that people can worship the way they want to, that you can worship, that you can choose to worship or not worship and be equally patriotic. That's important for people to know.

The second principle is that if you choose to worship, you're equally American if you're a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu. That's an important part of our society. It's essential that we always honor that. That's called freedom of religion. It's an integral part of the American past, present, and future. The state should never be the church, and the church should never be the state.

Now, having said that, I am inspired, uplifted, and comforted by the fact that millions of our fellow citizens whom I will never know actually take time to pray for me and Laura and our family, for which I am eternally grateful. It's an amazing country, when you think about a country that prays for its leaders, regardless of their political party. It's an amazing——

Q. Love you——

The President. Thank you. It's an amazing country, and I can't tell you how grateful I am and touched I am and humbled I am by this—the outpouring of prayer by fellow citizens.

A couple more questions, then we've got to—yes, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thanks for saying that.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Okay. If you can't hear it, I'll translate it. And if it's a lousy question, I'll just ask myself a question. [*Laughter*]

Significance of September 11, 2001, Attacks

Q. It appears that some people are forgetting 9/11—[*inaudible*]—remember 9/11 and those who are fighting for our freedom——[*inaudible*].

The President. Interesting question. He says it appears to him, there's an effort to forget about 9/11. We'll never forget 9/11. I mean, it is a—I appreciate that question. I think that there is a tendency for people to want to hope that there is normalcy. I remember talking to the country and saying, this is going to be a different kind of experience we're going through and that there will be—people want to live in normalcy.

And his question is, is there a concerted effort to kind of try to push 9/11 out of our memories. No, I don't think so. I don't think so; as a matter of fact, quite the contrary. I think it is one of those events that is a defining moment. Like, 30 years from now when you and I are kind of creaking around and we run into each other, we'll say, "Gosh, you remember where you were on 9/11?" You will, and I will.

The key thing about September the 11th, 2001, is never to forget the lessons that we learned that day. That is the most important aspect of that tragedy, and never forget the lives lost, either. But I think it's going to be—this will be one of those monuments in our history. I mean, it's one of those moments that we just will never forget. And they'll analyze—there will be a lot of history written about it. But my

job, and my call to the country, is to never forget—never forget: we've got to take threats seriously, before they materialize; when we say something, mean it; and that we have an obligation to remember there are still people out there that are so evil in their hearts, they will be willing to try to kill again.

And you've got to know something about the homeland. This is—it's hard to defend our homeland. Do you know why? Because we're free. And that's the way we intend to keep it. It's hard to defend a free country. And so the best way to do so is, we've reorganized the Government. We're sharing intelligence like we've never shared intelligence before. And there are really a lot of good people working hard on your behalf, at the Federal level, the State level, and right here in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. And I know you'll join me in thanking the local police and firefighters and EMS teams for their work.

You know what? So I'm looking around the room trying to figure out who is going to be the first to fall out. [*Laughter*] I remember campaigning here with Chuck Grassley in the caucuses, and it was the dead of winter. [*Laughter*] And we went to an elementary school, and it was like really hot inside the elementary school. And I was speaking, and to my left, boom, he hit the deck. And then pretty soon, somebody over here hit the deck. It was a lesson I learned, and that is that I stop speaking before people hit the deck. [*Laughter*]

So I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give everybody an oxygen break. But before I do, I can't thank you enough for coming. We have a fabulous country. We have got a fabulous country. Together we have been through some hard times. Together we've done some hard things. The spirit of this country is strong and vibrant and real. It's a great country because the people who are fortunate enough to be called Americans are great people.

And there will be—there's lessons we have learned, and the hard work we have done is paying off. The next 4 years will be peaceful years, prosperous years, and hopeful years for everybody fortunate enough to be a citizen of this great country.

I can't tell you how grateful I am you have come. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. in the recreation center. In his remarks, he referred to Norm Nielsen, president, Kirkwood Community College; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in his apartment in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in St. Charles, Missouri
July 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. I am proud to be back in Missouri, in this great city of St. Charles. John Ashcroft told me this morning that St. Charles was the first capital of Missouri. Today, the way things look, St. Charles is the capital of Bush-Cheney country. I always enjoy coming to the St. Louis area. You might remember the last time I was here, I brought my 30-mile-an-hour fastball. Now look at the Cardinals.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to let you know I've got more to do for this country, and I want your help. I want

you to go to your community centers and your places of worship and your—all around this important part of the country and tell folks they have an obligation to vote. And you might remind them, if they want optimistic, hopeful, determined leadership, vote for George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

With your help, we carried Missouri in 2000. With your help, we'll carry Missouri in 2004 as a part of a great nationwide victory. So thanks for coming. My only regret is that Laura is not traveling with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] And the reason why is because the people understand she is a great First Lady. And I understand I'm a lucky man to have such a fine person as my wife. Tonight I'll give you some reasons why you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason is so that Laura will have 4 more years.

I want to thank Madam Speaker for her kind introduction. Catherine, thank you for your leadership and your service. I want to thank my friend Matt Blunt. Good to see you, Governor. Peter Kinder is here, and I'm proud Peter is here. I want to thank him for his friendship. Mike Gibbons, all those who serve at the State and local level, thank you for serving our communities and our country.

I particularly want to say thanks to the grassroots activists who are here, the unsung heroes who make all the phone calls and put up the signs and get people to register to vote and remind people that if they're interested in helping, they can get on the Internet at the georgewbush.com site. I'm counting on your help. I'm counting on your support. I'll lay out the vision. You get the people to the polls, and we'll have 4 more years.

And when you're convincing people to do their duty, remind them that the last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. We came to office with the stock market in decline and an economy headed into recession, but we acted. We delivered historic tax relief, and over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. So we pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We have captured or killed many leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is done and America is secure.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror, the spread of weapons of mass destruction. So we acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When our great Vice President, Dick Cheney, and I—when we came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve, and today, nobody can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and the prosperity of America. You see, it is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President must make the hard decisions and keep his commitments. And with your help, that is how I will continue to lead our great Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to the contest, and it's going to be a hard race. That's why I'm here to ask for your help. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington a long time—long time. He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. [*Laughter*] He voted for the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the force—use of force

in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq. [*Laughter*] If you disagree with the Senator on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. [*Laughter*]

And as you know, he's picked a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And he chose a fellow lawyer, who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm asking for your vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend freedom and peace throughout the world. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan and strategy to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan to continue to rally the armies of compassion, the compassionate spirit of this country, so every single American has a chance to realize the great promise of our land. I'm asking for your help, and after 4 more years, America will be safer, stronger, and a better nation.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A big issue for every family is the Federal tax burden. By providing the largest——

Audience member. Oh, it's killing me! [*Laughter*]

The President. By providing the largest Federal tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we've left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

This economy of ours is strong, and it's getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added 1.5 million new jobs. In this great State, in the State of Missouri, 27,600 people went to work at a new job in June. Your unemployment rate is now 5.2 percent, down from 5.8 percent last July. The homeownership rate is at its all-time high. Business investment is up. Consumer confidence is strong. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponent looks at all this progress and somehow concludes that the sky is falling. [*Laughter*] Whether their message is delivered with a frown or a grin, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, more lawsuits, economic isolationism.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The surest way to end economic growth and to put Americans out of work is to adopt their vision. This Nation is on the path to progress and opportunity, and we're not going back. To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs just as the economy is gaining more steam. To help grow the economy so people can find work, my message to Congress is: Do not raise taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure Americans can find work today and work tomorrow, we must be wise about how we spend the people's money. My plan calls for spending discipline. It calls for setting clear priorities. I also understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. We don't spend the Government's money; we spend the people's money.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow and people can find work, we must stop the frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to

choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I will continue to push the United States Congress to reform the legal system to end the junk and frivolous lawsuits that plague our small businesses.

In order to make sure we continue to expand our job base, I have a plan to help more Americans afford health insurance, by giving people better access to health care through association health plans, giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health savings accounts. And to make sure that people have got affordable and available health care, we need medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure people can find work today and tomorrow, we need to pass sound energy legislation. I have proposed a plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It is a plan that calls for more conservation. It's a plan that says we will develop renewable sources of energy. It's a plan that says we must modernize our electricity grid. It's also a plan that recognizes we can explore and use resources in the United States in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake national security and for the sake of economic security, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we've got some farmers here. Thanks for working the land. The best way to make sure you continue—your prosperity continues is to sell your products overseas. The best way to make sure we've got jobs today and tomorrow is to make sure countries treat us like we treat them. We open our markets to their products; they open their markets to our product—American compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the playing field is level.

To sustain economic growth, we need to make sure you reelect a pro-small-business, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer administration. And that is the Bush-Cheney administration.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong. We still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation, the people of America resolved to fight the terrorists where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first times in their lives.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world and had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq is free and a sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I will never forget. And it is a lesson this country must never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. With this lesson in mind, my administration looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration

and the United States Congress looked at the intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our Government.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. And as he had for decades—for over a decade, he deceived the world. As he had for over a decade, he refused to comply.

So I had a choice to make: Either trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Although we have not found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction that we thought were there, we were right to go into Iraq. America is safer because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere is to capture or kill the terrorists. You can't talk sense to the terrorists. You cannot negotiate with these terrorists. You cannot sit back and hope for the best. We will engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world, so we do not have to face them here at home.

In this big, sweet country of ours, there's no such thing as perfect security, and the threats to this homeland are real. We know that the terrorists want to strike the United States again. They want to disrupt our way of life or cause panic or great fear. We reorganized this Government of ours to better protect the people. There's much better communication now between the Federal, State, and local governments. The FBI has changed its mission to make sure—changed its priorities to make sure that counterterrorism is the most important thing they do.

I want you to know there are a lot of really good people working on your behalf—good, decent, honorable people. I know you'll join me in thanking the police and firefighters and emergency teams of St. Louis, Missouri.

Over these next 4 years, we will defend our homeland. Over the next 4 years, we'll be relentless in the pursuit of the enemy abroad. Yet in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty, the hopelessness, and the resentments that terrorists can exploit.

See, life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders, when the people can decide their own future. You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others. And that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

America is leading the world, and the world is changing because of our leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now, the camps are closed; democracy is rising; and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now, Pakistan forces are rounding up the terrorists. Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were moving with little opposition. Now, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and Americans are safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it.

Three years ago, there was a network run by a Pakistan nuclear scientist named A.Q. Khan that was selling secrets, nuclear secrets to countries like Iran and North Korea and Libya. Thanks to the hard work of CIA agents, thanks to cooperation between the British and United States Government, that network has been dismantled. It is no longer a problem, and America is safer for it.

In the last 3 years, the world is changing for the better, just like Iraq is changing for the better. We will finish our work of spreading democracy and helping the Iraqis achieve democracy. We'll finish our work to help the Afghan citizens achieve democracy. Democratic states, free states are peaceful states. It's in our long-term interest that these countries survive, and we've got good allies there. President Karzai believes in the future of the people of Afghanistan. Prime Minister Allawi believes in the future of the people of Iraq. He wants there to be a free country, just like the fathers and mothers of Iraqi children want their children to grow up in a free and peaceful country.

People in Iraq are stepping up. They understand the stakes. They're fighting the foreign fighters and the terrorists. They're bringing them to justice so they can live in a free society. And the people of those countries can count on the United States of America. When we give our word, when we'll stay with people striving to become a free society, we will keep our word.

America is safer not only because we've led; America is safer because we've got a great United States military. At bases around our country and around the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our freedom. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. And I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

And we must make sure those who wear our uniform have the best training, the best pay, and the best equipment. That's why last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, for ammunition, for fuel, for spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against that legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying, quote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. That sure clears things up. [*Laughter*] Now, he's offering a different explanation. Last week, Senator Kerry said he's proud that he and his runningmate voted against funding for the troops. Later he said his vote against funding for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan was a complicated matter. [*Laughter*]

There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. Over the next 4 years as the Commander in Chief, I will see to it our troops have the best possible pay, equipment, and training.

America is leading this world with confidence and moral clarity. We've got a lot of fine folks helping us too. There's over 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I'll continue to work with allies such as Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi and Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, to work together to protect our peoples and to spread freedom and democracy. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other nations.

This Nation is prosperous and strong. Yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. Earlier this month, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like St. Charles, Missouri.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We are strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools. We stand for local control of schools. We stand for strong accountability in schools, so no child is left behind in America. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and everybody matters. We stand for institutions like marriage and family. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We are building a culture of responsibility in America. 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 are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it, like supporting your teachers. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, in a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats who shouted at me, "Whatever it takes." Either a fireman or a policeman grabbed me and said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops, seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every corner of our country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you, sir. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. at the Family Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; Missouri gubernatorial candidate Matt Blunt; State Senators Peter Kinder and Michael R. Gibbons

of Missouri; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Vote on the Nomination of Bill Myers To Be a United States Circuit Judge
July 20, 2004

Today a minority of Senators once again used obstructionist filibuster tactics to block a vote on an outstanding nominee to the United States Court of Appeals. Bill Myers has had a distinguished career as a public servant and practicing attorney and enjoys widespread support from across the political spectrum, yet he has been denied a simple up-or-down vote.

These tactics are unfair to Bill Myers and unfair to the American people. Bill Myers has the support of a bipartisan majority of Senators and would be confirmed if given an up-or-down vote. He would be an asset to the Ninth Circuit, which is seriously overworked and in need of more judges. He would fill a seat that has been designated a judicial emergency by the Judicial Conference of the United States. More Americans will be denied speedy access to our justice system by the obstruction of a few.

I continue to call on the minority in the Senate to stop playing politics with the American judicial system and give judicial nominees the fair treatment they deserve and the American people expect.

Remarks on Signing the Project BioShield Act of 2004
July 21, 2004

Thank you all. Mr. Speaker. Please be seated. Thanks. Good morning, and welcome to the Rose Garden.

On September the 11th, 2001, America saw the destruction and grief terrorists could inflict with commercial airlines turned into weapons of mass murder. Those attacks revealed the depth of our enemies' determination but not the extent of their ambitions. We know that the terrorists seek an even deadlier technology. And if they acquire chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, we have no doubt they will use them to cause even greater harm.

The bill I am about to sign is an important element in our response to that threat. By authorizing unprecedented funding and providing new capabilities, Project BioShield will help America purchase, develop, and deploy cutting-edge defenses against catastrophic attack.

This legislation represents the collective foresight and considered judgment of United States Senators and Members of the House of Representatives from both political parties, many of whom experienced bioterror firsthand when anthrax and ricin were found on Capitol Hill. It reflects 18 months of hard work and cooperation by many dedicated public servants in Congress and in the White House. It sends a message about our direction in the war on terror: We refuse to remain idle while modern technology might be turned against us; we

will rally the great promise of American science and innovation to confront the greatest danger of our time.

I want to thank the Vice President for his hard work. He was the point man in the White House on this piece of legislation and did an excellent job. I appreciate Secretaries Tommy Thompson and Tom Ridge for their leadership on this important piece of legislation as well.

I appreciate the Speaker and Leader Frist for making this bill a priority. I want to thank Senator Gregg and Senator Kennedy and Senator Cochran for working on this bill. I appreciate the efforts. I appreciate Congressmen Barton, Billy Tauzin, Chris Cox, and Henry Waxman as well for their hard work.

I appreciate the members of my administration who are here. Thanks for coming. These will be the implementers of this important piece of legislation.

Project BioShield will transform our ability to defend the Nation in three essential ways. First, Project BioShield authorizes $5.6 billion over 10 years for the Government to purchase and stockpile vaccines and drugs to fight anthrax, smallpox, and other potential agents of bioterror. The Department of Health and Human Services has already taken steps to purchase 75 million doses of an improved anthrax vaccine for the Strategic National Stockpile. Under Project BioShield, HHS is moving forward with plans to acquire a safer, second-generation smallpox vaccine, an antidote to botulinum toxin, and better treatments for exposure to chemical and radiological weapons.

Private industry plays a vital role in our biodefense efforts by taking risks to bring new treatments to the market, and we appreciate those efforts.

By acting as a willing buyer for the best new medical technologies, the Government ensures that our drug stockpile remains safe, effective, and advanced. The Federal Government and our medical professionals are working together to meet the threat of bioterrorism; we're making the American people more secure in doing so.

Second, Project BioShield gives the Government new authority to expedite research and development on the most promising and time-sensitive medicines to defend against bioterror. We will waste no time putting those new powers to use. Today Secretary Thompson will direct the NIH to launch two initiatives, one to speed the development of new treatments for victims of a biological attack and another to expedite development of treatments for victims of a radiological or nuclear attack. Under the old rules, grants of this kind of research often took 18 to 24 months to process. Under Project BioShield, HHS expects the process to be completed in about 6 months. Our goal is to translate today's promising medical research into drugs and vaccines to combat a biological attack in the future, and now we will not let bureaucratic obstacles stand in the way.

Third, Project BioShield will change the way the Government authorizes and deploys medical defenses in a crisis. When I sign this bill, the Food and Drug Administration will be able to permit rapid distribution of promising new drugs and antidotes in the most urgent circumstances. This will allow patients to quickly receive the best treatments in an emergency. Secretary Thompson has directed the FDA to prepare guidelines and procedures for implementing this new authority. By acting today, we are making sure we have the best medicine possible to help the victims of a biological attack.

Project BioShield is part of a broader strategy to defend America against the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Since September the 11th, we've increased funding for the Strategic National Stockpile by a factor of 5, increased funding for biodefense research at NIH by a factor of 30, secured enough smallpox vaccine for every American, worked with cities on plans to deliver antibiotics and chemical antidotes in an emergency, improved the

safety of our food supply, and deployed advanced environmental detectors under the BioWatch Program to provide the earliest possible warning of a biological attack.

The threat of bioterrorism has brought new challenges to our Government, to our first-responders, and to our medical personnel. We are grateful for their service. Not long ago, few of these men and women could have imagined duties like monitoring the air for anthrax or delivering antibiotics on a massive scale. Yet, this is the world as we find it. This Nation refuses to let our guard down.

Tomorrow the 9/11 Commission will issue its findings and recommendations to help prevent future terrorist attacks. I look forward to receiving the report. I will continue to work with the Congress and State and local governments to build on the homeland security improvements we have already made. Every American can be certain that their Government will continue doing everything in our power to prevent a terrorist attack. And if the terrorists do strike, we'll be better prepared to defend our people because of the good law I sign today.

It's my honor to invite the Members of the Congress to join me as I sign the Project BioShield Act of 2004. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:43 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). S. 15, approved July 21, was assigned Public Law 108–276.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Adrian Nastase of Romania and an Exchange With Reporters
July 21, 2004

President Bush. There will be two opening statements, one by me, one by the Prime Minister. I'll call upon a member of the American press. The Prime Minister will call somebody from the Romanian press. And then we'll do that one more time.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. We've just had a very good visit. It's the kind of visit that friends would have. We talked about our relationship. I complimented Romania and the Prime Minister's understanding that we need to work together to fight terror. We talked about the need to continue to work together to spread freedom and, therefore, peace in troubled parts of the world. And I want to thank him very much for his understanding and his vision.

We talked about economic ties. He asked if it would be possible to spread the word that Romania is a good place to invest, and I told him that because the country makes the right decisions, that American companies will take a look at Romania. Trade is up, which is good for Romanian people and for the American people. There is commerce going back and forth, which is a positive development.

I congratulated the Prime Minister on Romania's role at the United Nations. I think he handled the Presidency very well, and we appreciate that very much.

So it's been a very good visit. And I'm glad you're back, and I look forward to further discussions with you.

Prime Minister Nastase. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It's good to be back. Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. It is, by the way, the first time that I've been here representing an ally of the

United States. And I am very proud to come here to confirm to the President our continuous support for fighting together terrorists in the world and also our support for the vision of President Bush, not only on general issues but very specifically on a very complex process of changes in Iraq.

I had the honor to chair the Security Council during the Romanian Presidency, in New York. And, well, I briefed the President with major decisions, prospects, possibilities which are now offered for a wise political decision concerning Iraq. Reconstruction, stabilization, political development are the keywords for the future of Iraq. And we want to encourage the Iraqi people to take the ownership of their own choices.

Well, I briefed the President also on regional developments. I briefed the President with some of the developments on the continuous reforms that we are making in Romania. But also, well, I wanted to assure him that we are interested in opening more transparent procedures and, well, better integrity standards for civil servants and politicians.

I think this is part of the end of the transition in a country which suffered a lot but where there is a huge willingness to understand what can make us speed up the process of modernization. And we count very much on President Bush, on his colleagues, and also on the American businessman.

It was also very important to discuss about what happens now in areas in, like, the Black Sea, the Balkans. And I offered the President a five-star location for military bases, and there will be a decision on that very soon.

Mr. President, may I say also that the honor for us, being here—it's a great privilege, a great honor. We remember with great pleasure your visit to Bucharest and the rainbow speech and the gathering of more than 200,000 people.

Thank you very much again.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Okay, Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Alleged Mishandling of Classified Documents by Former National Security Adviser Samuel R. Berger

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. President Clinton suggested that perhaps politics was behind the disclosure of the Sandy Berger investigation. Do you have anything to say about that? And also, when did you learn about this probe?

President Bush. I'm not going to comment on this matter. This is a serious matter, and it will be fully investigated by the Justice Department.

Q. When did you learn, sir, if I may?

President Bush. I'm not going to comment on it. It's a very serious matter that will be fully investigated by the Justice Department.

Prime Minister Nastase. Romanian Public Television.

Romania-U.S. Economic Relations

Q. Mr. President, please, you said something about improving of economic relations between Romania and the U.S. Could you be more specific on that issue, please?

President Bush. Relations improve as market conditions improve inside Romania. In other words, American businesses look for places to invest capital where they can get a reasonable rate of return. American businesses like environments where there's transparency and strong anticorruption rules, where people—where the workforce is well educated and hard-working.

And the Prime Minister and I talked about those ingredients. He said he's had some good visits with business leaders here in America. But those are decisions, in our country, that are made apart from Government. In other words, each individual business will make that decision. They are investment decisions in Romania apart from the offices of Government. And that's what

the Prime Minister understands. And as he said, he had some good visits today. I'm sure he'll brief you on those visits later on.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Q. Your advisers were meeting today with the Chairmen of the 9/11 Commission.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. In light of what you know now, do you think the attacks were preventable? And also, do you plan to meet personally with the Commissioners to discuss their findings and recommendations?

President Bush. First of all, I haven't talked to my advisers who have met with the Commission yet. I will later on. Secondly, I am going to meet with, as I understand it, with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Commission. So I haven't had a chance to fully see—read that which they have developed. I look forward to it. This is a—I've always said this is an important Commission.

And the main reason why is, is because a President and a Congress must have the best possible intelligence to make good decisions about how to protect America and our friends and allies. We've spent a lot of time today talking about counterterrorism or counterproliferation. And the best way to succeed in counter—those efforts is to share intelligence. And therefore, we need to have good intelligence. And the main recommendations, as I understand it, from the 9/11 Commission will be as how best to structure the intelligence agencies.

Again, I haven't seen the report. I hope they talk about more human intelligence, because human intelligence is one of the most effective ways for us to gather intelligence in the first place. I hope they talk about it—and I suspect they will—about using modern technologies to better listen and see events taking place so that we can protect ourselves. And then, of course, there needs to be a full discussion about how best to coordinate the different intelligence gathering services here in the country.

Let me say one other thing about the 9/11. I told the Commissioners right here in the Oval Office that had we had any inkling whatsoever that terrorists were about to attack our country, we would have moved heaven and Earth to protect America. And I'm confident President Clinton would have done the same thing—any President would have.

So anyway, I'm looking forward to the report. I'm glad—they've done a lot of good work, and it's going to be very useful for the country to listen to what they have to say.

Upcoming Romanian and U.S. Elections

Q. Thank you, sir. Question for President Bush. Sir, in both United States and Romania, you have elections this autumn. It might be four possibilities: Either you win and Mr. Nastase is winning; either you both lose; either one of you is winning, the other one is losing.

President Bush. Right.

Q. Sir, which one of these four possibilities represents the biggest disadvantage for Romania? [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Well, let me answer you this way: I am going to win. And the Prime Minister told me he is going to win. And therefore, the other three possibilities you've outlined are not going to happen. The interesting thing is, is that here we are talking about elections in Romania. That's what I was thinking during this discussion, that we—a person standing for election in Romania and the United States President are now talking about what it means to campaign, a conversation which would not have been taking place 20 years ago.

You know, I'll never forget my trip to Bucharest, at the rainbow speech. It was one of the most moving experiences of my Presidency. And the reason why was that

the rainbow itself, that appeared in the midst of a rainstorm in front of 200-plus-thousand people, ended right behind—from my vision, ended right behind the place where the tyrant Ceausescu gave his last speech. It was a very powerful message. It moved me deeply during the moment. And it still moves me to think that there was a powerful message being delivered by nature, to the point where I remember turning back to the people of Romania and said, "God is smiling on Bucharest." And I meant that.

And part of my beliefs, Mr. Prime Minister, is that one of the great universal values of the world is that men and women deserve to be free. And here we are talking about an election voted on, in your country and mine, by free people.

Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:04 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas H. Kean, Chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, Vice Chairman, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks at the President's Dinner
July 21, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Gosh, thanks for the warm welcome. It is really good to be with you all tonight. There's nothing like being the President at the President's Dinner. [*Laughter*] And with your help, I look forward to being your guest next year as well.

I want to thank Tom Reynolds, who is my good friend, for his kind introduction. I appreciate the organizers of this fantastic dinner. Thank you all for coming. We're here for a really good cause, and that is to make sure Denny Hastert remains Speaker of the House and Bill Frist majority leader of the Senate. It's not only a worthy cause; it is an important cause. The stakes of the country depend upon their leadership, their continued leadership. Plus, they're really good people.

I'm sorry that Laura is not with me tonight.

Audience member. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know. She is—she's camping. [*Laughter*] But you know something? I am one lucky man that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me. She's a great First Lady. There's a lot of reasons why I think I ought to be given 4 more years, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank George Allen and Lamar Alexander for representing the Senate at this dinner. Thank you for your strong leadership. And I appreciate Bob Ney as well and Tom Reynolds for representing the House at the dinner and helping to raise the money. These men did a fine job. I also am proud to recognize my fellow Texan, the majority leader of the House of Representatives, Tom DeLay. Thank you for coming, sir.

I appreciate all the dinner hosts who are here at the table. It kind of looks like the old politburo—[*laughter*]—doesn't act like the old politburo.

I want to thank all the Members of the Congress who are here. I'm proud to work with you. And thank you for representing our country with such dignity and class.

I want to thank Secretary Ann Veneman, Secretary Elaine Chao, Secretary Tommy Thompson, for coming tonight. And thank

you for being such good Cabinet members in my administration.

I appreciate John Popper for lending his talents tonight. And I love the voice of Sara Evans.

As we meet tonight, there are a little over 100 days until an historic election, and the campaigns are hitting full swing. In recent days, I've been in Pennsylvania and Michigan and Minnesota and Wisconsin and West Virginia and Iowa and Missouri. Everywhere I go, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good: We are on our way to victory.

My opponent has been spending some time with his base as well, at a recent gala with his Hollywood friends. [*Laughter*] Evidently, things got a little out of hand. My name came up a few times. [*Laughter*] And now the Senator refuses to release a tape of that whole enchanted evening. [*Laughter*] Could be that his friends, whom he said conveyed the "heart and soul of America," actually embarrassed themselves and the candidate. I have a different theory: You see, the tape shows a meeting of all those unnamed foreign leaders that the Senator says have endorsed him. [*Laughter*]

Now he has a runningmate. Some people say that Senator Edwards was chosen in part because of his boyish good looks. After all, People Magazine once named John Edwards the sexiest politician. One of my administration's great goals for a new term is to get Dick Cheney on that list. [*Laughter*] In the meantime, I value the Vice President's experience in Government, his expertise in national security, and his sound judgment.

It's now been 3½ years since the Vice President and I took office. We've faced significant challenges. We have met them head on. I believe it's the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. Because of our actions, America is becoming a safer and stronger and better country.

Four years ago, our economy was headed into a recession, and the stock market was in decline, so we passed historic tax relief for families and small businesses. Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has been growing at the fastest rate in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Because we believe in economic freedom and left more money in the people's hands, America is a stronger country.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. Whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it is the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. But that's the surest way to end economic growth and to put Americans out of work. This Nation is on a rising path, and with 4 more years, we'll achieve more growth, new and higher paying jobs, and greater opportunity for all of our citizens.

Four years ago, too many of our public schools were stuck in a cycle of mediocrity and excusemaking, with children often shuffled from grade to grade, year after year. So we insisted on high standards and accountability, local control of schools. And now, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math, and America is better for it.

Four years ago, our Medicare system was falling behind modern medicine. Many seniors were not getting the drugs they needed. Because we have updated Medicare and passed prescription drug coverage for our parents and our grandparents, America is a better place.

Four years ago, some of the finest, most effective charities in our country were viewed with suspicion or even hostility by our Government, just because they were faith-based charities. Because we have ended discrimination in Government contracting, the armies of compassion are transforming more lives in our country, and America is better for it.

In each of these areas, we are keeping our promises. We are doing our duty. Because of our actions, our economy is stronger. Our schools are better. Our country is safer. We have turned a corner, and there's no turning back. And in the weeks ahead, I will lay out an agenda worthy of this advancing and confident country.

The American economy is creating good jobs. Now we must move forward and make America even more job-friendly by keeping taxes low, more job-friendly by making regulations reasonable and fair and opening up new markets around the world. To keep our economy growing, we must pass a comprehensive energy plan to make America more energy-independent.

We will help more Americans get training at our community colleges for the jobs of the future. We'll protect workers and entrepreneurs from junk lawsuits that threaten to close the doors of too many small businesses and factories. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I've made my choice: I will continue to work with Congress to end the junk lawsuits that hurt small businesses and threaten jobs all across our country.

Across America, teachers and parents and principals are now working hard to raise the standards at our elementary schools and to see that every child can read by the third grade. Now we must move forward and make certain that our high schools are doing their jobs as well. Every high school diploma must mean that our graduates are prepared for jobs, for college, and for success.

The quality of health care in America is one of our great achievements. Now we must move forward to expand access to care and to keep important health decisions in the hands of patients and doctors, not in Government bureaucrats'. We need to make health care more affordable by making health insurance available to more Americans, by harnessing the power of information technology and by limiting the costly and abusive litigation that threatens health care in America. America needs medical liability reform. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

Our country has made a lot of progress in ending dependency on Government. Now we must move forward to strengthen work requirements that lead people from welfare to stable jobs. We need to encourage marriage and the family ties that improve the lives of our children.

During the next 4 years, we'll help more citizens to own their health plan, to own a piece of their retirement, to own their own home or their own small business. We'll usher in a new era of ownership in America with an agenda to help all our citizens save and build and invest, so every person owns a part of the American Dream.

This broad agenda we will carry into the new term comes from a basic conviction: Government should never try to control or dominate the lives of our citizens. Yet Government can and should help citizens gain the tools to make their own choices and to improve their own lives. When men and women have a sound education and the skills to seize new opportunities and the security of health care, they will achieve great things for themselves and for our Nation. There is no greater force for good in the world than the energy of free people.

Our opponents have a very different agenda. Senator Kerry has spent almost 20 years in the Federal Government, and he's concluded that it just isn't big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed nearly $2 trillion in additional Federal spending, and we're just getting started. But he hasn't told us how he plans to pay for it all. I think we can guess. He has a history of voting to raise taxes. But we're going to make it clear to him that would be the wrong medicine for America's improving economy.

He and his runningmate consistently oppose reforms that limit the power of Washington and place trust in the individual. They share the same old Washington mindset: They will give the orders, and you pay the bills. But we've gone beyond that way of thinking, and we're not going back.

America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. On a September morning, the world changed. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Al Qaida terrorists were plotting and moving across borders with little fear. Today, two-thirds of Al Qaida's known leaders have been captured or killed, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the security of the American homeland was in grave danger. Our Government was not organized to meet the new threat. We transformed our defenses. We created a new Department of Homeland Security. We rallied the world to pursue terrorists abroad and strengthened our laws to act against terrorists at home. We're using the PATRIOT Act to track terrorist activity and break up terror cells. We're using intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. In a vast and free nation such as ours, it is impossible to guarantee perfect security. But I can assure you, many fine professionals in intelligence and national security and homeland security and law enforcement are working around the clock. They're doing everything they can to protect us, and because of their vigilance, America is safer.

Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up terrorists; they're an ally in the war on terror. America and the world is safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world and firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He threatened his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. That's why, even before September the 11th, the policy of our country was regime change in Iraq. After September the 11th, the risk that Saddam Hussein could have used weapons or could have shared his capability to produce them with terrorists was simply too great.

We went to the United States Congress, which overwhelmingly agreed, then to the United Nations Security Council, which unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. When he again refused to comply and continued to systematically deceive the weapons inspectors, we made the decision to remove him from power.

Although we have not found the stockpiles of weapons that our intelligence showed would be there, we were right to go into Iraq. With Saddam Hussein in prison, America and the world are safer.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task is to work with friends and allies around the world to continue aggressively pursuing the terrorist and foreign fighters in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and elsewhere. You can't talk sense to the terrorists. You cannot negotiate with the terrorists. We must engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

The conditions for success in Afghanistan and Iraq are now coming together. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders, committed men, people who want peace and freedom for their people. The people of Iraq are taking more and more responsibility for their own security. They want to live in a free society. Men and women in Iraq want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. Schools and hospitals are being reopened. Citizens' lives are improving. Both nations are on the path to elections.

The people of those countries can count on America and our coalition. When we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to set them on the path of democracy. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

Over the next 4 years, we will continue to defend our homeland; we'll continue to defeat the terrorists abroad. Yet, in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentments that terrorists too often exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders, when the people can decide their own future.

A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we also serve the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Our men and women in the military are serving the cause of freedom. They're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases across the country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. And I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in good hands.

We must make sure our troops have the very best. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, for ammunition, for fuel, for spare parts for our military. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against that legislation, and 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. Now he's offering different explanations. Last week, Senator Kerry said he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops. Then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. Leaders need to stand behind our military and back them up 100 percent, and that's what I will do every day that I am your President.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help defeat the terrorists. There are over 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly

40 nations are involved in Afghanistan; some 30 nations involved in Iraq. We'll continue to build our alliances. We'll continue to work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other nations.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help to give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives; they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

And we're building a culture of responsibility here in America. The culture of this country is changing 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 are fortunate enough to be a mother or father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbors just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of the leaders. This isn't one of those times. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm—I can't remember if he was a policeman or fireman—and he said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of our country, whatever it takes.

In these times, I've also been a witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country in the quiet love of neighbor for neighbor. We've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have come through much together. We've done the hard work. We've made our Nation better and safer. We've turned the corner in extending freedom throughout the world. We're expanding opportunity here at home. And now, we move forward with confidence. During the next 4 years, we will spread opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

May God bless you all. Thank you all very much. God bless our great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers John Popper and Sara Evans; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks on Receiving the Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States
July 22, 2004

The President. It's been my honor to welcome Chairman Kean, Vice Chairman Hamilton to the Oval Office. We just had a good discussion about the 9/11 Commission Report. I want to thank these two gentlemen for serving their country so well and so admirably. They've done a really good job of learning about our country, learning about what went wrong prior to September the 11th, and making very solid, sound recommendations about how to move forward. I assured them that where Government needs to act, we will.

I want to thank the Commission members as well. These people worked really hard, long hours. They took time out of their private lives to serve America and have left their mark in a very constructive and positive way.

These two men bring a commonsense approach to how to move forward. They recognize what I recognize and America recognizes, that there's still a threat and that we in Government have an obligation to do everything in our power to safeguard the American people. And the report that they are about to present to me puts out some very constructive recommendations. And I look forward to studying their recommendations and look forward to working with responsible parties within my administration to move forward on those recommendations.

As well, we look forward to working with the Congress on the implementation of ways to do our duty. And the most important duty we have is the security of our fellow countrymen.

So, thank you, men, for your service. I'm proud you're here. You did a wonderful job.

Commission Chairman Thomas H. Kean. Mr. President, we'd like to present you a copy of our report. I thank you very much for giving me the honor of serving. I thank you also on behalf of the Commission for unprecedented access to documents and cooperation from your administration. We were able to see things that no commission or no Member of Congress has ever seen in doing our work. And we thank you for allowing us to do that.

The President. Thank you, Tom. Good job. Thanks, Lee. I appreciate you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks at the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy in Glenview, Illinois
July 22, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. It is a pleasure to be back in the great State of Illinois. It's an honor to be sharing the stage with some of America's finest citizens, our firefighters and policemen, EMS teams. Thanks for welcoming me here.

Our country faces new and unprecedented threats. The American people are counting on all who wear our Nation's uniform. We are counting on the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, who are serving in distant corners of the world.

We're counting on those who wear the uniform here at home: the police, the firefighters, the emergency rescue personnel, and others who risk their lives each day to protect our homeland and its citizens. The Nation is proud of your service. We're grateful for your sacrifices.

Here at the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy, you're performing a critical mission. I've just seen an impressive demonstration of the training that you provide to protect our communities from acts of terrorism. You are showing the commitment of our Nation: We will work tirelessly to disrupt and prevent terrorist attacks, and if an attack should come, America will be prepared.

I want to thank my friend Tom Ridge for taking on a tough assignment. He's the first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. His job is to coordinate agencies and groups of people that have really never worked together as well as they should have. He's done a fantastic job for the country. And I appreciate your service, Tom.

I appreciate Al. Thanks for having us. Thanks for your leadership here. And I want to thank Bob Lahey as well, who is the Director of NIPSTA. It sounds like Bob may have invited some of his family here today. [*Laughter*] I want to thank my friend Congressman Mark Kirk, who represents—[*applause*].

You know, I'm traveling today by chopper from the O'Hare Airport, and I was honored that truly one of the country's great mayors welcomed me there and flew over, and that's Mayor Richard Daley of the great city of Chicago. I want to thank Mayor Larry Carlson from Glenview for joining us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Mayor Peter Moy of Lincolnwood—thank you for coming, Peter. Mayor George Van Dusen of Skokie—thanks for coming, George, great first name. [*Laughter*] Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate all the State and local officers who are here as well as the first-responders. Thanks for having me.

The events of September the 11th, 2001, demonstrated the threats of a new era. We found that oceans which separated us from other continents no longer separate us from danger. We saw the cruelty of the terrorists, and we glimpsed the future they intend for us. They intend to strike the United States again. They're seeking increasingly powerful weapons that would allow them to kill our citizens on an unprecedented scale. That's the reality of the world we live in today. We didn't ask for it. It came to our shores because of what we believe in. It came to our shores because we're the beacon of freedom, and we're not going to change.

A new kind of threat has required a new kind of war, a new kind of response, and we are prosecuting the war on many fronts. Our military has captured or killed hundreds of terrorists, removed terrorist regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan that had harbored terrorists and threatened our people. Our intelligence community helped uncover the A.Q. Khan network that had supplied nuclear weapons-related equipment and plans to Libya and Iran and North Korea, and we put them out of business. Our diplomats, working with Great Britain, convinced Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction. Our law enforcement officials, working with friends and allies around the world, have disrupted terrorist financing and broken up terrorist cells virtually on every continent.

The results of these efforts are solid, and they're clear: In just 3 years, we've captured or killed about two-thirds of Al Qaida's known leadership; we've removed two terrorist regimes from power and convinced a third to voluntarily disarm; we helped eliminate the world's most dangerous nuclear trading network. Because of these achievements, America and the world are safer.

As we conduct this war abroad, we will always remember where it began: here in our homeland. We will not permit the terrorists to find sanctuary or safe haven, especially not within our own borders. In the past 3 years, we have dismantled terrorist cells, prosecuted terrorist supporters from California to Florida to Massachusetts.

In Lackawanna, New York, we broke up a terrorist cell whose members had trained in an Al Qaida affiliated camp near Kandahar, Afghanistan. In New Jersey, we indicted a man who was trying to sell shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles for the purpose of downing a U.S. commercial airliner. Here in Illinois, we convicted a man with a longstanding ties to bin Laden, who had been using a Chicago-area charity called the "Benevolence International Foundation" to channel money to Islamic militants.

Today, because we are on the offensive against terrorist networks, the American people are safer. But this does not mean that our Nation is fully secure. In a vast, free society such as ours, there is no such thing as perfect security. And no matter how good our defenses are, a determined enemy can still strike us. Terrorists only need to be right once; we need to be right every single time. Yet our fellow citizens can be certain of this: Our Government is doing everything we can to stop another attack. We're using every resource and technological advantage we have as a nation to pursue our enemies, at home and overseas. We're doing everything we can to protect our country. In the past 3 years, we have taken unprecedented steps to defend the homeland, to increase security, and to give our brave first-responders the tools they need to deal with a terrorist attack.

On September the 11th, 2001, there was no single Department of Government charged with protecting the American homeland, so we have undertaken the most sweeping reorganization of the Federal Government since the start of the cold war. Last year, we created the Department of Homeland Security, merging 180,000 personnel from 22 different Government organizations into a single Department with a single mission: to protect America from future attacks.

On September the 11th, many of the police, firefighters, and rescue personnel at the World Trade Center could not speak to one another by radio. It made it much more difficult to work as a single team to save lives. Since then, my administration has dedicated $280 million specifically to improve the ability of our first-responders to communicate with each other and work together in a crisis. And later this year, a new program called RapidComm will ensure that first-responders in Chicago and nine other large cities have the ability to communicate clearly in a major emergency.

On September the 11th, we saw the character of America as first-responders from around the country flooded New York and Pennsylvania and Virginia with offers of assistance. Since then, we've helped States establish Mutual Aid Agreements and Regional Response Plans so that when first-responders need help from their neighbors, they can be certain the right assistance will get to the right people at the right time.

Before September the 11th, the Federal Government set—sent threat information to local authorities by fax machines. Since then, we've established 21st-century communication networks to make information on rapidly emerging threats available to local officials in real time. We've given them access to the Department of Homeland Security's state-of-the-art mapping and imagery capabilities.

On September the 11th, the FBI did not have either the right tools or the clear mission to prevent terrorist attacks, so we are transforming the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism. We have nearly tripled the number of FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces, where FBI agents work shoulder to shoulder with State and local partners to stop the enemy before the next attack.

On September the 11th, there was no unified military command in the Department of Defense whose job it was to protect the homeland of the United States, so we have created a new Northern Command, with the mission of defending the American homeland.

Before September the 11th, our intelligence and Federal law enforcement communities were often prevented from sharing information about potential terrorist activities. They couldn't talk to each other. So we passed the PATRIOT Act, permitting investigators who sit next to each other to share information that could save American lives.

On September the 11th, the Federal Government often did not share classified information with local law enforcement, the ones most likely to first encounter terrorists and disrupt their planned attacks. Today, we've established secure connections to Emergency Operations Centers in every State and every Governor's office so local officials will have information they need to recognize suspicious behavior.

On September the 11th, there was no one place focused on pulling together a complete picture of all the terrorist threats at home and abroad. So we created the Terrorist Threat Integration Center to bring together all that information and to get it to the people at the Federal, State, and local level who need it to prevent attacks.

Since September the 11th, we have also implemented a new strategy to protect our borders. Posting Homeland Security personnel at foreign ports. We've beefed up airport and seaport security here at home. We've instituted better visa screening for those entering the country. We want to know who is coming in the country, why they're coming in the country, and if they're leaving the country, when they're supposed to leave the country. We have instituted new measures to protect critical infrastructure, including America's communications system and transportation networks.

After September the 11th, we created the Citizen Corps, a grassroots effort spearheaded by the Department of Homeland Security and the USA Freedom Corps to help Americans learn how to be prepared for and respond to attacks on our homeland.

Nicole Meier is with us. She is a member of the Citizen Corps Community Emergency Response Team. She is a volunteer. She completed 20 hours of training on disaster preparedness. By the way, Nicole and her three teenagers helped clean up debris in neighborhoods struck by a tornado near Utica, Illinois. I appreciate you being here, Nicole, and thank you for your voluntarism for the country. Thanks for bringing Gerhard. That would be the husband. [*Laughter*]

Since September of 2000, my administration has provided more than—along with the Congress, I might add—has provided more than $13 billion to equip and train America's State and local first-responders. We've sent nearly one-half billion dollars to help the first-responders of the State of Illinois. Those funds have helped pay for mobile command centers, mobile decontamination equipment, hazmat trucks, mobile WMD-detection equipment, and other rescue equipment that is making this State and local communities safer. In all, more than a half a million first-responders across America have been trained since 2001.

We are also bringing the best technologies to bear against the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Through the BioWatch program, we have placed state-of-the-art equipment in many major U.S. cities to detect biological agents. We have greatly expanded the Nation's stockpile of drugs and vaccines, including antibiotics to treat exposure to anthrax. We have enough smallpox vaccine for every American in case of an emergency. At the National Institutes

of Health, we have increased our investments in biodefense medical research and development to more than $1.6 billion a year. That's nearly a 3,000-percent increase since 2001.

Yesterday I signed into law the Project BioShield Act to speed the development of new vaccines and treatments against biological agents that could be used in a terrorist attack. Project BioShield authorizes $5.6 billion over 10 years to develop and stockpile the best and latest medical countermeasures for anthrax, for botulinum toxin, for Ebola, and for plague.

We have done all this in less than 3 years. There are good people working hard on your behalf. There is more to do. The report of the 9/11 Commission, which was released earlier today, will help us in our efforts. The Commission members have produced a serious and comprehensive report with thoughtful recommendations. These fine citizens dedicated more than a year of their lives in this effort. And on behalf of the American people, I thank them for their hard work.

I agree with their conclusion that the terrorists were able to exploit "deep institutional failings" in our Nation's defenses that developed over more than a decade. The Commission's recommendations are consistent with the strategy my administration is following to address these failings and to win the war on terror. But the job is not done. And this report will help our country identify even more steps we can take to better defend America.

The Commission has suggested a number of reforms to improve our intelligence capabilities so we can better anticipate emerging threats. We will carefully study all their proposals, of course. We agree that better coordination between the various intelligence agencies is needed. We agree that more human intelligence is needed, because we know the best way to figure out what the enemy is thinking is to get to know the enemy firsthand. We agree that we need to improve the technology at our disposal and develop capabilities that allow us to track our enemies anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

I appreciate the hard work of the Commission and the spirit in which their recommendations are written. We will give serious consideration to every idea because we share a common goal: to do everything in our power to prepare for and to stop any terrorist attack.

The new threats of the 21st century—they are dangerous and they are frightening, but America has the resources and the strength and the resolve to overcome them. We are waging a broad and unrelenting war on terror overseas and here at home. We're not going to give up. We're not going to weaken. Our resolve is firm. We have a duty to the American people. We are using this country's technological advantages to develop new cures and defenses to protect our citizens. We have dramatically improved our capacity to prevent and, if necessary, respond to a terrorist attack.

In nearly 3 years since September the 11th, life in America has in many ways returned to normal, and that's good for the country. It means that citizens are doing their jobs and raising their families and living as free people. Americans want to live in peace. I want peace for our country and peace for the world. Yet we have not forgotten what happened to our Nation on that day. We must do everything we can to prevent an even bolder and deadlier attack. We will never let our guard down.

Americans will always remember the courage we saw on that day as well, the unselfish heroism of police and firefighters and rescue personnel who rushed toward danger to save lives. All of you know that the next alarm could bring serious danger and even sacrifice. Americans are grateful that you are on the job. We're grateful that you're on the lookout for the enemy. We're grateful that you're prepared to respond if tragedy strikes.

You are vital to the Nation's defenses, the ones most likely to first encounter a terrorist, the ones who will be the first on the scene should there be an attack. You have dedicated your careers to serving others. That is a noble calling. In these challenging times, with the Nation relying on your efforts, you deserve the full support of our governments, and you can count on that support.

It's an honor for me to be here with those who defend us and protect us. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:49 p.m. in the field training facility. In his remarks, he referred to Albert Rigoni, president, Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Statement on Senate Action To Block Votes on Judicial Nominations
July 22, 2004

Today a minority of Senators employed filibuster tactics to bar confirmation votes on three excellent judicial nominees from Michigan to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit—Judge Richard Griffin, Judge David McKeague, and Judge Henry Saad. Each of these nominees is eminently qualified, has the support of a majority of Senators, and would be confirmed if given an up-or-down vote.

These filibuster tactics are shameful and inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional obligation. All three of these fine men are distinguished jurists. Together they have more than three decades of experience on the Michigan State and Federal courts. All three have been rated either well-qualified or qualified by the American Bar Association. The vacancies these judges have been nominated to fill have been designated judicial emergencies by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Yet all three nominees have been waiting more than 2 years for an up-or-down vote in the Senate. By blocking votes on these nominations, a minority of Senators is continuing a crisis that has delayed the administration of justice in the Sixth Circuit.

Prior to this Congress, the filibuster had never been used to block the confirmation of a judicial nominee. But in recent months, the use of this obstructionist tactic by some Democrats has become commonplace. With today's action, 10 appeals court nominees have now been filibustered.

The Senate minority's unfair treatment of these nominees demonstrates the breakdown in the judicial confirmation process. More than 18 months ago, I proposed a plan that would ensure that judicial nominees receive timely hearings and up-or-down votes no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. I again urge the Senate—Republicans and Democrats alike—to put an end to the partisan politics of the past and ensure judicial nominees are given the timely up-or-down votes they deserve. The Senate owes it to these fine men and women and to the American people.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Provide Funding for the United States Military
July 22, 2004

My most solemn duty as President is to protect the lives of the American people, and I have worked consistently for the largest defense buildup in a generation. America continues to be at war, and the legislation passed today by the Congress delivers the funding necessary to ensure that our troops are the best paid, the best equipped, and the best trained in the world.

I also commend the Congress for continuing to provide the resources necessary to support the critical missions of our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. As I have said repeatedly, our troops will have what they need to do their job, and I am pleased that a bipartisan majority in the Congress continues to stand with me to support our military.

I look forward to signing this legislation into law.

Remarks to the National Urban League Conference in Detroit, Michigan
July 23, 2004

The President. Thanks for the warm introduction. It's really good to be here. You know, Marc, you're right, the National Urban League is a vital and important part of the American scene. And I think the reason why is, not only is the mission important but the people involved in the Urban League are dignified, decent American citizens. And I am honored to be in your presence.

I see some friends like Willard, who is—I don't know if you remember, Willard, but we were on the porch of the Governor's mansion in Texas. I'm not saying you drank all my beer, but—[*laughter*]. Never mind. [*Laughter*] That's unfair. [*Laughter*] But thanks for having me.

Marc, I appreciate your leadership. I've had the opportunity to work with Marc. I look forward to continue working with Marc. He's a good man. He cares deeply about the country, the people in our country. He is—he has had a lot of experience. He has, after all, been a mayor. It's a heck of a lot tougher job than being President. After all, you've got to fill the potholes—[*laughter*]—and empty the garbage. And he did a fine job as mayor. He's doing a fine job for this very important organization.

Speaking about mayors, the mayor of Detroit was here. He's cutting a ribbon, which most mayors do. He's a fabulous mayor, by the way. He's standing a little taller, as if he needed to, because the Detroit Pistons are now the NBA champs. I told him, I said—I asked Kwame if he took credit for it. He said, "Of course." [*Laughter*]

I appreciate so very much Mike Critelli, who is the chairman. Thank you, Mr.—Mike, it's great to see you again. And Charles Collins, senior—the vice chairman—these are distinguished gentlemen who are helping to lead a very distinguished board of directors. It was my honor to meet with members of the board before I came out here today. And I appreciate your service to our country.

Rick, thank you very much. Rick Wagoner is the CEO of General Motors,

who is sponsoring this conference. I appreciate you doing that. It's an important conference, and corporate America needs to stand up and help organizations that are out to help other people, and you've done so. And I know people here appreciate that.

I appreciate Reverend Ernest Ferrell's blessings. They asked me before the speech whether or not I would object to a prayer. I said, "Absolutely not." All of us need prayer, and I appreciate that.

And I appreciate Reverend Jesse Jackson. Thanks for coming, again.

And it's hard to run for office. Isn't it, Al? [*Laughter*] Al Sharpton is with us. But I appreciate you putting your hat in the ring. [*Laughter*] It's not an easy thing. It looks easy.

Democratic Presidential candidate Rev. Al Sharpton. It's not over.

The President. There you go. It's not over. [*Laughter*] Just don't declare right now. [*Laughter*] Welcome. Glad you're here.

Thank you all for coming.

The thing I like about the National Urban League is you believe in the future of the African American community. You've got this great faith that the future is going to be better, and I share that. That's what I'm here to talk about. I believe the same thing. I believe this country can and will be a place of opportunity and hope for every single citizen. It's not a given; there's work to be done. But it's a goal, and it's an important goal.

I don't care what party you're in, what city you live in, or what State you're from, the goal has got to be—America has got to be an hospitable, hopeful place for every single citizen. That's what I believe. That's kind of the heart of what they call compassionate conservatism, that the American experience must be alive and viable for everyone and that Government has a role to help people have the tools so they can help themselves. See, I believe in the human spirit; I believe if people have the opportunity and the ability, they will achieve their God-given talents. That's what I believe. And I think that's a proper role for the Federal Government, to help people.

The last 3½ years, we've worked hard on that. We've worked hard to make opportunity available and prosperity real and justice not a word. And I'm here to tell you, we're making good progress.

Progress for African Americans and all Americans require a healthy, growing economy. It's hard to realize dreams if you're in a recession; it's hard to realize dreams if jobs aren't being created; it's hard to realize dreams if the entrepreneurial spirit is flat, at best, and that's not the case today.

It says a lot about our country that we've recovered from a recession. Remember, the recession was started before September the 11th—as a matter of fact, right as I came to office. The stock market had been declining for 9 months. In other words, the indications weren't all that viable for the economy.

And then we got hit, and the attacks hurt. It hurt our psyche. It hurt our economy. It hurt the ability to find work.

And then we uncovered the fact that some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen. See, we had some CEOs in corporate America that didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. That also hurt the economy. It took confidence away from a system that requires confidence. We acted. It should be clear now to all Americans that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We expect the high standard, and there will be enforcement of law to enforce that standard.

So the economy went through a lot. But we acted. See, I happen to believe if people have more of their own money in their pocket, they're going to spend, save, or invest, and when they do, that revitalizes economic growth and entrepreneurship. That's what the tax cuts were all about. That's why we raised the child credit. If you happen to have a 2-year-old son like Marc does, it enables you to be—have more

money in your pocket. We reduced the marriage penalty. What kind of Tax Code is it, by the way, that penalizes marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in the United States of America.

We reduced the 10-percent bracket; we reduced taxes on everybody. I think that's the fair way to do things. And as a result, the economy is growing. The economy, since last summer, has been growing at the fastest rate in nearly 20 years. That's the truth, and that's positive news. If people are looking for work, you've got to have an economy which is vibrant and growing.

And that's the case. We've added 1.5 million new jobs since August. There's more work to do, of course. Job opportunity isn't in every neighborhood and every corner of the country; I fully recognize that. But the economy today is strong, and it's growing stronger. And we've always got to remember why. I mean, inherent in the—in new job creation is small businesses. That's the most important part of new job creation. See, most new jobs are created by the small-business owners of America. And therefore, policy has got to recognize that. That's why we've got to have fair—a fair legal system that doesn't—these frivolous lawsuits make it awfully difficult for a small-business owner to thrive.

We've got to have affordable health care. We must have trade policy that enables small businesses to sell products overseas, that says we're going to level the playing field. Listen, we can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere if the rules are fair, which is precisely what this administration is doing. They need less regulation on small businesses.

But remember about the tax policy in terms of small businesses. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. See, that's reality. Ask your friends and neighbors who are entrepreneurs. They will tell you they're either a sole proprietorship or a Subchapter S corporation, which means they pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. And so when you cut the individual income taxes, you're really helping small-business owners. It's an entrepreneur—we're stimulating growth, and the small-business sector of America today is alive and well. And more minorities are owning their own small businesses, and that's really good for the future of the country.

See, if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of America. This administration promotes what I call the ownership society. When people tell me statistics, they say more people are owning their own small businesses and a lot of minorities are owning their own small businesses. That's really good news for the future of the country. It also happens to be really good news for the economy. The more small businesses there are, the more likely it is people are going to find work.

And there's more we can do to help people start their own businesses. The SBA has got a vital role—that's the Small Business Administration. Loans to African Americans were up by 75 percent from last year. That's positive. In other words, somebody said, "I need some help." They've come to the Federal Government. They said, "I've got an idea. I want to start my own business. I want to say, 'I'm the owner.' " And the Government says, "We want to help you." It's a legitimate role, to encourage ownership.

And that's what's happening right now in our society. We've rewarded $6 billion in new markets tax credits. Those are important. They promote economic and community development in low-income areas. And when you do that, the spinoff is more ownership of businesses. When there's a vitality in a neighborhood that has been—that needed help, new businesses spring up. That's all part of a vital tomorrow. Our plan is to help people help themselves, is to create an environment where the entrepreneur can flourish.

Marc, I read your comments, and the National Urban League is a partner in the $127 million reward we announced in May

this year just to do that, to create an environment where people have a chance to realize their dreams by owning their own business.

An interesting project that's going on inside inner cities, which makes life better but also helps the entrepreneurial spirit, is the cleanup of brownfields. Since I've come to office, we've cleaned up more than 1,000 brownfields. Those are old industrial sites which have been abandoned. They're not only eyesores; they're blights in the communities. They've been cleaned up. They're now viable pieces of property. Businesses are springing up—businesses around—businesses are springing up. An integral part of stimulating economic growth and activity to give people a chance to start and own their own company is wise policy in the inner city, such as brownfields cleanup policy. We've been aggressive with brownfields just like we have with empowerment zones.

What I'm telling you is, the role of Government is to create an environment where people from all walks of life have a chance to realize their dream. And that's precisely what's taking place in America. And the economy is better for it, and more people are finding work. And we must not go backward to the days of high taxes, high spending, more regulation, and more lawsuits if we expect more people to own their own business.

Secondly, we've got work to do to encourage and train a new generation of entrepreneurs. And that's why I'm pleased to announce today that we're joining with the Urban League to expand minority businessownership. It's an interesting project. You can't say to somebody, "You must be an entrepreneur." You can't say that. But you can say, "If you want to start your own business, we'll help you." And I want to thank Marc's leadership on this and the board's leadership in understanding the need to work with the Federal Government to set up what they call one-stop centers where minority enterprise can receive business training. It's one thing to say, "Let's go be an entrepreneur." But if you're not certain how to do it, people need help. You may have a great idea, but you're not sure how to keep the books. It's a practical application of Federal assets to help people understand how to own and run their own business. You can develop contacts there. You get advice on financing. It's practical ways to help people realize their dreams, is what we're talking about here.

The Business Roundtable, I'm pleased to say—those are the CEOs of big corporate America—the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation—he used to be the owner of the Kansas City Royals; he's a fine guy from Missouri—will support the work of the centers. And so, in other words, it's a collaborate effort. The Federal Government, the Urban League, and these other citizens are coming together and saying, "We're going to set up these centers to help people help themselves."

Progress for African Americans and progress for all Americans requires good schools. The system tended to shuffle kids through, and you know what I'm talking about. You know, the "hard-to-educate" were labeled that, and they just moved through; that's what was happening. We can play like it wasn't happening. It was happening. That's what you get when you get low expectations. It's what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations.

When I first came to the Urban League, I vowed to change that attitude in Washington. It was one of the things I said. I said, "Give me a chance to work the education system." And we have. We passed good law. Listen, the Government has got a funding responsibility. We have. We've increased Federal funding for K through 12 by 49 percent from 2001. I label that significant.

But you know what else has changed? For the first time, the Federal Government is asking the question, "Can our children actually read?" And see, I feel comfortable asking that question, because I believe

every child can read. You don't ask that question if you believe certain children cannot read; you say, "Okay, fine, shuffle them through"—the consequences of which, when people get out of high school, they're illiterate, they're lost, they're frustrated. They don't have a chance to realize the great promise of the country. We're changing that attitude in public schools.

We say we're going to have local control of schools. I really don't want the Federal Government trying to run the school systems of America. I think that would be cumbersome, too bureaucratic, stifling. It wouldn't encourage innovation; it wouldn't say to the school boards, "Be imaginative and strong and smart."

We stand with our teachers. But we're going to measure now in America, because we want to know. Our goal is for every child to be reading at grade level by the third grade, because we believe every child can do that. And now we want us to show—just please show us whether or not it's—whether or not you're achieving the objective. Because every child matters, see. If you don't measure, you do not know. If you don't take time to determine whether or not a child has got the skills necessary to succeed in America, you'll never find out until it's too late.

The philosophy of the No Child Left Behind Act says every child can learn, we expect every child to learn, and we expect you to show us whether or not every child is learning.

And it's paying off. The test scores, the accountability systems are beginning to show that African American fourth graders are catching up. There is an education gap in America, and so long as there is an education gap, we must be relentless in our pursuit for excellence.

By the way, the law says that if—we're going to detect problems early, before they're too late, and correct them; that's why we started measuring early. And there's money in the budgets that say, "If you need extra help, we'll help correct them." It says to parents that if the schools continue to fail, if they won't adjust, if a child is trapped in mediocrity, parents have different choices to make. See, this is all part of making sure we focus on the child, not the process, so no child in America is left behind.

And there's more to do. I'm working with Congress, hopefully over the next 4 years, for intensive reading intervention programs. It's one thing to start early, but there's a—you can imagine there's a group of kids that need to be saved now, before it's too late—eighth and ninth grade intervention programs. I know in Florida there's some great intervention programs. Willard, you'll probably take credit for them, but they—[*laughter*]—they're beginning to work well. They're good. It says we're not going to quit on any child. We're going to be involved.

We need to make sure a high school diploma means something. When a kid comes out of high school, an employer or community college—the college says that means something when they hold up a high school diploma.

And so we've got to make sure we continue to work not only in the early grades but in the later grades in public education so that people can say, "I've got something that means something." It's a certification for the ability to read, write, add, and subtract, to understand the sciences and maths as well. That's possible, see. You've got to think it's possible in the first place; otherwise, you wouldn't insist upon it.

Plus, I want to make sure the community college system is vibrant. I put money aside and will continue to do so for the community colleges. They're available, affordable. They're accessible. They're good things. They can change their curriculum to meet the needs of a local community. They actually train people for jobs which exist. They're good opportunities for kids coming out of high school. Look, education is the future of the country. And that's why, under my administration, we've increased

the number of men and women who will be receiving Pell grants to nearly one million, and why, under my budget, funding for historically black colleges is at an alltime high. It's what I said I would do when I was running for President, see. I told people I'd do that, and I've done it. And the country is better off for it, because education is the cornerstone of a hopeful tomorrow.

I was proud to support Mayor Tony Williams. He's my Mayor right now. I've got one mayor in Crawford and one mayor in Washington. [*Laughter*] Tony is the Mayor of Washington. He's a very good Mayor, by the way. He's a good man. Maybe you know him. But he and I—I work with Tony. And I signed a bill into law creating taxpayer-sponsored scholarships for students in Washington, DC. And let me tell you why. I believe this: If school choice is good for the wealthy, it's good enough for disadvantaged children in America. This is a good piece of legislation. It's a good piece of legislation which is going to help improve education for all children in the Nation's Capital.

Progress for African Americans and all Americans depends on more citizens living the dream of owning their own home. There's nothing better than somebody saying, "Welcome to my house. I'm putting out the welcome mat in my piece of property." And this has been a focus of this administration, because we want people owning their own home. It's a vital part of the American experience, isn't it.

So we're providing downpayment assistance, good counseling. Listen, people walk in, first-time home buyers, and they take a look at the contracts and the print's about that big, and they say forget it, you know? They get driven away by the complexity of the situation. Sometimes they get skinned by loan sharks, you know? And we're doing everything we can to make sure the loan application process is understandable and fair and open. We're proposing tax credits to encourage the building of more affordable housing, particularly in inner-city America. In other words, we want there to be a greater supply of homes.

Let me tell you something hopeful about the country. For the first time in our history, a majority of families and minority groups own their own homes. We're making progress. People are saying, "This is my home." And we must continue the progress we're making.

Progress for African Americans and all Americans depends on safe streets. Safe streets are important for any community, particularly important for communities in which parents feel like they've got to keep their kids locked in.

And so we're making progress there. We've increased Federal prosecutors. And I want to tell you something: Federal gun law prosecutions are up by 68 percent in the last 3 years. See, it's one thing to, you know, say we're going to pass laws. The thing is, you've got to enforce the law. If you're going to want safe streets, you've got to do a good job of enforcing the laws on the books, which is precisely what we're doing. And as a result, violent crime in America is down by 21 percent during my administration. That's positive for people. Property crime is down 13 percent.

But there's more than just fighting crime. We need to help the 600,000 men and women who are being released from prison each year. I went to the Congress in my State of the Union; I talked about a prison reentry program. I said, "Put some money up to help these souls come out. Let's make sure we're the country of the second chance. Let's make sure people have got a chance to get an education and a job. Let's make sure there's—if need be, let's make sure there's church families available to welcome a person back in community." And so this prison reentry program is a vital part of making sure America is a safe country.

Progress for this country, for African Americans and all Americans, depends on

the full protection of civil rights and equality before the law. My administration and its Justice Department has vigorously enforced the civil rights laws. The Civil Rights Division has opened a Federal investigation into the murder of Emmett Till. I'm the first President of the United States to ban racial profiling in Federal law enforcement. And to serve the cause of justice on the bench, the Federal bench, I have nominated outstanding men and women to the courts, including 6 superbly qualified African Americans for the courts of appeal and 11 for district courts.

Progress for African Americans and for all Americans depends on driving the drugs out of our neighborhoods. We put forth a comprehensive approach. We're doing everything we can to interdict drugs so they don't make it into the country in the first place. We have encouraged faith-based programs to help change hearts so people change habits. We've got money directed at the people who need the most help, which are the addicts of America—an intensive, focused, real effort to save lives.

But we're also working to reduce demand in the country. It's a community effort. We're bringing together all aspects of the community organizations to say to our youngsters, "Don't use those drugs." And we're making progress. From 2001 to 2003, youth drug use has declined by 11 percent. We're headed in the right direction. We're saying to our kids, "Be responsible with your bodies, be responsible with your behavior, and you have a chance to understand the great promise of America." It's a vital effort. This isn't a Republican cause or a Democrat cause. This is a community cause; this is an American cause; and it's important to work together.

Progress for all our citizens, including African Americans, depends on the spirit of compassion for others. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's lives. And we'll have the traditional programs of help, the safety nets. They're there. And that's an important part of Federal funding. But I strongly believe the Federal Government must welcome programs of faith into the compassionate delivery of help and service to those who hurt.

My community- and faith-based initiative recognizes the true strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens; that we recognize that oftentimes there's—a change of heart will change behavior, and governments can't change hearts. That changes when somebody who has heard a universal call to love a neighbor puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you brother. I love you sister. What can I do to help you on your walk so your life is improved?" This community- and faith-based initiative is a vital part of this administration's program to help save lives. We've opened up Federal grants to the faith community for the first time. I shouldn't say "for the first time"—most vigorously, let me put it to you that way.

And so now we've had over a billion dollars go out the door to faith-based programs, programs all aimed at serving America by saving lives. And it makes sense. It just makes sense. It makes sense to tap into the great strength and spirit of the country.

The Associated Black Charities of Baltimore—ask them what it's like to be a partner with the Federal Government; or the Black Ministerial Alliance in Boston or the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative. These are all initiatives, all aimed at saying to somebody, "The future is better for you. Somebody loves you. We care, and we're going to help you. We're going to help mentor you. We'll save you from drugs and alcohol. We'll do everything in our power to save America one soul at a time."

We've done a lot in 3½ years. I ask you to look at the record of accomplishment. And I didn't do this alone. I've got a good administration, really good people. It's a diverse Cabinet. It's a Cabinet full of strong people. It's a Cabinet who are

serving our country first, people like Rod Paige. You've heard my talk about education. I hope you have a sense of my passion to make sure we get it right. I understand the importance of schools in America. I picked a good man to serve as the head of the Education Department, Rod Paige. He was—[*applause*].

You heard me talk about owning your own home; it's a vital part of this future of this country. Alphonso Jackson is the head of the Housing and Urban Development. Kay James runs the Office of Personnel Management. You know, the Government owns a lot of property. Steve Perry is the head of the GSA.

We've got a diverse cabinet, diverse administration, people who serve our Nation with dignity. You know, when it comes time to money, Alan Greenspan is a smart guy; so is the Vice Chairman, Roger Ferguson, of the Federal Reserve. Chairman of the FCC, the Federal Communications Commission, Michael Powell—in other words, what I'm telling you is I feel I have an obligation to reach out to people from all walks of life. I have met that obligation, and the Government is better for it.

And when it comes to national security, thankfully I've had a good team. We've had some big challenges in this country. And I've got a strong foreign policy, because the architects of that policy are people like Condi Rice and Colin Powell. These are good people. I've seen them under incredible pressure. I know their steadiness and their clear vision.

See, our most solemn duty is to protect the American people. That's our most solemn duty. It's a duty brought upon us not at our asking, because we were attacked unmercifully by people who hate what we stand for. They hate the fact that we can have free dialog just like this. They hate the fact that there's open discourse. They hate the fact that we're a free society where people can worship any way they see fit. They hate the idea that we welcome people who worship God and we welcome people who don't worship God. They can't stand the thought that we're a society that says if you choose to worship, you're equally American if you're a Christian, Jew, or Muslim.

And so they attacked us. And we have a duty, all of us have a duty, to respond. This is an American effort to protect ourselves. And Colin Powell and Condi Rice have provided valuable, valuable advice and counsel during these tough times.

And we're making progress. Listen, we're trying to do everything we can to protect our homeland. There's people from all walks of life working hard to protect the American people. There's no such thing as perfect security. I tell people we've got to be right 100 percent of the time; those who want to cause us harm have to be right once. But there's a lot of people working. It doesn't matter what your party is, they're working hard to protect the American people. And we've got a lot of people overseas working to protect us too, by bringing justice to the enemies before they strike again.

Our foreign policy is tough, and it's compassionate. It's tough, and we have to be tough. It's compassionate. We liberated over 50 million people who were brutalized by tyrants. We're proud to lead the armies of liberation. We're standing true to this great American ideal that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We've begun the largest initiative ever to combat global AIDS. America is in the lead on dealing with the pandemic that ravages the continent of Africa. We're taking the lead because we're a compassionate nation. We feed more of the hungry than any nation on the face of the Earth. We're a compassionate nation.

We're also a wise nation when it comes to smart policy. I signed the African Growth and Opportunity Acceleration Act of 2004. It recognizes that the best way to help lift people out of poverty is to

trade; it's through the free flow of commerce. And it's working on the—this policy is working on the continent of Africa.

Problems come to our desk because of our influence in the world. We've dealt with Liberia. We're now dealing with the Sudan. The United States is working closely with the United Nations. As a matter of fact, the Secretary of State was recently with Kofi Annan, talking about this very subject. We're working closely with the African Union to bring relief to the suffering people in that region. We've made our position very clear to the Sudanese Government: They must stop the Janjaweed violence. They must provide access for humanitarian relief to the people who suffer.

Ours is a solid record of accomplishment. And that's why I've come to talk about compassionate conservatism and what I envision for the future. I'm here for another reason. I'm here to ask for your vote.

No, I know. I know—I know. The Republican party has got a lot of work to do. I understand that. [*Laughter*] You didn't need to nod your head that hard, Jesse. [*Laughter*]

Do you remember a guy named Charlie Gaines? Somebody gave me a quote he said, which I think kind of describes, maybe, the environment we're in today. I think he's a friend of Jesse's. He said, "Blacks are gagging on the donkey but not yet ready to swallow the elephant." [*Laughter*]

Now that was said a while ago. [*Laughter*] I believe you've got to earn the vote and seek it. I think you've got to go to people and say, "This is my heart. This is what I believe, and I'd like your help." And as I do, I'm going to ask African American voters to consider some questions.

Does the Democrat Party take African American voters for granted? It's a fair question. I know plenty of politicians assume they have your vote. But do they earn it, and do they deserve it? Is it a good thing for the African American community to be represented mainly by one political party? That's a legitimate question. How is it possible to gain political leverage if the party is never forced to compete? Have the traditional solutions of the Democrat Party truly served the African American community?

That's what I hope people ask when they go to the community centers and places, as we all should do our duty and vote. People need to be asking these very serious questions.

Does blocking the Faith-Based Initiative help neighborhoods where the only social service provider could be a church? Does the status quo in education really, really help the children of this country? Does class warfare—has class warfare or higher taxes ever created decent jobs in the inner city? Are you satisfied with the same answers on crime, excuses for drugs, and blindness to the problem of the family?

Those are legitimate questions that I hope people ask as this election approaches. I'd like to hear those questions debated on talk radio. I'd like it debated in community centers, in the coffee shops. It's worthy of this country for this debate to go forward and these questions to be asked and answered.

I'm here to say that there is an alternative this year. There is an alternative that has had a record that is easy to see. If you dream of starting a small business and building a nest egg and passing something of value to your children, take a look at my agenda. If you believe schools should meet high standards instead of making excuses, take a look at my agenda. If you believe the institutions of marriage and family are worth defending and need defending today, take a look at my agenda.

If you believe in building a culture of life in America, take a look at my agenda. If you believe in a tireless fight against crime and drugs, take a look at this agenda. If you believe that our men and women

in uniform should be respected and supported 100 percent of the time, take a look at my agenda.

If you're struggling to get into the middle class and you feel like you're paying plenty of taxes, take a look at my agenda. If you're a small-business owner who is trying to expand your job base and are worried about excessive lawsuits, increasing taxes, and over-regulation, take a look at this agenda.

And finally, if you believe in the power of faith and compassion to defeat violence and despair and hopelessness, I hope you take a look at where I stand.

You see, I believe in my heart that the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, is not complete without the perspective and support and contribution of African Americans.

And I believe in my heart that the policies and actions of this administration, policies that empower individuals and help communities, that lift up free enterprise and respect and honor the family, those policies are good for the Nation as a whole. That's what I believe. And I'm here to thank you for giving me a chance to come and express those beliefs.

I'm proud to be with an organization that does so good—so much good for the American people. I'm honored that your chairman would extend an invitation to me. Thanks for coming. And may God bless you, and may God continue to bless the country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. at the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League; Michael J. Critelli, chairman, and Charles M. Collins, senior vice chairman, National Urban League Board of Trustees; Mayor Kwame M. Kilpatrick of Detroit, MI; Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; and Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Executive Order Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Importation of Certain Goods From Liberia

July 23, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with subsection 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") in which, in view of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1521 of December 22, 2003, and 1532 of March 12, 2004, I declared a national emergency with respect to the threat to the foreign policy of the United States constituted by certain actions, policies, and circumstances with respect to Liberia. These actions, policies, and circumstances include the undermining of Liberia's transition to democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources by former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property. These actions, policies, and circumstances also include the lack of universal implementation throughout Liberia of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed on August 18, 2003, and the related ceasefire. Finally, these actions, policies, and circumstances include the link between the illicit trade in round logs and timber products and the proliferation of

and trafficking in illegal arms, which perpetuate the Liberian conflict and fuel and exacerbate other conflicts throughout West Africa.

To address this threat, I ordered that, except to the extent provided in section 203(b)(1), (3), and (4) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(1), (3), and (4)), or regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that may be issued pursuant to the order, all property and interests in property of the persons listed in the annex to the order or any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to meet the criteria set forth in section 1(a)(ii) of the order, are blocked.

I further ordered that, except to the extent provided in regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that may be issued pursuant to the order, the direct or indirect importation into the United States of any round log or timber product originating in Liberia is prohibited.

I have enclosed a copy of the order, which became effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 23, 2004.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The Executive order of July 22 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address
July 24, 2004

Good morning. This week, the independent Commission on the September the 11th attacks issued its final report. I appreciate the hard work of the Commission over the past 20 months. They have produced a serious and comprehensive report, and I welcome their recommendations.

Indeed, we have already put into action many of the steps now recommended by the Commission, and we will carefully examine all the Commission's ideas on how we can improve our ongoing efforts to protect America and to prevent another attack.

The events of September the 11th, 2001, dramatically demonstrated the threats of a new era. In the nearly 3 years since the attacks, we have waged a steady, relentless, determined war on terrorists. We're fighting them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here in America, and we are taking unprecedented steps to defend the homeland. Since September 2001, America and our allies have captured or killed thousands of terrorists, removed terrorist regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, convinced Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction, and put the world's most dangerous nuclear trading network out of business. We're chasing down terrorist enemies abroad and within our own borders.

On the homefront, we have dismantled terrorist cells and prosecuted terrorist supporters from California to Florida to Massachusetts. As the Chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Tom Kean, said this week, "We are safer today than we were on 9/11." But as Governor Kean also noted, "The danger to America has not passed." In a vast, free society such as ours, there is no such thing as perfect security. And no matter how good our defenses are, a determined enemy can still strike us. Yet all Americans can be certain our Government is using every resource and technological advantage we have to prevent future attacks.

We have created a new Department of Homeland Security with a single mission,

protecting the American people. We have established better communications networks to make information on rapidly emerging threats available to local officials in real time. We are transforming the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism. And we created a new Northern Command in the Department of Defense with the mission of defending the American homeland.

To better protect the country, we have posted Homeland Security personnel at foreign ports, beefed up airport and seaport security at home, and instituted better visa screening for those entering our country. We have placed state-of-the-art equipment in major cities to detect biological agents and stockpiled enough smallpox vaccine for every American, in case of an emergency. And this week, I signed a new law establishing Project BioShield, which will speed the development of new vaccines and treatments against biological agents that could be used in a terrorist attack.

On Thursday, I visited with first-responders at the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy. I thanked them for their service and assured them that America will give them the tools they need to do their jobs. Since September of 2001, my administration has provided more than $13 billion to equip and train more than a half a million first-responders across America.

There's still more to do. As Commander in Chief, it is critical that I receive the best intelligence to defend the American people. The 9/11 Commission's recommendations will help guide our efforts as we work to protect the homeland. And we can be confident, although the threats of this new century are dangerous, America has the resources, the strength, and the resolve to overcome them.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:56 a.m. on July 23 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Methane to Markets Partnership
July 28, 2004

Today the United States and several major international partners are forming the Methane to Markets Partnership, a new and innovative program to increase energy security, improve environmental quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the world. The United States will commit up to $53 million to the Partnership over the next 5 years. To date, Australia, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom have agreed to participate as founding partners, along with the United States.

Under the Partnership, members will work in coordination with the private sector to share and expand the use of technologies to capture methane emissions that are now wasted in the course of industrial processes and use them as a new energy source. The important benefits of this international partnership include improved energy security and air quality from the use of clean-burning methane as natural gas, improved coal mine safety, enhanced economic growth, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions of methane. The Partnership will be led by

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Mike Leavitt, working closely with the Department of State, the Department of Energy, and the United States Agency for International Development. Administrator Leavitt will host a ministerial-level meeting of the founding international partners later this year. I look forward to working closely with our international partners to achieve the Partnership's important goals.

Statement on Progress in Homeownership
July 29, 2004

My administration has put forward an aggressive agenda to help all Americans—especially first-time homeowners, low-income families, and minorities—achieve the dream of owning their own home. Today's homeownership statistics show that we are making significant progress in building an ownership society in America. We have set a new record for homeownership, and today, more Americans, including minorities, own their own home than ever before. We will continue to usher in a new era of ownership by providing additional opportunities for all Americans to realize the American Dream.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Executive Order on Termination of the National Emergency Declared in Executive Order 12722 With Respect to Iraq and Modification of Related Executive Orders
July 29, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with subsection 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (this "order") in which I terminate the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990, amend Executive Order 13290 of March 20, 2003, and take additional steps regarding the national emergency I declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, and expanded in Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003. I have determined that the situations that gave rise to these national emergencies have been significantly altered by the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein and other developments.

Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990, imposed sanctions on Iraq in response to its invasion of Kuwait and other actions. Those sanctions were modified in Executive Order 12724 of August 9, 1990, in light of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661 of August 6, 1990, which also imposed sanctions on Iraq. I have determined that the removal of the regime of Saddam Hussein warrants the termination altogether of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12722. This action is consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1483 and 1546, of May 22, 2003, and June 8, 2004, respectively, which substantially lifted the multilateral economic sanctions against Iraq.

Although I am terminating the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12722, pursuant to my authority under IEEPA, I am continuing for the near future certain prohibitions with respect to property previously blocked pursuant to Executive Orders 12722 and 12724. Such prohibitions are necessary on account of claims involving Iraq.

Consistent with section 203(a)(1)(C) of IEEPA, 50 U.S.C. 1702(a)(1)(C), in Executive Order 13290 of March 20, 2003, I ordered that certain blocked funds held in the United States in accounts in the name of the Government of Iraq, the Central Bank of Iraq, Rafidain Bank, Rasheed Bank, or the State Organization for Marketing Oil be confiscated and vested in the Department of the Treasury. I originally exercised these authorities in furtherance of Executive Order 12722. In light of the changed circumstances in Iraq, and my decision to terminate the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12722, I have now determined that the exercise of authorities in Executive Order 13290 should continue in order to address the national emergency I declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, and expanded in Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003, regarding the obstacles posed to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq. This order amends Executive Order 13290 to that effect.

In Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003, I declared a national emergency to address the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by obstacles to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in that country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq. I expanded that emergency in Executive Order 13315 of August 28, 2003, in light of UNSCR 1483 of May 22, 2003, in which the Security Council decided that states shall freeze the assets of the former Iraqi regime, Saddam Hussein, and other senior officials of the former Iraqi regime, and their immediate family members, among others, and cause the transfer of certain of those assets to the Development Fund for Iraq. Executive Order 13315 implements this provision of UNSCR 1483.

This order further modifies the actions taken to address the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13303, as expanded in Executive Order 13315, by amending the Annex to Executive Order 13315 to include certain persons determined to have been subject to economic sanctions pursuant to Executive Orders 12722 and 12724. Because of their association with the prior Iraqi regime, I have determined that these persons present an obstacle to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in that country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq and, therefore, I have determined that such persons should be subject to sanctions under Executive Order 13315.

Additionally, in UNSCR 1483, the Security Council decided that states shall take appropriate steps to facilitate the safe return to Iraqi institutions of Iraqi cultural property or other items of archeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance that were illegally removed from the Iraq National Museum, the National Library, and other locations in Iraq since August 6, 1990, including by establishing a prohibition on trade in or transfer of such items and items with respect to which reasonable suspicion exists that they have been illegally removed. This order, among other actions, implements this international legal obligation.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to me by IEEPA and the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended, as may be necessary to carry out the

purposes of this order. The Secretary of the Treasury may redelegate any of these functions to other officers and agencies of the United States Government consistent with applicable law. I have directed all agencies of the United States Government to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of this order.

I have enclosed a copy of this order, which became effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 30, 2004.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in Springfield, Missouri
July 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. It's great to be in the heartland of our country. And I want to thank you all for being here this morning to help kick off our Heart and Soul of America tour.

There will be big differences in this campaign. They're going to raise your taxes; we're not. I have a clear vision on how to win the war on terror and bring peace to the world. They somehow believe the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The heart and soul of America is found right here in Springfield, Missouri.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to getting out amongst the people. We're going to Michigan and Ohio this weekend. Everywhere I've been going the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good: With your help, Dick Cheney and I will lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. I know you are too. [*Laughter*] You probably wish she was speaking and not me. [*Laughter*] She is a great First Lady. Today you'll hear some reasons why I think you need to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I appreciate my runningmate. I tell you, he's not the prettiest man in the race—[*laughter*]—but he's got sound judgment, and he's got great national—he's got great experience in national security. He's a steady man. I'm proud to have him by my side for 4 more years.

I thank my friend Roy Blunt for his leadership and for his great introduction. I'm proud to be working with you. I appreciate my friend Kit Bond. You need to send him back to Washington, DC. And 2 years ago, you sent a good one from Missouri in Jim Talent. I appreciate you, Senator. Thank you for being here. I'm honored that Kenny Hulshof and Jo Ann Emerson are with us, two fine Members of the House of Representatives. Thank you all for coming. Proud you're here.

Speaker Catherine Hanaway, it's good to see you again. It wasn't just but yesterday, it seemed like, we were in St. Charles, Missouri, together. Thank you for coming. I appreciate your warm introduction there.

Can't help but notice my friend Johnny Morris is here. Gosh, I wish we were fishing. [*Laughter*] I was in the Bass Tracker, I want you to know, over the weekend in Crawford. It didn't sink. [*Laughter*] Great to see you, friend. Thanks for coming.

I'm proud so many citizens showed up here. I appreciate the grassroots activists who are here. I'm here to ask for your help. I'm not only traveling the country to ask for the vote; I'm here to ask for your help. I'd like you to call up people on the phone and encourage them to register to vote. Encourage them to do their duty on election day to vote. And when you get them headed toward the polls, make sure you nudge them toward that George Bush/Dick Cheney lever.

I'm glad Joe White is here. He runs Kanakuk Kamps. Thanks for coming, Joe. I appreciate you coming.

I met a fellow named Charlie Graas. He's a volunteer with the Stone County Food Pantry. Let me tell you why I mention him. The strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, people who are willing to feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless, love a neighbor in need. Charlie, thank you for being an army—a soldier in the army of compassion.

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has to answer one question: Why? Why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is determine who best will lead the Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake: prosperity and peace. We have so much more to do to move this country forward. Give me 4 more years, and America will continue to march toward peace and better prosperity.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm asking for 4 more years to make our country safer, to make the economy stronger, to make our future better and brighter for every single citizen. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to protecting our homeland, we have made much progress, and there is more to do.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We're setting high standards. We're focusing on results. We're insisting on accountability. We're empowering parents. We're making sure local folks are in charge of schools. And today, children across America are showing real, substantial progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills. We'll reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science education so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into our classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation gain the skills and the confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs. Medicare didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties had promised political—had promised prescription drug coverage for years. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan

that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save, tax-free, for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This world of ours is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at discounts available to big companies.

To improve health care, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care and drive good doctors out of medicine. We must harness technology to reduce costs and prevent deadly health care mistakes. We must do more to expand research and development for new cures for terrible diseases.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make America's economy stronger. We've come through a recession, terrorist attacks, corporate scandals. We overcame these obstacles because of the hard work and will of the American entrepreneur, the small-business owner, the farmers, and the workers. And we came through these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

We gave tax relief to every American who paid taxes. We didn't play favorites with the Tax Code. We didn't try to pick winners or losers. We made sure families with children and married couples and small businesses got tax relief. And this time, the check really was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Because we acted, Missouri has added more than 82,000 jobs over the past 11 months; your unemployment rate is now 5.2 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for America's workers, we are turning the corner, and we are not turning back.

Today I met a fellow named Kit Carson. He's a small-business owner here in Springfield. See, most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. That's why the cornerstone of our tax relief plan says we're going to help the small-business owners.

Here's what he said about tax relief—this is a fellow who's hiring people right here in this area; this is a fellow who's making investments—he said the effect is already—is showing already. It's going to get better. "I'm an optimistic guy," he says. "I think we might see a boom bigger than the nineties." The tax relief we passed is working.

We will do more to make America more job-friendly and America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations should be reasonable and fair. To keep the jobs here at home, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs here, we must end the junk lawsuits that hurt our small businesses. And to keep this economy growing so people can find work, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low.

We'll offer America's workers a lifetime of learning and help them get training for jobs of the future at places like our community colleges. The education and training they offer can bridge—can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

Today I met Kristin Heydt. She's from Springfield as well. She used to be a bank teller. With the tax relief she and her family had as a result of the tax cuts, she went back to school. She's now a nurse. She completed a program. She now makes three times the amount of money she made before, because of education. Good education means workers can realize their dreams.

To make sure we continue to grow our economy, we will insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. We want Missouri farmers selling Missouri crops all over the world. And we'll make sure American families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that's time: time to play with the kids; time to go to the little league games; time to care for elderly parents; or time to go to class themselves. I believe Congress ought to enact comp-time and flex-time to help America's families better juggle the demands of work and their home.

The goals of the economic agenda are clear. After 4 more years, our Nation will have more small businesses, greater opportunities, better jobs, and higher wages for the American people.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base for Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers and set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, an ally in the war on terror, a place where many young girls go to school for the first time. And as a result of our actions, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He has pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most vulnerable region.

I took those threats seriously. After September the 11th, we had to look at the threat in a new light. One of the lessons of September the 11th is we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we cannot fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, who had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction and might use those weapons or share his deadly capability with terrorists, was not a threat.

We looked at the intelligence; we saw a threat. Members of the United States

Congress from both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat. We went to the United Nations, which unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he refused to comply with the demands of the free world. When he continued to deceive the weapons inspectors, I had a decision to make: to hope for the best and to trust the word of a madman and a tyrant, or remember the lessons of September the 11th and defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world and making America safer and promoting the peace, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back. We have more to do. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists. You can't hope for the best. You can't negotiate with them. We will engage those enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We've put together a strong coalition to help us defeat the terrorist threats. Over 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan; some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to work with our friends and build alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decision to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitment to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders. They're on the path to free elections. More and more people in Afghanistan and Iraq are stepping up to secure their own country from these killers. They understand the benefits of a free society. Moms and dads in Afghanistan and Iraq want their children to grow up in a peaceful world, and so do we.

The people of these countries can count on our continued help. When we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to set them on the path of liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments have been kept by the men and women of our military. I thank those who are here today who wear our uniform, and I thank their families as well. I've seen their great decency and the unselfish courage of those who wear our uniform. The cause of freedom is in good hands.

And when these good folks are in harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best equipment, the best possible training. That's why last September, when our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. In the Senate, only a handful of what I would call out-of-the-mainstream folks—that would be 12 Senators—voted against that legislation. Two of the twelve are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He tried to explain his vote by saying, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. He's got a different explanation now. One time he said he was proud he voted against the funding; then he said the whole thing was a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq

and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to a neighborhood that needs the example of liberty. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By being resolute and strong, by working for the ideal of liberty, after 4 more years, America will be more secure and the world will be more peaceful.

These are still dangerous times. There's an enemy out there that would like to hurt us and change our way of life and shake our will and shake our confidence. I agree with the conclusion of the September the 11th Commission when they said our homeland is safer, but we are not yet safe. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses and created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement new tools to track terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism.

We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we have ever before. When it comes to better protecting America, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back. We will do more to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capabilities. Reform is not easy, and it never is. Achieving reform takes—requires taking on the special interests, requires challenging the status quo.

You see, it's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done. When it comes to reforming schools—provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating new jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror, results matter. And when it comes to choosing a President, results matter.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This week, members of the other party gathered in Boston. We heard a lot of clever speeches and some big promises. My opponent has good intentions, but intentions do not always translate to results.

After 19 years in the United States Senate, my opponent has had thousands of votes but very few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the intelligence budget. And he had no record of reforming America's intelligence gathering capability. He had no significant record for reforming education and health care. As a matter of fact, he and his runningmate consistently opposed reforms that limit the power of Washington and leave more power in the hands of the people.

He's spent nearly 20 years in the Federal Government, and it appears he's concluded that it's just not big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional Federal spending, and he's just getting started. [*Laughter*] The problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. We can figure it out, can't we?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. He's had a history of voting for higher taxes.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We're going to make it clear, his prescription for America is the wrong medicine. We're not turning back to the old days, the old Washington mindset that says they will give the orders, you will pay the bills. We've turned a corner from that way of thinking, and we're not turning back.

These are exciting times for our country. It's a time of amazing change. The economy is changing. The world is changing. In our parents' generation, moms usually stayed home while fathers worked for one company until retirement. The company

provided health care and training and a pension. Many of the Government programs and most basic systems, from health care to Social Security to the Tax Code, were based—and still are based—on those old assumptions.

This is a different world. Workers change jobs and careers frequently. Most of these jobs are created by small businesses. They can't afford to provide health care or pensions or training. Parents are working; they're not at home. We need to make sure Government changes with the times and to work for America's working families. You see, American workers need to own their own health care accounts. They need to own and manage their own pensions and retirement systems. They need more ownership so they can take the benefits from job to job. They need flex-time so they can work out of the home.

All of these reforms are based on this conviction: The role of Government is not to control or dominate the lives of our citizens; the role of Government is to help our citizens gain the time and the tools to make their own choices and improve their own lives. That's why I will continue to work to usher in a new era of ownership and opportunity in America. We want more people owning their own home. We want more people owning their own business. We want more people owning and managing their own health care system. We want more people owning and managing a part of their retirement systems. When a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In this world of rapid change, some things will never change. Our conviction that every life matters and every life counts will not change. Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity will not change. The individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, hard work and duty, won't change. We'll always honor the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our future. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench. And we will work together to build a culture of responsibility. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands that we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another one began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I will never forget. I remember the workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a fireman or a policeman—I can't remember which one—looking me in the eyes and saying, "Do not let me down."

As those folks did that day, and like many other Americans, we took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've done some hard work. We've turned a corner. We've moved—we're moving America forward by extending freedom and peace around the world. We're expanding opportunity here at home. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner—every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail. With your support and with your prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a world of change.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 a.m. at Hammons Field at Southwest Missouri State University. In his remarks, he referred to Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; John L. Morris, founder, Bass Pro Shops; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in Grand Rapids, Michigan
July 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all. I appreciate you coming. Sit down if you've got a chair. I'm proud you're here. Thanks for inviting me. You can't come to Grand Rapids and not think about a great President, Gerald Ford. What a decent man. What an honorable citizen. And what a great example for Presidents.

I appreciate you coming out for our Heart and Soul of America tour. This is going to be a great campaign. I'm looking forward to it. And there's going to be big differences. We'll have differences over taxes, how to keep the peace. And there seems to be a difference over the heart and soul of America. My opponents think you can find it in Hollywood. I think you find it right here in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I'm excited about traveling the country. I was in Springfield, Missouri, earlier. I'm going to Cleveland, Ohio; Canton, Ohio; on to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, tomorrow. I like traveling. I like being with people. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm is high. And with your help, Dick Cheney and I will serve this Nation for 4 more years.

Speaking about my friend Dick Cheney, I admit, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] But I picked him because he's steady and strong and reliable. He's got good judgment. Dick Cheney is a great Vice President.

And speaking about really fine people, I am sorry that Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. [*Laughter*] Most people feel that way. They wish she

were speaking and I stayed at home. [*Laughter*] But I'm really proud of her. She is a great lady, a fantastic First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank Juan Olivarez for his leadership of this very important institution. I appreciate a fellow *Tejano* serving the community of Grand Rapids—that means a fellow Texan. [*Laughter*] I appreciate his warm words of introduction. *Gracias, amigo*.

I appreciate Hoekstra—Peter Hoekstra for his service in the United States Congress. I'm proud to call him friend. And I appreciate my friend Vern Ehlers' service to the people of Michigan in the United States Congress as well.

I'm honored that Terri Lynn Land and Mike Cox and Ken Sikkema are with us today. I've gotten to know these good souls during my trips here in Michigan. And they represent the State well. I appreciate Speaker Rick Johnson joining us as well; State Senator Bill Hardiman. I'm honored that these good citizens have decided to serve the people of the communities in the great State of Michigan. I thank them for the hard work they have done and are going to do to make sure we carry the State of Michigan this time.

I want to thank my friend Betsy DeVos and Chuck Yob and Holly Hughes and the ambassador, Peter Secchia. I want to—does it strike anybody funny, "Ambassador" Secchia? No? [*Laughter*] We love him in our family.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate your willingness to work in the political process. I encourage you to get people to register to vote. Make sure people go to vote on election day. We have a duty in our society—in our democratic system, we have a duty to participate. And I want to thank you for getting people to participate. And when you get them headed into the polls, give them a little nudge our way. [*Laughter*]

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has got to answer one central question, and that's why—why should the American people give me the privilege, the high privilege, of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together, and we have accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who will lead the Nation forward, who can do the job for the American people. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have much more to do to move this country forward.

I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer, to make our economy stronger, to make the future better and brighter for every single citizen who lives in this country. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to protecting our homeland, we've made much progress, and I'm here to tell you, we have got more to do.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we know they can be so that no child is left behind in this country. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we've challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're setting high standards. We're focusing on results. We're insisting on accountability. We're empowering parents. And we're making sure local folks are in charge of their own public schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we are turning the corner, and we are not turning back.

We have more to do. This world of ours is changing. Jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher skill levels. We must reform our high schools to make

sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science education so young people can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. We got it done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Most Americans get their health coverage through their work. But today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big corporations.

To improve health care, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive doctors out of medicine. We will do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We will do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make America's economy stronger. We've come through a lot together. We've come through a recession and terrorist attacks and corporate scandals. We overcame these obstacles because the hard work of the American people, because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because people like our farmers and ranchers refuse to buckle. We overcame these obstacles as well because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't—when we provided tax relief, we didn't try to pick winners or losers. We didn't play politics. We did it the fair way. We provided tax relief to every American who pays taxes—for families with children, for married couples, for small businesses. And this time, the check was really in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. We still face serious challenges, especially in places like western Michigan, where the slowdown hit hard. I understand that. That's why I'm going to keep working to help all sectors of our economy recover. We will not rest until every American who wants to work can find a job.

The cornerstone of our tax relief plan was help for small businesses. Most new jobs in America are created by entrepreneurs in small businesses. Today I met Bob Roth again. He runs a manufacturing company. He told me that business in this part of the country is turning around, that people are beginning to add jobs. As a matter of fact, his small business hired nine workers in the past year. He tells me the reason why is because he is confident about what tax relief means. He says, "We'll take fair advantage of any relief that is possible. It helps us feel more confident about investing." The small-business sector of the country is leading the growth for new jobs in America.

We can do more to make America more job-friendly and America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations must be minimal, reasonable, and fair. To keep American jobs here, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs here, we must end the junk lawsuits that hurt small businesses. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low.

I met Audra and Brian van Haren. They're here today. These good folks saved about $2,500 on their taxes in 2003, and they're going to save another 2,500 on their taxes in 2004. That's what the tax relief provided. It's their own money to begin with, by the way. It's not like—we're not passing the Government's out. These people worked hard for that money. They can spend it better than the Government can spend their money. Some of the tax relief is set to expire, which means they'll have to pay $1,100 more in taxes next year. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on the working people of this country.

Over the next 4 years, we'll offer American workers a lifetime of learning and help them get training for the jobs of the future at places like our community colleges. The education and training community colleges offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

Today I met Sarah Soles. She used to work as a part-time receptionist at a doc's office. She went back to a community college program. She's now a nurse. She makes more money at steady employment because she found time to get more training and to get a new degree. The community college system of America is vital in making sure America is a competitive place in the world.

To make sure we continue to grow our economy and people can find work, we will insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. This country can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere with free and fair trade. And we will help American families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that's time—time to play with the kids, time to go to the little league game, time to take care of their parents, or to go to class to improve themselves. I believe that Congress must enact comp-time and flex-time to help America's families better juggle the demands of work and home.

After 4 more years, our Nation will have more small businesses. The entrepreneurial spirit will be strong. There will be greater opportunity and better and higher wages for the American workers.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, an ally in the war on terror, a place where many young girls now go to school for the first time, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists. They're an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer for it.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, we had to look at threats in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th was, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction, might use those weapons or share his deadly capabilities with the terrorists. We saw a threat. We looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat.

The United Nations looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs or he will face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. When he continued to deceive the weapons inspectors, I had a decision to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or defend the United States of America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time. Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell; America and the world are safer.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world and spreading peace, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back. We have more to do. We will continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorist enemy and the foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to them. You cannot negotiate with the terrorists. They're cold-blooded killers. We must engage the enemy so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other nations.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people committed to freedom. People in Afghanistan and Iraq are stepping up for their own security. They're willing to step up and to fight those who want to stop the advance of a free society. You know why? Because they want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. Moms and dads in Iraq and Afghanistan have great hopes for their children. They want them to be educated. They want them to realize their dreams. The people of those countries, the freedom-lovers in those two countries, can count on continued help from America and our coalition.

You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path of

liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across the country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we must make sure they have the full support of the Federal Government. And that's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, #ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a very small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] He's had different explanations since then. He said that he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding, then he further said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries are peaceful countries. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're living out the ideals of this country. America knows that freedom is not our gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. We are turning the corner toward a more peaceful world that we long for, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do to protect our country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us; this is still a dangerous time. I agree with the conclusion of the September 11th Commission: Our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses. We're creating a new Department—we have created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement tools needed to track and bring terrorists to justice. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We've integrated intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. When it comes to better protecting America, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capabilities. Reform won't be easy; it never is in Washington. See, achieving it requires taking on the entrenched interests and challenging the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done——

Audience member. Right!

The President. ——because when it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing the homeland and fighting the forces of terror, results matter.

When it comes to choosing a President, results matter.

This week, members of the other political party gathered in Boston. There was a lot of clever speeches and some big promises. Listen, my opponent has got good intentions, but intentions don't always translate to results. After 19 years in the U.S. Senate, my opponent has thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the intelligence budget, yet he had no record of reforming America's intelligence gathering capability. He's had no significant record for reforming education or health care. In fact, he and his runningmate consistently opposed reforms that limit the power of Washington, reforms that would leave more power in the hands of the people.

My opponent has spent 20 years in the Federal Government, and it appears he's concluded it's not big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional spending, and we're just getting started. The problem is, he hasn't told us how he plans to pay for it. But you know how. You and I can guess. It's an educated guess. After all, he's had a history of voting to raise taxes. But we're going to make it clear to him that raising taxes to fulfill all his big promises will be the wrong medicine for America's improving economy.

We have a difference of opinion. They share the old Washington mindset: They will give the orders, and you will pay the bills. But we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This is a time of amazing change. It's an exciting period of time. In our parents' generation, moms usually stayed at home while fathers worked for one company until retirement. The company provided health care and training and a pension. Many of our Government programs and most basic systems, from health care to Social Security to the Tax Code, were set up based on those old assumptions.

Yet, our world today is different. Workers change jobs and careers frequently. Oftentimes both parents work. Many times there's a single mom struggling to get ahead. Most new jobs are created by the small businesses that cannot afford to provide health care or pension or training. It is time to make the Government work for America's families. America's workers need their own health accounts that they can carry with them from job to job. American workers need pensions and retirement plans that they own, that they control, that they can pass from one generation to the next.

These reforms that make sure Americans stand on the side of families and workers are based on this basic conviction: The role of Government is not to control or dominate the lives of our citizens; the role of Government is to help our citizens gain the time and tools to make their own choices and improve their own lives.

And that's why I'm working to usher in a new era of ownership and opportunity in America. We want more people owning their own homes. We want more people owning their own small business. We want more people owning a piece of their retirement plans. We want people owning and managing their own health care accounts. When people own something, they have a vital stake in the future of this great land.

Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity are things that will never change in a rapidly changing world. In this changing world, there are just some things that will not change: The values we try to live by, courage and compassion and reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives and to our future, and they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life

in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Our culture is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The strength of this country is not our Government. The strength of this country is the heart and souls of the American people. That's the true strength of America.

Today I had the honor of saying hello to Dr. Peggy Curry. She's the executive director of Grand Rapids Reach. The reason I bring her up is one of the most important initiatives over the next 4 years will be to continue to expand the faith-based program, to have Government stand on the side of faith programs, not against faith programs.

Dr. Curry's program distributes food to senior citizens. It mentors. There's after-school programs. There's Christian outreach. See, it's a program that understands that when you help a person change their heart, they can help change their lives. For those of you who are soldiers in the army of compassion here in Grand Rapids and western Michigan, thank you for your service. Thank you for helping change America one heart, one soul at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. These aren't one of those times. This is a period where we need resolve, firm resolve and clear vision. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbing my arm—a firefighter or policeman, I don't know which one—he had tears in his eyes, and he looked at me and said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work together. We're turning the corner. We're moving America forward by extending freedom and peace around the world, and we're moving our country forward by expanding opportunity to every corner of this great land.

During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity so every single citizen has a shot at realizing the great dream of this fantastic country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will prevail. With your support and your prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a time of great change.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country and came to places like Grand Rapids, Michigan, asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected, so help me, God. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thank you all. God bless. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. at Grand Rapids Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Juan R. Olivarez, president, Grand Rapids Community College; Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land and State Attorney General Mike Cox of Michigan; Ken Sikkema, majority leader, and Rick Johnson, speaker, Michigan State House of Representatives; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Charles "Chuck" Yob, national committeeman, and Holly Hughes, national committeewoman-elect, Michigan Republican Party; Peter F. Secchia, former U.S. Ambassador to Italy; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks at the International Children's Games and Cultural Festival in Cleveland, Ohio
July 30, 2004

Thank you. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the United States. I am honored to have been introduced by a great Iranian-American, silver medalist Matt Ghaffari. Thank you, Matt, for being here, and thank you for your introduction.

Listen, I don't know if you know this—hold on—there are—the Governor of this great State is with us today. Senators are with us today, very fine people in Senators Voinovich and DeWine. Members of the Congress are here today. The reason why is they want to join me in welcoming you who do not live in the United States to our great country. We're glad you're here, and we hope you have a wonderful experience in America.

You're in a great United States city. Cleveland, Ohio, is a fantastic place to visit. And I want to thank—and I know you join me in thanking the mayor of Cleveland, Mayor Jane Campbell, for her gracious hospitality.

I want to thank the sports authority figures who are here. I appreciate David Gilbert of the Cleveland Sports Commission. I want to thank Alex Machaskee, who is the cochair of the International Children's Games, and Dr. Fred Loop, who is the other chairman, for working so hard to put this event on.

I know you join me in thanking all the volunteers from the city of Cleveland who have worked hard to make sure your stay here is a good stay. I suggest you go to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. Oh, yes, that's where you need to spend some time.

I want to thank the former Olympians who are here. They wish you all the very best in the games and hope that you become Olympians yourselves. And this is a good place to start, right here in the competition.

A couple things I want to tell you. One, I hope you enjoy yourself, and I hope you spend time not only competing hard but getting to know each other. Like, there's all kinds of cultures here and different languages are spoken, but I think you'll find you share a lot of things in common. Yes, you hope for a better life. You care deeply about people you love. You want the world to be a better place. And so, not only compete hard, but spend time with each other and share cultures. I think you'll find you're all God's children. There's so much in common.

A couple other things I want to tell you is make sure that you continue to make

the right choices in life. See, you're at the age where you're going to be challenged with some tough choices: drugs and alcohol, prejudice and hate. Reject that. Reject those kinds of temptations and continue serving your bodies and your soul well by making right choices in life. You made right choices to get here to compete. Continue doing so. I think it will help you—I know it will help you in your life.

I want to say one other word. I want to welcome the Afghan girls' soccer team who is here. We're glad every country is represented. I think it's especially interesting and an especially poignant and uplifting moment that young girls are here from the country of Afghanistan. Because your country is free, you're here. Because your country is free, you can now go to school for the first time—many of you can now go to school for the first time.

Freedom is such a powerful part of the world in which we live, and we take great pride in welcoming you all into a free society from a free society.

May God bless you, and may God bless all the athletes and their families and coaches who are here. Enjoy yourselves. Good luck. All my best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:35 p.m. at Cleveland Browns Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Matt Ghaffari, 1996 Olympic silver medalist, Greco-Roman wrestling; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; and Floyd D. Loop, cochair, International Children's Games.

The President's Radio Address
July 31, 2004

Good morning. This week, we received encouraging reports that show our economy is gaining strength. Consumer confidence hit a 2-year high in July. Existing home sales hit an alltime new record in June. The homeownership rate has hit a new alltime high. And since last summer, our economy has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

These gains in our economy have come at a time when Americans are benefiting from the full effects of tax relief. I have traveled across America meeting small-business owners who are investing tax savings into new equipment, and I have met families who are using tax savings to pay for their children's needs. All of this added economic activity is creating opportunity. Since last August, Americans have started work at more than 1.5 million new jobs, many of them in high-growth, high-paying industries.

The impact of our growing economy is being felt in Washington, where estimates of Government deficits are shrinking. My administration now forecasts that the combined deficits in 2004 and 2005 will be about $100 billion less than previously expected, and because of my policy of strengthening the economy while enforcing spending discipline in Washington, we remain on pace to reduce the deficit by half in the next 5 years.

These are hopeful signs, and we must make sure our economy continues to gain momentum. Families are working hard to make ends meet, and these families depend on good policies in Washington that promote growth, new jobs, and new opportunities.

Thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act, we are improving our public schools so students learn basic skills like reading, writing, math, and science. We have expanded Pell grant college scholarships so that more students can attend college, and we are helping community colleges train workers for

the new high-skill jobs being created in our growing economy.

We're giving individuals more control over their health care dollars through newly created health savings accounts, and we must also address the rising costs of health care by enacting commonsense reforms in our medical liability system. We must continue to open up foreign markets to American goods, because on a level playing field, American workers and farmers and entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

We must enact reforms to our legal system so hard-working entrepreneurs are not run out of business by frivolous lawsuits. We must have a national energy policy so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. We must have sensible regulations so that America's job creators can focus on satisfying their customers and not bureaucrats in Government.

And we must keep taxes low on American families and small businesses by making the tax relief we have passed permanent. Thanks to tax relief enacted since 2001, a family of four earning $40,000 a year now pays nearly $2,000 less in Federal taxes. That is enough to pay the average home electricity bill for more than a year or fill up the gas tank of two cars for an entire year. To millions of hard-working Americans, tax relief has been the difference in helping make ends meet.

This is a crucial time for our economy. We have emerged from a period of great challenge. Terrorist attacks, recession, and corporate scandal hurt the wallets of millions of Americans, but these shocks to our economy did not damage our spirit. We're a hard-working and resilient nation. Our economy is on a rising path, and together, we will bring our prosperity to every corner of America.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:40 p.m. on July 30 at the Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids, MI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Canton, Ohio
July 31, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I'm glad so many came out on a Saturday morning. I appreciate the warm welcome. I particularly thank those who are sitting behind me; you've probably got the best view in the house.

We're on the Heart and Soul of America tour. I'm out asking for the vote. I'm out asking for your help. I want to serve this Nation for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Oh, there's going to be big differences in this campaign. You'll hear big differences on taxes, on how to win the war on terror. There seems to be a difference over the heart and soul of America. My opponents think you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The true heart and soul of America is found right here in Canton, Ohio.

Last night I was in Cleveland; we're heading to Cambridge; I'm heading to Pittsburgh today. We're taking this bus tour. I'm excited about the campaign. The

crowds are big. The crowds are enthusiastic. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will win 4 more years.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, "Bring her on, and you stay at home." [*Laughter*] But she is a great First Lady. I am proud of her. Today I'm going to talk about what I intend to do over the next 4 years, but perhaps the most important reason to put me back in is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I mentioned my runningmate. I admit, he's not the prettiest on the ticket. [*Laughter*] That's not why I picked him. I picked him because he's strong, he's steady, and he gets the job done.

I want to thank my friend Senator Voinovich. Put him back in there, will you, for the sake of Ohio and for the sake of America. He is a fabulous human being and a great United States Senator. Every time I talk to him, he says, "You be thinking about Ohio, Mr. President." I said, "Don't worry. Ohio is an important State, George." It's important for a lot of reasons. I carried it last time. I intend to work hard to carry it this time.

And if you want to know how you can help, go to georgewbush.com. That's where you get your marching orders. I want to thank Mike DeWine, the United States Senator who serves with George Voinovich so well. I appreciate your Governor, Bob Taft, joining us today. I'm proud he's joining me on the bus tour. I want to thank Congressman Ralph Regula, and Mary, for joining us. I was proud to say hello to your mayor, Mayor Creighton, today when I came in. I appreciate the fact that Janet ran for office. She said, "When you get up there, make sure you assure them that I'm going to fill the potholes." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." I want to thank all the other State and local officials.

I'm proud that grassroots activists are here. Those are the people who put up the signs. Those are the people who make the phone calls. Those are the people who register the voters. Those are the people who tell Republican, Democrat, and independent you have a duty in this country to vote. And those are the people, when they get people heading to the polls, are going to nudge them our way. Thanks for what you're doing.

Also, I'm proud that Chris Spielman is here. I'm glad that he is—taking one look at him reminded me how I'm glad we're both on the same side. [*Laughter*] He's a good man. I want to thank the McKinley Bulldog marching band.

Every incumbent who asks for your vote has to answer a central question, and that's why. Why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together. Think about what we've been through. We've accomplished a great deal. We've done a lot together. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that's to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. I'm asking for your vote because we have so much more to do together to move this country forward. If the people give me 4 more years, this country will be safer. Our economy will be stronger. Our future will be brighter and better for every single citizen. From creating well-paying, good jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading peace and protecting the homeland, we have made much progress. And we will do more.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We set high standards. We're focusing on results.

We're empowering parents. We're making sure the local folks are in charge of their own public schools. Today, children across America are showing real progress, substantial progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving public schools, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. The world we live in is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills. We will reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand our math and science education so young people can compete in the high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and the confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans couldn't afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for the drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save, tax-free, for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their health care and making health care more affordable, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health care. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

To improve health care, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care and drive good doctors out of medicine. To make the health care industry more efficient and cost effective, we must harness technology to reduce costs and to prevent mistakes. We must expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Still back there? [*Applause*] They are.

We have more to do to make America's economy stronger. We have come through a recession. We've come through terrorist attacks. We've come through a stock market decline. We've come through corporate scandals. Yet, this Nation has overcome all these obstacles. We've overcome the obstacles because we've got great workers in America, the most productive workers in the world, many of whom are right here in eastern Ohio. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector is alive and well in America.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax relief. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal taxes. We didn't play winners or losers. We did it the fair way. We gave tax relief for families with children. We gave tax relief for married couples. We provided tax relief for every small business that was making purchases. And this time, the check really was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any time in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. It lags in places like eastern Ohio; I know that.

I'm aware of that. I just traveled on the bus with workers who told me they are nervous about their future. They're concerned. I am too. And therefore, we must have a President who understands that in order to keep jobs at home, America must be the best place to do business.

I'm here to tell you we can do more to make America job-friendly and America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, our regulations must be reasonable and fair. To keep American jobs in America, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits that hurt our business and employers. If you want to keep jobs in America, the Government must not overspend your money, and the Government must keep your taxes low. And that's how you keep jobs at home.

You also keep jobs at home by making sure American workers have a lifetime of learning. And you help them get training for the jobs of the future. And a great place to do that is in our community college system. The education and training they offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

I know there's great concern about trade in eastern Ohio. Let me tell you something about trade. I believe that America and Americans can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

We understand what currency valuations can do to manufacturing, particularly in eastern Ohio. We've been working with China to put fair policy in place. Just give us a chance to compete, is all we're asking. We've been enforcing our trade agreements. We're making sure that our workers and our manufacturers are treated fairly.

We'll help American families keep more of something they never enough of, time—time to play with their children, time to go Little League games or Girl Scout meetings, time to care for elderly parents, time to go to class to improve their lives. I believe that Congress should enact comp-time and flex-time rules to allow American families to better juggle the demands of work and home. I think Government ought to be on the side of the American family. After 4 more years, there will be better paying jobs in America. After 4 more years, there will be more small businesses. After 4 more years, the American economy will continue to be the strongest in the world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is now a place where many young girls go to school for the first time.

Yesterday in Cleveland, Ohio, at the International Children's Games, I was able to hug and say hello to a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan. That wouldn't have happened 3 years ago. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction; America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapon of mass destruction.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was the source of great instability.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th is we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we cannot fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, who had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction, might use those weapons or share those capabilities with a deadly enemy.

We saw a threat. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion; they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, saw a threat, and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons and weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He continued to deceive the weapons inspectors.

And so I had a choice to make; this Nation had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best and trust a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world, when it comes to making America safer, when it comes to spreading the peace, we're turning a corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more work to do, more hard work to do. We'll continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters wherever they hide—in Afghanistan and Iraq or elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. You must bring them to justice.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We will engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere so that we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to lead the world with competence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition—a strong coalition joined together to defeat the terrorists. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we will continue to build alliances and work with our friends, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other countries.

We must keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. You see, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders who believe that there's a democratic future for their countries. These are courageous people who have stood up and led. And more and more of their citizens are joining them. More and more of the security needs in Iraq are being handled by Iraqis. It's their future. It's their responsibility. They understand that the men and women, the fathers and mothers of Iraq, want their children to grow up in a peaceful world just like the moms and dads of America want their children to grow up in a peaceful world.

When we acted to protect their own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to help them on the path to liberty. And when America gives it word, America will keep its word. And in these times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. The cause of liberty, the cause of freedom, is in really good hands.

And we must make sure that the men and women who wear our uniform have the very best—the best training, the best equipment. And so last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, and ammunition and fuel and spare parts. In the Senate, only a handful, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. And two of those twelve Senators are on the ticket opposing us.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote this way: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] Now, he's offering different explanations. At one time he said he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops, and then he said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty, hopelessness, and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. Free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of the people that live there. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others and making America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the values we believe in. Freedom is not America's gift to world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. An enemy still lurks, an enemy which hates what we stand for. And they're still plotting. The September the 11th Commission * had this interesting conclusion, which I agree with. It said our homeland is safer, but we are not yet safe. They're right. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses—or we're transforming our defenses, and we've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to track the terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We've integrated intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. When it comes to better protecting America, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Listen, we've got more to do. Over the next 4 years, we'll better secure our ports and borders and train first-responders and dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capabilities. Reform is not going to be easy; I understand that. It never is. You see, there's a lot of entrenched interests around, particularly in Washington, a lot of people happy with the status quo. But it's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

When it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes

* White House correction.

to better securing the homeland, to fighting the forces of evil and spreading peace, results matter. When it comes to choosing a President, results matter.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This week, the other party gathered in Boston.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We heard a lot of—there were some clever speeches and some big promises. Their intentions, I think, are good. My opponent's intentions are good. But the problem is, intentions don't always translate into results.

After 19 years in the U.S. Senate, my opponent has thousands of votes but few signature achievements.

Audience member. He's a flip-flop.

The President. During 8 years in the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the budget—intelligence budgets, yet he had no record of reforming America's intelligence gathering capability. He's had no significant record in reforming education or health care. As a matter of fact, he and his runningmate consistently oppose reforms that limit the power of Washington and leave power in the hands of the people.

He spent 20 years in Government—nearly 20 years; it appears he's concluded that Government just isn't big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional spending, and the campaign is just getting started. [*Laughter*] The times of the big promise is coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] The problem is he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. If you look at his record, I think we can figure it out. [*Laughter*] He believes in higher taxes, at least that's how he's voted time in and time out—time in and time out. If I had to guess how we're going to pay for all these new promises, it's going to be: You get to pay.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said he's only going to raise the tax on the so-called rich. But you know how the rich is; they've got accountants. That means you pay. That means the small business pays. It means the farmers and ranchers pay. That's the wrong medicine for this economy, and we're not going to let him prescribe it.

There's a big philosophical difference in this campaign. Our opponents share an old Washington mindset: They'll give the orders, and you pay the bills. But we've turned a corner, and we're not turning back to that way of thinking.

Listen, we live in—we're living in a time of amazing change—amazing period of time, isn't it? In our parents' generation, moms usually stayed at home and fathers worked for one company until retirement. A lot of people are still doing that today, but it's changing times, when you think about it. The company provided the health care and training and pension, and Government programs reflected that way of life. That's just the way the Government was structured in those days.

Yet today, oftentimes workers change jobs and careers frequently, a lot of times both parents are working, a lot of times there's only one mom at home working. It's a different world we're living in. Government has got to reflect the different world. Government has got to work with America's working families. That's why workers need to own and manage their own health care accounts, so they can take them with them from job to job.

That's why our pensions and retirements systems must insist that the owners be the workers. You see, Social Security needs to be strengthened by giving younger workers the opportunity to manage some of their own money in personal savings accounts. Social Security will be strengthened by telling those who have retired or are near retired, "Nothing is going to change. The Government is going to pay your commitment." But younger workers—and a country will be benefited when younger workers

have an opportunity to take some of their own money—their choice—and build up their nest egg so they can pass it from one generation to the next.

You see, my reforms are based on the basic conviction, the role of Government is not to control or dominate the lives of our citizens. The role of Government should help our citizens, help our citizens gain the time and tools they need to make their own choices and to improve their own lives.

That's why I'm working hard to usher in an era of ownership in America. See, we want more people owning something in our country. We want more people owning their own home, owning their own small business, owning their own health care accounts, owning a piece of their retirement plan. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

This is a world of change—a world of change. But some things will never change: our belief in liberty and opportunity for all and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose will not change, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values are fundamental to our lives. These institutions are necessary for a hopeful America; they deserve the respect of our Government.

Some things will not change in this changing world. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in our country. You know, the culture of the country is changing 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 you 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. It's your responsibility. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time where we need strong resolve and clear vision.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking along and a fellow grabbed me—policeman or fireman, I don't know which one—but he had tears in his eyes and said, "Do not let me down." You see, all of them working through the rubble there took the incident personally, just like you did and just like I did. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every single morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to the enemy and protecting our country, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together; there's more to do. We've done a lot of hard work, and the world is getting better. During the next 4 years, we'll spread opportunity and ownership through every corner of this country. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to pass on enduring values to a younger generation. And during

the next 4 years, we will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I had traveled the great country and the great State of Ohio asking for the vote, pledging to our fellow citizens that if you honored me with the great responsibility of being President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at the Canton Memorial Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Regula, wife of Representative Regula; Mayor Janet W. Creighton of Canton, OH; former professional football player Chris Spielman; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in Cambridge, Ohio
July 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming out today. Thanks for inviting me to Cambridge. It's an honor to be here. I always feel comfortable being in the middle of a ball diamond. I appreciate so many taking time out of your Saturday to come by and say hello and to welcome us on what we call the Heart and Soul of America tour.

There seems to be a difference of opinion about the heart and soul—I'm running against a fellow who thinks you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I know where you find the heart and soul of America, right here in places like Cambridge, Ohio.

Thanks for coming out. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm ready to lead for 4 more years, and I want your help.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm glad to be amongst my fellow Republicans, discerning Democrats, and wise independents. I'd like to ask you to volunteer to register voters. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. We have a duty in a land of free to exercise our individual choices in the ballot box. So please register your neighbors to vote. Make sure you tell them after they register to vote, and when you get them heading toward the polls, why don't you nudge them our way?

Thanks for coming. My regret is that Laura isn't with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. That's usually the reaction. I'm really proud of her. She's a great lady. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura can be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a really good man. I know he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for that reason. I picked him because he's solid. I picked him because he's got good advice and great experience. I picked him because he's a good man. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney.

I'm proud to be traveling on this bus with Governor Bob Taft. Thank you for coming, Governor. Senator Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran. By the way, Voinovich was with me a little earlier. You need to put him back into office; he's a great United States Senator. He's a good man—he's a good man. I appreciate Congressman

Bob Ney being with us today. Congressman, I'm proud you're here.

Mr. Mayor—I appreciate the mayor coming; Mayor Sam is with us today. I'm honored you're here, Mayor. Thank you, Mayor. I was walking by; he said, "You get a chance, put in a good word for me." He said he's going to fill the potholes. I said, "All right."

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I appreciate the chairman of the party, Bob Bennett. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who are putting up the signs and manning the phones and getting your neighbors to show up to the polls on election day. And I want to thank you for your hard work; I really do. My job is to set the vision; your job is to get the people to the polls. And together, we're going to win Ohio and win the Nation.

Everybody running for office, every incumbent who asks for the vote has got to answer the question, why—why are you running again? Why should the American people give me the high privilege, the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? Let me tell you something. We've been through a lot together, and we have done a lot. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because there's a lot at stake, and there's more to do to move our country forward. I want to be your President, and I'll work hard to be your President and to keep your confidence to make this country safer, to make the economy stronger, and to make our future brighter and better for every single citizen. I'm ready to lead the country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, we've got more to do. We've got more work to do to make sure our public schools are the center of excellence so no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being just shuffled through, grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we confronted the status quo. We're challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We expect better results. We're insisting on accountability. We're empowering parents. And we're making sure that local folks are in charge of the public schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress when it comes to learning to read and math. When it comes to improving our schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do; this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and a higher level of skill, and so we must reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and education so our youngsters can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training to classrooms all across America with 4 years—with 4 more years. We will help raise a generation of young Americans to have confidence and the skills necessary to realize the American promise.

We've got more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many of our older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember the old debates of Medicare: There was promise after promise, but nothing was ever done. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

Listen, we've expanded community health centers so low-income Americans can get health care. We've created health savings accounts so families can save, tax-

free, for their own health care needs. And when it comes to giving Americans more choices about their health care and making health care more affordable, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. I understand that. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses cannot afford to provide health coverage. We must deal with that. To help more American families get health insurance, small employers must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at discounts available for big companies.

To make sure the health care system is available and affordable, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs, that not only raise your costs, but they drive the good doctors of Ohio out of business. Listen, we'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent costly errors. We will expand research to find new cures for terrible diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, we've got more to do to make this country's economy stronger. We've come through a lot together. Think about what we've been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through attacks. We've been through a stock market decline. And we've been through corporate scandals. But we've overcome all these obstacles. We've overcome them together. I'll tell you why: We've got the greatest workers in the world in America; we've got the most productive, greatest workers in this country.

We're overcoming these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers. We're overcoming these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit of America is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is vibrant and alive.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts. Listen, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We had a fair attitude, I think, that says if you pay taxes, you ought to get relief.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. And so families with children got relief. People who are married got relief. Small-business owners got relief. And this time, the check really was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added over 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Look, I understand there are challenges here in eastern Ohio. This part of the country has lagged behind other parts of the country. But let me tell you something, raising your taxes isn't going to create jobs. Isolating America from the rest of the world isn't going to create new jobs. Voting against energy policy isn't going to create new jobs. We will not rest until every America who wants to find a job, has one. That's the policy of the Bush administration.

There's more work to do to make sure this country is job-friendly and our workplaces are family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations need to be fair and reasonable. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk and frivolous lawsuits that threaten employers all across the country. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money and we will keep your taxes low.

To keep American jobs in America, we need a reasonable energy policy. As you know in Cambridge, an important part of an energy strategy is clean coal technology. My budget for next year provides $447 million to encourage this vital technology. I'll tell you why: In order for us to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, we must use American coal.

We have a difference of opinion on this. My opponent said—he called coal a dirty energy source.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He opposed my energy plan, which promoted clean coal technology and alternative sources of fuel. The other night in Boston, he said he wants America finally and forever independent of Mideast oil. Listen, I share that goal, and I know how to achieve it. To make sure we're independent, to make sure we're not dependent on foreign sources of energy, we must be wise about how we use America's energy sources, including coal.

We'll offer America's workers a lifetime of learning and to help them get training for the jobs of the future at our community colleges. Listen, to make sure American jobs stay here, we must be wise and educate people for the jobs of the 21st century.

When it comes to keeping jobs in America, we must not isolate ourselves from the world. I know people around here are worried about trade. Let me tell you my view of trade. I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair. I believe—and my job is to make sure the rules are fair, holding countries to account that mistreat American manufacturers, holding countries to account that do not let their currency float, holding countries to account that close their markets. No, to keep jobs in America, you need a President who won't isolate us in the world, a President who's confident in the American worker, the American entrepreneur, the American manufacturer, and insists that foreign countries treat us just the way we treat them.

We'll help American families keep something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to go to Little League games or Girl Scout meetings, time to take care of the elderly, time to improve themselves by going back to class. Congress needs to join me in supporting what we call comp-time and flextime to help American families better juggle the demands of work and home.

After 4 more years, there will be better paying jobs in America. There will be more jobs in America. Our farmers will be better off, and the small-business sector will be alive and well.

Listen, we've got more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible morning in September. And since then, we have changed the world. We've done the hard work, and we're headed to peace. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Let me tell you something, what happened yesterday in Cleveland. I went to the International Children's Games. I was able to see a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan on American soil. Because we acted, the people are free. Because we acted, we have an ally in the war on terror in Afghanistan. Because we acted, America is safer, and so is the world.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, they're an ally in the war on terror. Their forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world is safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya abandoned his

pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the tyrant of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a dangerous part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. See, a lesson of that fateful day was that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

And so we looked at the intelligence and saw a threat; that's what the intelligence said. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion, that Saddam was a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence and voted unanimously to demand a full accounting of Saddam's weapons, or he would face serious consequences. That's exactly what the world said. After 12 years of defiance, the dictator chose defiance again. He deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th, hope for the best, and trust a madman, or take decisions to defend this country. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The dictator of Iraq sits in a prison cell, and America and the world are safer.

We have more to do. We've more to do. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these folks. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders. See, these people are committed to free societies. They understand, the moms and dads of Iraq and Afghanistan want the children there—want their children there to grow up in a peaceful world, just like moms and dads here in America do, just like Laura and I do. We want people to grow up in a peaceful society. We want them to be able to realize their dreams.

The people of these countries can count on our continued help. See, when we acted to protect our own security, when we took action to do our duty to protect our own people, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help them get on the path to liberty. And when America gives it word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and around the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. These are fine, fine people.

The cause of freedom is in really good hands, and those who wear our uniform deserve all the support from our Government. Last September, while our troops

were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the United States Senate, only a small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 senators voted against the legislation. Two of the twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about his vote, Senator Kerry said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. Now he's got some different explanations. He said, well, he's proud of the vote, and further, he said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples for their neighbors. Free countries don't export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. Free countries have governments which listen to the aspirations of their people.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the values which make us great. We don't—America does not believe that freedom is our gift to the world; America believes freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

There are still enemies that want to do us harm. They still plot. Listen, I agree with the conclusion of the September the 11th Commission—says our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. But we've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed—we're transforming our defenses and created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the new tools to track and find the terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We've integrated intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. When it comes to protecting America, we're turning the corner, and we're not going back.

There's a lot more to do over the next 4 years to better secure our ports and borders and to train our great first-responders and to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capabilities. Listen, reform isn't easy. There's a lot of entrenched interests in places like Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] Some people up there love the status quo.

It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to get it done, see, because when it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, results matter. When it comes to defending America and spreading freedom and peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This week, the other party gathered in Boston. And they had a convention and there was a lot of clever speeches and some pretty big promises. Listen, I think my opponent has good intentions, but good intentions don't always translate into results. He's been there for 19 years in the U.S. Senate. He's had thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, for example, he voted to cut the intelligence budget, yet he had no record of reforming America's intelligence gathering capability. He's had no

significant record on education or health care.

See, he and his runningmate consistently opposed reforms that limit the power of Washington, reforms that leave more power in the hands of the people. We have a different point of view. We have a different philosophy. He spent nearly 20 years in Government, in the Federal Government, and now he's concluded it's not big enough. That's why he's promised $2 trillion of new money. That's a lot of money, and the campaign is just getting started. [*Laughter*] He hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it, though. Yes, I know, we can figure it out—looking at his record. In order to pay for all that new spending, you're going to have to pay for it. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. It's the wrong medicine for America. And the people understand, you're not raising taxes on the working people of this country. They share that same old Washington mindset: They'll give the orders, and you pay the bills. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. No way!

The President. We're turning that corner, and we're not turning back.

This is a world of rapid change, amazing times we live in. In order to make sure the American people are able to adjust to the change, I think people need to own something. I think you need to be owning your own health care account and managing it for your purposes. I think people, younger workers—I mean, young workers—need to have the opportunity to manage and own some of their own retirement accounts. I think—I know we need to keep working for people to own their own home, own their own small business. This administration understands that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, this is a time of amazing change. But some things will never change: our belief in liberty, our desire for opportunity to spread throughout this country, the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for something. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundation of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. I've got a good record on that issue. It stands in stark contrast to my opponent. As a sportsman, I understand that gun ownership carries serious responsibilities. I also know that when a person commits a crime with a gun, they need to be held to account. Over the past 3 years, Federal prosecutions of crimes committed with firearms have increased 68 percent. Our message is, law-abiding citizens should be allowed to bear and own a gun, and criminals who commit crime with guns ought to go to jail.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're 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 worried about the quality of the education in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving

our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

You know, for Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is times that requires vision and strength and determination, resolute will.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I remember those guys in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember the firefighter grabbing me by the arm and looking me in the eye, bloodshot eyes and sweat pouring, and he said, "Do not let me down."

This fellow—and they all took what happened on that day personally. I know you did, as did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in bringing justice to the enemy. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work together to make this country hopeful and promising. During the next 4 years, we'll work to spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the country—I mean every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause—lead the cause of freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

With your support and your prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in this world of change. Listen, 4 years ago, when I traveled to your great State and traveled our wonderful Nation, I told our fellow citizens, if you honored me with the great responsibility of being the President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I was elected. If you give me 4 more years—with your help, with 4 more years, I will continue to honor that pledge.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you all, and may God bless our great country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. at Don Coss Field in Cambridge City Park. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Mayor Samuel A. Salupo of Cambridge, OH; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at Cabela's Retail Store in Triadelphia, West Virginia
July 31, 2004

General Manager Mike Boldrick. Mr. President, we'd like to welcome you to Triadelphia, West Virginia. It's a suburb of Wheeling. This is a new Cabela store. As you can see, it's 175,000 square feet. We're going to be bringing up to 1,200 new jobs to the area eventually. We currently have 450 people——

The President. Four hundred fifty good people, I might add.

Mr. Boldrick. ——on staff. We'll draw upwards of 5 or 6 million visitors a year to this location alone, making it the number one tourist attraction in the State of West Virginia.

Marketing Manager John Castillo. And the best news is, we're building two more of these down in Texas next year.

The President. Oh, that's great.

Mr. Boldrick. We'd like to present you with a Cabela's hat and a rain slicker.

The President. Okay, thanks so much. Thanks for having me. Listen, thanks for having me. I've come by because, first, I love to hunt and fish; secondly, because I heard you're expanding the job base here. Over 1,200 new jobs is really good news for this part of the country.

Mr. Boldrick. Absolutely.

The President. I want to thank you all for expanding your operations. You picked a great place in the world to come.

Mr. Boldrick. We love it here.

The President. Good, hard-working decent folks who are going to make you proud. So thanks for your hospitality. I love being here with you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:34 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Boy, it's great to be back in Pittsburgh. Thank you all for being here. I'm proud to be introduced by a great man, a great athlete, and a great adviser. He said, "When you ride your bike, don't fall off." [*Laughter*] I need to listen to him more. What a wonderful person Lynn Swann is, and I'm proud to have him on my team.

We've had a great day traveling in Ohio and now in Pennsylvania, with a stop in West Virginia. The crowds are big, the enthusiasm high. We're on our way to 4 more years.

I'm here to ask for your help. I'm out traveling the country asking for people's vote. I have more I want to do to see that this country is safer, stronger, and better.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Make sure you get your friends and neighbors to register to vote. And then, come election time, tell them we all have a duty in this country to participate in the elections. And when you get them headed toward the polls, you might remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country with strength and vision and optimism.

I wish Laura were here. Man, did I luck out when she said yes. She's a great wife and wonderful, wonderful person and a wonderful First Lady. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons why you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason is so that Laura will have 4 more years as the First Lady. She sends her best.

I'm proud to be on the stage with Senator Arlen Specter. You need to put him back in to the United States Senate. I'm proud to be on the stage with Rick Santorum, the United States Senator. I thank Congressman—Congresswoman Melissa Hart and Congressman Tim Murphy for their service.

I want to thank everybody who is running for office. I particularly want to say thanks to the grassroots activists who are here. You're the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls. Find those discerning Democrats and wise independents and get them to join our cause to make this country a great place for everybody.

I understand a fellow Texan was here, Lee Ann Womack. I want to thank her for her entertainment. Proud to call her friend.

Listen, I'm here to ask for the vote. And every incumbent who asks for your vote has to answer a question, and that is, why. Why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving for 4 more years? In the past years, we have done a lot together. We've come through a lot. And we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling Ohio and West Virginia and Pennsylvania asking for the vote because we have so much more to do to move this country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make the country safer, to make the economy stronger. We have more to do to make our economy stronger and more to do to make our future brighter and better for every single citizen. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made progress. And we still have more to do.

We have more to do to make sure our public schools are the centers of excellence so that no child is left behind in America. We came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We're now challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We're insisting on higher standards. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in empowering parents. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving our public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. We've got to recognize this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills, so we're going to reform our high schools to make sure the high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training in the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation gain the skills and the confidence necessary to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. Listen, leaders in both political party, year after year after year, made promises to our American seniors. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them the coverage for prescription drugs.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save, tax-free, for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do. There's more to do. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, which have trouble affording private health insurance. To help more American families get health insurance at reasonable costs, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at discounts available to big companies.

To improve health care we must stop the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. My opponent takes a different view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He blocked medical liability reform 10 times, including twice in the past 3 years.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, I don't think you can be pro-doc, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time; I think you have to make a choice. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'll stand with the docs and the patients of America and get medical liability reform.

We can do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We can do more to expand research and seek new cures for diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make our economy stronger. Think about what we've been through. We've been through a recession and terror attacks and corporate scandals. We've overcome these obstacles because the spirit of America is strong. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got the best, most productive workers in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America and the small-business sector of our economy is alive and well.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We had a fair view that said, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." Families with children got relief. Married couples got relief. Small businesses that purchased equipment got relief. And this time, the check was actually in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Because we acted, Pennsylvania has added more than 68,000 jobs over the past four months. When it comes to creating jobs for America's workers, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do. There's more to make sure America is job-friendly and America's workplaces are family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations should be reasonable and fair. To keep American jobs in America, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money and we will keep your taxes low.

We will offer American workers a lifetime of learning and help them get the training for the jobs of the future, at our community colleges. You see, the education and training they offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

In order to keep jobs here, in order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we will reject economic isolationism. We will insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. You see, I believe this: We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

We'll help American families keep something they don't have nearly enough of, and that's time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your elderly parents, time to help yourself by education. Congress needs to enact what we call comp-time and flex-time to help American families better juggle work and home duties.

After 4 more years—with your work, after 4 more years, there will be better and higher-paying jobs in America, more small businesses in America, and America will remain the greatest economic engine in the world.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terrorism. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows

weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, last night in Cleveland, I had the opportunity to meet a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan, here to compete in the International Children's Games. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit place for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistan forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Saudi—in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money, recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions of dollars on weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a dangerous part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. After September the 11th, this Nation needs to take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September 11th Commission concluded our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. Well, after September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine—could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America and had ties to terror and had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his deadly capabilities with the terrorists.

We looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress—from both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations looked at the intelligence and demanded a full accounting——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He deceived the weapons inspectors, so I had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We have more to do. We have more to do. I'm seeking the office for 4 more years, because we must—we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You see, you cannot talk sense to these people.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot negotiate with them.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot hope for the best and hope they change.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition of friends and allies to help defeat this enemy. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. See, they know what I know: Moms and dads of those countries want their children to grow up in a peaceful world, just like the moms and dads here in America. They've got dreams for their children, just like the moms and dads in America have dreams for our children. The people of these countries can count on our continued help. You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments have been kept by the men and women of our military.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I want to thank all of the veterans who are here, who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform today. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. They deserve—those in the uniform deserve the full support of our Government.

Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. That legislation provided for body armor and for vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, in the United States Senate, only a small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——of 12 Senators voted against the legislation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. End quote. [*Laughter*] Then he went on to say, well, he's proud of the vote, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by military might and force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that's desperate for freedom. See, free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. Free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of their citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others. And that makes America more secure in the long run, and it makes the world more peaceful. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the

values of our country. We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect our country, more to do to protect America. There are enemies out there that still hate us, and they're still plotting. Listen, the September the 11th Commission said our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. I agree with that assessment. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses and are creating a new Department of Homeland Security, ably run by former Governor of Pennsylvania Tom Ridge. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement new tools to track and find terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating law and intelligence enforcement better than ever before. When it comes to better protecting our country, we're turning a corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do—there's more to do, to do our duty to protect the American people. We better—we've got to do a better job of securing our ports and borders. We've got to continue to train our first-responders. We've got to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capability. It's not going to be easy. It never is. There's a lot of entrenched interests in Washington, DC. A lot of people got comfortable with the status quo. This administration isn't. It's not enough just to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

When it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education to all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and spreading freedom and peace, results matter. And when it comes to picking a President, results matter.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. They recently had a meeting in Boston.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We heard a lot of clever speeches and some pretty big promises. But intentions—good intentions of my opponent don't always translate into results. Listen, after 19 years in the Senate, he's had thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the intelligence budget.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yet, he had no record of reforming America's intelligence gathering capability. He's had no significant record of reforming education or health care.

We have a difference of opinion: He and his runningmate oppose reforms that limit the power of Washington and leave more power in the hands of the people; I believe in limiting the power of Washington and giving more power to the people. No, I'm running against an experienced Washington, DC-type Senator. He's spent nearly 20 years there, and it appears that he's concluded the Government just isn't big enough.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. After all, he's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional spending, and we're just getting started in the campaign. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. Yet, all we've got to do is look at his record to determine how he's going to pay for it. He's voted time and time and time again for higher taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You know how he's going to pay for his new programs? You're going to pay. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Listen, we have a difference of opinion in the campaign, a clear

difference. My opponents share an old Washington mindset: They will give the orders; you'll pay the bills.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We're turning that corner, and we're not going back.

We have a time of change in this country, a time of real, rapid change. It's an exciting time to be an American. But we've got to make sure the Government responds to these times by standing on the side of workers and families. We want people owning things in America. We want workers to be able to own their own health care plans so they can take them from job to job. We want younger workers to be able to own a personal retirement account when it comes to Social Security, an account they can call their own and pass on from one generation to the next. We want more people owning their own home in America. We want more people owning their own small business. We understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, in this changing world, there are some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. Values won't change, the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose must not change, our families, our religious congregations. These institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of the Government.

In this changing times, our values and strong beliefs will not change. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of ours is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture that says each of us is responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Today I met Fay Morgan, the executive director of the North Hills Community Outreach. It's a faith-based program, all aimed at feeding the hungry, providing clothes to those who need clothes in the winter, of helping people find a job. You know what it really is? It's a program that's heard a higher calling, that's going to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

The strength of this country—the strength of this country is not found in our halls of Government; the strength of this country is found in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. And over the next 4 years, I will continue to rally the armies of compassion to help change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, strong determination.

None of us will ever forget that day when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the line, thanking people for their sacrifice and service,

thanking people for their care, for their loved ones who had rushed into harm's way. A man grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people going through the rubble took that day personally. I know you took it personally, and so did I. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every day thinking about how better to protect our country and our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together—we've come through a lot together. And we've done the hard work. And the country is getting better, and the world is becoming more peaceful. That's what we long for, a peaceful world, a world where people can grow up and realize their hopes.

During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner—I mean, every corner—of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of America on to the next generation. We'll lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our wonderful Nation asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you honor me with this great responsibility, I will uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I have been elected, so help me, God.

And with your help—and with your help, I will continue to do so over the next 4 years. Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to former professional football player Lynn C. Swann; entertainer Lee Ann Womack; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks on Intelligence Reform and an Exchange with Reporters
August 2, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate the members of my administration joining me. Thank you all for being here.

My most solemn duty is to protect our country. It's our most solemn duty as well. In the 3 years since our country was attacked, we've taken steps to overcome new threats. We will continue to do everything in our power to defeat the terrorist enemy and to protect the American people.

Recently, the Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States came to a conclusion that I share, that our country is safer than it was on September the 11th, 2001, yet we're still not safe. The Commission members have worked hard and served our country well. I speak for all Americans in thanking them for their fine work.

Their recommendations are thoughtful and valuable. My administration has already taken numerous actions consistent with the Commission's recommendations. Today we're taking additional steps.

Our Government's actions against the terrorist threat accelerated dramatically after the attacks on the country. Across the world, we've aggressively pursued Al Qaida terrorists, destroyed their training camps, and ended their sanctuaries. We're working

closely with other countries to gather intelligence and make arrests and to cut off the terrorists' finances.

We've created a new unified Department of Homeland Security and gave it resources and the authority to defend America. We're employing the latest equipment and know-how to secure our borders, our air and sea ports, and infrastructure. We're bringing the best technologies to bear against the threat of chemical and biological warfare. Project BioShield will fund cutting-edge drugs and other defenses against a biological, chemical, nuclear, or radiological attack.

To track terrorists and disrupt their cells and seize their assets, we're using the tools of the PATRIOT Act. Congress needs to extend this important law. Congress needs to make sure law enforcement have the tools necessary to defend the country. We've transformed the FBI to focus on the prevention of terrorist attacks. We're continuing to expand and strengthen the capabilities of the Central Intelligence Agency. We established the Terrorist Threat Integration Center to merge and analyze, in a single place, foreign and domestic intelligence on global terror.

Yet, the work of securing this vast Nation is not done. The elevation of the threat level in New York and New Jersey and Washington, DC, is a serious reminder, a solemn reminder, of the threat we continue to face. All the institutions of our Government must be fully prepared for a struggle against terror that will last into the future. Our goal is an integrated, unified national intelligence effort. Therefore, my administration will continue moving forward with additional changes to the structure and organization of our intelligence agencies.

Many of these changes are specific recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Others will go further than the proposal of the Commission's report. All these reforms have a single goal: We will ensure that the people in Government responsible for defending America and countering terrorism have the best possible information to make the best decisions.

Today I'm asking Congress to create the position of a National Intelligence Director. That person—the person in that office will be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and will serve at the pleasure of the President. The National Intelligence Director will serve as the President's principal intelligence adviser and will oversee and coordinate the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community. Under this reorganization, the CIA will be managed by a separate Director. The National Intelligence Director will assume the broader responsibility of leading the intelligence community across our Government.

I want, and every President must have, the best, unbiased, unvarnished assessment of America's intelligence professionals. Creating the position of the National Intelligence Director will require a substantial revision of the 1947 National Security Act. I look forward to working with the Members of Congress to move ahead on this important reform.

The 9/11 Commission also made several recommendations about Congress, itself. I strongly agree with the Commission's recommendation that oversight and intelligence—oversight of intelligence and of the homeland security must be restructured and made more effective. There are too many committees with overlapping jurisdiction, which wastes time and makes it difficult for meaningful oversight and reform.

Today I also announce that we will establish a National Counterterrorism Center. This new center will build on the analytical work—the really good analytical work—of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center and will become our Government's knowledge bank for information about known and suspected terrorists. The new center will coordinate and monitor counterterrorism plans and activities of all Government agencies and departments to ensure effective joint action and that our efforts are unified

in priority and purpose. The center will also be responsible for preparing the daily terrorism threat report for the President and senior officials.

The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center will report to the National Intelligence Director, once that position is created. Until then, the center will report to the Director of the CIA.

Given the growing threat of weapons and missile proliferation in our world, it may also be necessary to create a similar center in our Government to bring together our intelligence analysis, planning, and operations to track and prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. I asked the Commission headed by Judge Laurence Silberman and Senator Chuck Robb to determine the merits of creating such a center. This Nation must do everything we can to keep the world's most destructive weapons out of the world's most dangerous hands.

Finally, we will act on other recommendations made by the Commission. In coming days, I'll issue a series of directives to various departments to underscore and further outline essential steps for the U.S. Government on the war on terror. All relevant agencies must complete the task of adopting common databases and procedures so that intelligence and homeland security information can be shared and searched effectively, consistent with privacy and civil liberties.

At the same time, the FBI Director will continue his restructuring of the Bureau to create a specialized workforce for collecting, analyzing domestic intelligence on terrorism. The Acting CIA Director will continue to increase efforts already underway to strengthen human intelligence and analytical capabilities.

The dedicated, hard-working men and women of our intelligence community are laboring every day to keep our country safe. I'm proud of their work—and so should our American citizens. We're in their debt. We're grateful for them. And the changes we're making are designed to help the professionals carry out their essential missions as best as they possibly can. I'll work closely with the Congress to ensure that reform does not disrupt their daily work. We've got good people working hard to protect America. We don't want these efforts to get in the way of their efforts to protect our fellow citizens.

We are a nation in danger. We're doing everything we can in our power to confront the danger. We're making good progress in protecting our people and bringing our enemies to account. But one thing is for certain: We'll keep our focus, and we'll keep our resolve. We will do our duty to best secure our country.

I'll answer a couple of questions today. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press], have you got one?

Congressional Action on Intelligence Reform

Q. First, I'd like to ask you what the level of urgency is here on those actions that require congressional approval. They're out on recess until Labor Day. Can you envision calling them back into special session? And also, you've got a terror warning, as you said, in three cities. How do you react without tipping the bad guys off and without turning the country into a fortress?

The President. Yes. Well, the first question is—listen, the Congress has been thinking about some of these ideas. They can think about them over August and come back and act on them in September. We look forward to working with them—not only in the creation of the National Intelligence Director, how to do it the right way, but also the 9/11 Commission had some very constructive suggestions for congressional reform. I think Tom told me one time he—how many different committees have you testified in front of?

Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. Well, 140 times our leadership was up there last year.

The President. He testified 140 different times.

Secretary Ridge. Leadership.

The President. And——

Secretary Ridge. The leadership—Under Secretaries——

The President. Yes. I mean, it's a lot of—he's got a lot of jurisdictions up there, and so he goes committee, subcommittee, this committee, that committee. I mean, it seems like it's one thing to testify and, therefore, to be oversight; it's another thing to make sure that the people who are engaged in protecting America don't spend all their time testifying. And so there's going to be some important reforms. We look forward to working with Congress on the reforms.

The second part of your two-part question?

Intelligence Information Sharing

Q. In a situation like this, where you have this new terror alert, how do you react without tipping off the terrorists and having them move to different targets, and how do you avoid turning the country into a fortress?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I think we have an obligation to inform the people involved with protecting New York City, in this case, or parts of Jersey or parts of DC about what we know. We have an obligation. When we find out something, we've got to share it. What we're talking about here is a very serious matter based upon sound intelligence. And I would hope the people affected in New York realize that by sharing intelligence, we can better prepare in case something were to happen.

In other words, if we were just silent on the subject, I think people would be a lot more nervous. They would say, "What is Government withholding? Why weren't they sharing stuff with the people responsible, Commissioner Kelly or Mayor Bloomberg?" So our attitude is, we try to be as transparent as possible with the affected sites so that people can then take responses necessary to better protect the people.

But it's serious business. I mean, we wouldn't be contacting authorities at the local level unless something was real. And what this points up to is that there's an enemy which hates what we stand for. And it's a different kind of war. And it's one that we're just going to have to continue to work on—and will—do the very best we can to protect the country.

Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

Proposed Director of National Intelligence

Q. Mr. President, some of your own advisers oppose creation of a National Intelligence Director. Why did you override their objections? And will you give the new Director sweeping budget authority?

The President. Because I thought it was the right thing to do, Adam. And the good thing about having an administration full of competent, capable intelligence people is that I get all different kinds of opinions. The best decisionmaking process is one where people have different opinions, and they bring them to me in a forthright way, and then I make the decision about what I think is best. And I think that the new National Intelligence Director ought to be able to coordinate budgets. I certainly hope Congress reforms its budget process too, so that it's a seamless process.

Secondly, the National Intelligence Director will work with the respective agencies to set priorities. But let me make it also very clear that when it comes to operations, the chain of command will be intact. When the Defense Department is conducting operations to secure the homeland, there'll be nothing in between the Secretary of Defense and me. I believe this system will serve our country well as we head into the depths of the 21st century. As I said in my remarks here—that this struggle against these thugs will go on for a while, and therefore we've just got to

do everything we can to be better prepared.

Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News].

War on Terror

Q. Mr. President, thank you. All of this, as you know, is coming in the context of the Presidential election campaign. Your opponent has made a couple of charges that I would like your response to: One, essentially saying that 3 years after the 9/11 attacks, to go about the business of rehauling the intelligence community, is too long; second, there's been a suggestion from the Kerry camp today that this administration is actually responsible for fueling the recruitment of Al Qaida through some of its policies, particularly—they didn't say this directly—but the war in Iraq. Your response?

The President. Yes, that's a misunderstanding of the war on terror. Obviously, we have a difference of opinion—a clear difference of opinion—about the stakes that face America. These people we face are coldblooded, committed killers. They're interested in destroying our way of life. They were interested in destroying our way of life before I arrived in office. The only way to deal with these people is to bring them to justice.

See, evidently some must think that you can negotiate with them, you can talk sense to them, you can hope that they change. That's not what I know. I know in order to deal with these people, we must bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And so we're on the offense. We will stay—the best way to protect the American homeland is to stay on the offense. It is a ridiculous notion to assert that because the United States is on the offense, more people want to hurt us. We are on the offense because people do want to hurt us.

The other part of your question was what, sir?

Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Why wait 3 years after the 9/11 attacks to call for this kind of reform? Senator Kerry has said that's too long.

The President. Yes. We have implemented significant reforms since 9/11. The FBI is reformed, and Director Mueller has done a fabulous job. The communications between the FBI and the CIA have been enhanced by the creation of what's called TTIC, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center. We moved quickly to make sure that there is a seamless spread of information throughout our Government. We called for and worked with Congress to create the Department of Homeland Security. Not everybody in Congress agreed with how that Department ought to be set up. But we got it set up, and not only that, under Secretary Ridge, we have implemented the integration of multiple agencies to better protect the homeland. We've done a lot since September the 11th.

Let's see here. Jay Newton-Small [Bloomberg News]. How are you?

Q. Good, and you?

The President. I'm fine.

Proposed Director of National Intelligence

Q. Mr. President, the 9/11 Commission originally recommended that the National Intelligence Director be part of the Executive Office, part of the executive branch. Why the change? Why make it part of—with congressional oversight?

The President. Well, I don't think that person ought to be a member of my Cabinet. I will hire the person, and I can fire the person, which is—any President would like. That's how you have accountability in Government. I don't think that the office ought to be in the White House, however. I think it ought to be a stand-alone group to better coordinate, particularly between foreign intelligence and domestic intelligence matters. I think it's going to be one of the most useful aspects of the National Intelligence Director.

Let's see. John—or Mike [Mike Allen, Washington Post], why don't you, and then John Cochran [ABC News].

Situation in Afghanistan/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You saw that Doctors Without Borders pulled out of Afghanistan because it was too dangerous. You've seen reports about the reformed Taliban. Why is the security situation there so poor? What do you see as the trajectory of it? And Mr. President, do you worry that you should have given more attention to Iran earlier?

The President. First, let me address Afghanistan. I did see that the Doctors Without Borders left, and I'm sorry they did, because they were providing a important function for the people who want to live in a free society. I also saw, at the same time, that there's over—I think it's 9 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote. That's an unbelievable statement, isn't it? Do you remember when we were here—I can't remember, at one of my press conferences—we had a discussion about this, but there was some concern that, well, maybe they're not going to get even the 3 million people registered to vote in Afghanistan. Or maybe it was—some minimal threshold. I think we're over 9 million now?

Secretary Ridge. Yes, just about 9 million.

The President. Nine million people have said to the world, "We love freedom, and we're going to vote." Now, the Taliban still roams in parts of the country, and we're working with the Afghan Government to bring them to justice. These are similar to the killers in Iraq; they'll lurk in shadows and come out and kill indiscriminately. Do you remember they pulled the women off the bus? They got the bus; they stopped and said, "Everybody—the women with voter registration cards step up," and they killed them. Nevertheless, the Afghan people refuse to be intimidated. They're showing up in droves to vote. A free society is emerging in that part of the world.

In Iran, we are paying very close attention to Iran. We have ever since I've been in office here. We are working with our friends to keep the pressure on the mullahs to listen to the demands of the free world. And we're working with the—hold on a second, please. Excuse me. We're working with the IAEA to keep the pressure on Iran, and the Secretary is working very closely with the foreign ministers of France, Great Britain, and Germany, who are taking it upon themselves to make it clear that the demands of Europe are also equal to—the same as the demands of the United States, that we expect for there to be full disclosure, full transparency of their nuclear weapons programs.

Yes, Suzanne [Suzanne Malveaux, Cable News Network]. Suzanne.

Q. Do you think the intelligence was——

The President. Suzanne.

Response to Terrorism Threats

Q. Mr. President, your opponent, John Kerry, has called for a complete endorsement of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. How do your actions today differ from his own in ensuring national security? And what can the American people see in the days to come, either feel or see, to know that they are better protected?

The President. Well, when we put out a threat alert like we did yesterday and then work with folks at the local jurisdictions to respond, the American people need to know that, one, our intelligence gathering is doing its job—the intelligence gatherers are doing their job. And secondly, the response mechanism is fast. And they need to know their Government—there are thousands of people working overtime to not only find data but analyze data and then take the steps necessary to protect, as best as we possibly can. This is a big country. We're a free country. And as I've said many times, we've got to be 100 percent correct; they've got to be correct once.

But the people need to know that we're taking action on actionable intelligence.

First part of the—the 9/11—listen, my job is to take a look at what I think is right and to build on that which we've already done. We've already done a lot. Take a good look at what has taken place since 9/11, and I think you'll be, as a citizen concerned about your own safety, I think you'll be pleased. And the question is, how do we do more? We're more than happy to do more.

Last question. Deans [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers].

Proposed Director of National Intelligence/ Decisionmaking on Iraq

Q. Yes, sir. Mr. President, can you say what you regard as the model for this National Intelligence Director? Is it the Fed? Would it be the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

The President. Yes.

Q. And in what way would this new structure prevent the kind of intelligence failings that preceded the war in Iraq with respect to weapons, difficulty of the opposition faced, and those sorts of things?

The President. Not like the Fed. More like the Joint Chiefs, because the Joint Chiefs have got a—even though not a part of the chain of command, they are affected by the chain of command.

And the second part of the—oh, why would this—listen, let me talk about the intelligence in Iraq. First of all, we all thought we would find stockpiles of weapons. We may still find weapons. We haven't found them yet. Every person standing up here would say, gosh, we thought it was going to be different, as did the Congress, by the way, members of both parties, and the United Nations. But what we do know is that Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons.

And let me just say this to you: Knowing what I know today, we still would have gone on into Iraq. We still would have gone to make our country more secure. He had the capability of making weapons. He had terrorist ties. The decision I made was the right decision. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. And I find it interesting, in the political process, that some say, "Well, I voted for the intelligence," and now they won't say whether or not it was the right decision to take Saddam Hussein out. It's the right decision, and the world is better off for it.

Listen, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting CIA Director John E. McLaughlin; and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City. The President also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission); and the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman/Robb Commission). The related Executive orders of August 27 on the President's Board on Safeguarding Americans' Civil Liberties, the National Counterterrorism Center, management of the intelligence community, and sharing of terrorism information are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Signing the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act

August 3, 2004

The President. Welcome. Please be seated. I'm honored to welcome you all to the White House this morning, as I sign the legislation implementing the historic free trade agreement between Australia and the United States.

For nearly a century, our two nations have been allies in war and partners in peace. Prime Minister Howard's superb leadership has helped ensure that the friendship between our two peoples remains strong, that our commitment to political and economic freedom remains firm.

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a milestone in the history of our alliance. It expands our security and political alliance by creating a true economic partnership. It will create jobs and opportunities in both our nations. It will fuel economic growth throughout the Pacific Rim, and it will strengthen our common ties of family and friendship.

I appreciate so very much those in my Cabinet who have worked hard to make this agreement come true: Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, and, of course, Ambassador Bob Zoellick, who is the U.S. Trade Representative.

Just as an aside, Zoellick has done heroic work, as has his staff, to see to it that the world trades more freely and America is treated fairly when it comes to trade.

I appreciate Ambassador Michael Thawley, the Ambassador of Australia to the United States, for his tireless efforts in representing his country's best interests as we negotiate this trade agreement. Mr. Ambassador, you are a credit to your country.

I'm also proud that Senator Orrin Hatch is with us. Senator, I appreciate you taking time to come and represent the United States Congress. This agreement received strong bipartisan support. It represents that members of both parties understand the benefits of trade to our country. Welcome, Senator, I appreciate you coming.

We support free and fair trade. I support free and fair trade, because it has the power to create new wealth for whole nations and new opportunities for millions of people. Sound policy can help unleash the initiative and talent of free people. Open trade is sound policy. It has a record for creating jobs and raising living standards and lowering consumer prices.

My administration is working with the Congress to extend the benefits of free trade throughout the western hemisphere, in Africa, and into the Middle East. We renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which promotes economic reforms and reduces trade barriers on goods from the nations of sub-Sahara Africa. Working with Congress, we entered into a new free trade agreement with Morocco and Chile. We're encouraging the free flow of trade across the Pacific. Last year I had the honor to sign a free trade agreement with Singapore, America's first with an Asian Pacific nation. Today I'm honored to sign legislation enacting the second.

The total annual two-way trade in American and Australian goods and services stands at $28 billion. Australia is America's 10th largest export market. Our trade with Australia is important to every American. It is vital to our economy. The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a recognition of that importance and a commitment by both our nations to work in partnership for common prosperity. This agreement will immediately eliminate duties on 99 percent of all U.S.-manufactured exports to Australia. That is the largest immediate reduction of tariffs on manufactured goods ever

achieved in an American free trade agreement.

America's manufacturers estimate that eliminating these tariffs will increase the export of manufactured goods by nearly $2 billion per year. That will mean new jobs for American workers. This agreement will also be good for America's farmers. It will eliminate all duties on American agricultural products entering Australia. Today, American farmers export almost $700 million worth of goods to Australia. And because of this agreement, that total will rise.

Free and fair trade means more than eliminating tariffs on existing trade. We must also work to open up new sectors of our economies to competition and trade. This agreement opens important sectors of Australia's economy, such as telecommunications, government procurement, express delivery, computers, tourism, energy, construction, financial services, and entertainment. And the agreement strengthens protections for intellectual property and promotes electronic commerce.

One of the great economic achievements since the end of the cold war has been the success of free and fair trade in raising up the world's poor, bringing hope to the world's hopeless, promoting freedom among the world's oppressed, and creating jobs at home and abroad. The same advantages that this agreement will bring to the United States and Australia can and should be available to the developing world. Our two nations are committed to the reduction of trade barriers and other restrictions that are keeping too much of the world from the kind of prosperity and opportunity that the developed world takes for granted.

On Saturday, that commitment yielded an important result that will benefit manufacturers and farmers from America, Australia, and the world. For the last several days, our trade ministers in Geneva have worked tirelessly to achieve an agreed framework for the WTO's Doha's negotiation. This framework provides a roadmap for these ongoing talks. Among other things, it commits WTO members to the elimination of export subsidies on agricultural products. And it commits them to start new work on the overhaul, streamlining, and transparency of customs rules. There is more work to be done, but Prime Minister Howard and I remain committed to the success of the Doha negotiations.

The United States and Australia have never been closer. We're allies in the war on terror. We're partners in the effort to help democracy take root in Afghanistan and Iraq and throughout the world. We understand that free societies will be peaceful societies. We long for peace. I appreciate Prime Minister Howard. He's a strong partner in peace. We understand that over the long term, the only way to create a safer world is to create a better world. We share a belief in the need to help others.

This trade agreement serves the interests of our countries. It serves the interests of the United States and Australia. It serves the interests of citizens with ambition and initiative and entrepreneurial instincts in both our countries. It advances the principle of free and fair trade. I am grateful to the Prime Minister, John Howard, for his good work and his vision and his friendship.

And it's now my honor to sign the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Implementation Act.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. H.R. 4759, approved August 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108–286.

Remarks to the Knights of Columbus Convention in Dallas, Texas
August 3, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Welcome to Texas. And thanks for inviting me so I can come home. [*Laughter*] I really appreciate the Knights of Columbus. This strong organization believes in families and faith and compassion for those in need. And I'm honored you'd invite me to the 122d Convocation of this great organization.

I appreciate Carl Anderson and his leadership. I've gotten to know Carl because, you see, he's more than just an introducer of Presidents. [*Laughter*] He's a person who works with Presidents—at least this President. And I'm proud to have his help. It's good to see my family friend Virgil Dechant. Virgil, it's good to see you, sir. Thank you for such a warm greeting in the photo op line and reminding me of some great days gone past.

I'm proud to be here with Cardinal McCarrick. It's good to see you, sir. He's a neighbor in my temporary residence. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Cardinal Egan. I appreciate Cardinal Rigali of the great city of Philadelphia, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore, Maryland. I'm honored you all are here. I thank you for your presence. I'm honored to be in the presence of Cardinal Macharski, the Archbishop of Krakow, who succeeded the Holy Father in that role. Welcome to the United States. Appreciate you coming, sir. I appreciate Bishop Wilton Gregory's leadership of the Conference of Catholic Bishops.

I appreciate Your Eminences and Your Excellencies, reverends, monsignors, fathers, and deacons. *Nuestros amigos de Mexico*. I appreciate the officers and directors, State deputies, board of directors, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Knights, and my fellow Americans. Thanks for having me.

Two months ago, I had the privilege of visiting His Holy Father Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. It was my third meeting with His Holy Father since I took office, and for those of you who have ever met him, you know I'm telling you the truth when I tell you being in his presence is an awesome experience. He is a true presence. On the occasion, I had the special honor of presenting him with America's highest civil award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It was my chance to express our Nation's respect for a devoted servant of God and a true hero of our time.

Pope John Paul II has been a unique and commanding voice for the cause of the poor, the weak, the hungry, and the outcast. He has challenged our Nation and the entire world to embrace the culture of life. He's called upon us to uphold and affirm the dignity of every person, rich and poor, able and disabled, born and unborn. He's called us to love and serve our neighbors in need. Few organizations have worked harder and done more and met this challenge than the Knights of Columbus. I know you're proud of your organization, and you should be.

The Knights were born in New Haven, Connecticut. Come to think of it, so was I. [*Laughter*] From your foundations in a small church basement, you have raised up one of the great America organizations dedicated to charity and mutual assistance and the fight for civil liberties.

I'm proud to say that my family has contributed to your ranks. A few years ago, Governor Jeb became a Knight. [*Applause*] And he—yes—and he recently took his Third Degree. I'll see him this weekend. His son is getting married. I'll pass on the word, aim for the Fourth. [*Laughter*] Jeb knows, as I do, that your works of mercy are making our society more compassionate, changing the lives of millions of citizens. Compassionate work changes our society one heart and one soul at a time.

Last year, the Knights raised and donated a record $130 million to charity. That's a phenomenal record. You also volunteered for an unprecedented 61 million hours of community service. You obviously have heard the call.

I was pleased to hear this story about the Knights in Corpus Christi, Texas, at the Mother Teresa Day Shelter. They're a daily presence there. They're mopping the floors, collecting laundry soap, blankets, and food for 130 homeless men and women. They're not giving the orders; they're serving the people. Patricia Henry, the shelter director, put it this way: "If I need help, I just give the Knights a call"—such a powerful example. Americans across this great land know that they can do the same, that they can serve our country by helping someone in need.

We're grateful for your service to the men and women in uniform and to our Nation's veterans. You've sent hundreds of thousands of prayer books to those working to make our country more secure and to bring freedom in parts of the world that are desperate for freedom. You bring comfort and strength to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. I want to thank you for taking time to visit our wounded and disabled veterans, for providing comfort to their families, to give them a word of thanks.

See, you're—the Knights are soldiers in the armies of compassion. You're foot soldiers. You've heard the call. You're helping this Nation build a culture of life in which the sick are comforted, the aged are honored, the immigrant is welcomed, and the weak and vulnerable are never overlooked. You have a friend in this administration. You have somebody who wants to work with you to change America for the better.

We have a responsibility in Government to do things to help overcome recession and corporate scandal. It's easier to be a hopeful society when people are working. That's why I put forth an economic stimulus plan to encourage small-business growth, a plan that will help get jobs moving so people can work and do their duty as a mom or a dad and put food on the table. And we're making progress.

When I came to Washington, I was concerned about a school system that simply shuffled children through grade after grade, year after year, and hoped for the best. Oftentimes, what we found out was kids with great hearts were graduating from schools but couldn't read. I challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations by raising the bar, insisting on high standards, by making sure the money we spent—and we did spend more money—went to help those who needed extra help early, before it was too late. I believe you've got to measure in order to know. If you believe a child can read, you've got to measure to determine whether or not that child is reading, and if not, get them help early, before it's too late.

Because we measure, we know that now more minority children are learning to read at grade level, and that's good for America. I want to thank the Knights for their help in—helping low-income parents in Washington, DC, escape from schools—have their children escape from schools that will not teach and will not change. Because of the work of the Knights of Columbus and other concerned citizens in our Nation's Capital, poor parents now have a choice. They will have a $7,500 scholarship so they can afford to send their school—their child to a private school or parochial school—their choice to make.

You know, one of the great statistics of this modern era is the fact that more people are owning their own home. It seems like to me an optimistic society is one that encourages ownership, more people owning their own business, people being able to own and manage their own health care account, people being—own a piece of their retirement policy that they can pass on from one generation to the next, and people owning their own home. I love a society in which more and more people are able

to say, "Welcome to my home; come to my home." This country has added more than 1.6 million minority homeowners in the past 2 years. Today, the American homeownership rate is the highest ever—and the highest ever for minorities. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of your country.

I want to work with the Knights for reasonable and compassionate immigration reform, to bring good, hard-working people out of the shadows of American life and to ensure that America is always a welcoming nation. I recognize, like you recognize, that amidst the great prosperity of America, amongst our great wealth, there are pockets of despair in this country, and we've got to do something about it. We must address despair so America is hopeful for every single person. See, we got fellow citizens who are trapped in the misery of drugs and gang violence, collapse of the family.

Our society and our Government have a responsibility. You have a responsibility. Those of us honored to hold high office have a responsibility. We're doing some practical things. We've got a community-wide effort to help educate kids to the dangers of using drugs. We believe in collaborative efforts; people all throughout society must work to reduce the demand for drugs. Listen, we'll do all we can to bust the thugs, interdict the drugs coming in from foreign—overseas. But we've got to work on demand. And teen use of drugs is down by 11 percent from 2001 to 2003. That's a hopeful sign. A hopeful America is where our children are learning—[*applause*].

There's a lot of work to be done on health care, but one place I know we can continue to work together on is health care for the poorest of the poor. We've expanded and built over 600 community health centers in America. I want to double the number so the 16 million poor Americans can get primary health care without putting a strain on the emergency rooms of our hospitals, whether they be public or private.

We've got to pay for—we've got to work on additional welfare reforms to help people find a job, help them have the skills necessary to work so they realize the dignity that comes from being independent from Government and, at the same time, strengthen marriage and the family as part of welfare reforms.

But I believe one of the most effective ways our Government can help those in need is to help the charities and community groups that are doing God's work every day. That's what I believe Government ought to do. I believe Government needs to stand on the side of faith-based groups, not against faith-based groups, when they come to saving lives.

Government can hand out money, and of course there will be arguments whether we're handing out enough or not. But what Government can never do is put love in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. You see, in order to heal—help the lonely, it works every time when a loving soul puts their arm around and says, "What can I do to help you? How can I help you in your life? What can I do to make your life better?" Many are called by God to do so, and Government must stand on the side of those millions of acts of mercy and kindness that take place on a daily basis.

And so the Faith-Based Initiative that I've launched recognizes the need there be separation of church and state. The state should never be the church, and the church certainly should never be the state. But the state should never fear the good works of the church. And the truth of the matter is, there's a culture inside Government which resents and fears religious charities and has discriminated against them. We're changing that. I want to thank the Knights for their help in changing that attitude in Washington, DC.

Our goal is to end the unfair discrimination against faith-based charities by the

Federal Government. And we're making substantial progress. In December 2002, I issued an Executive order—I was hoping, frankly, that Congress would pass a law. I got tired of waiting. [*Laughter*] I got tired of the process debate. See, I'm focused on results. I want there to be positive results. I want lives to be saved as best as possible. The process bogged down. For those of you who pay attention to Washington, you know what I'm talking about when I say the process bogs down.

So I signed an Executive order mandating equal treatment for faith-based charities in the Federal grantmaking process. What that means is, is that faith-based groups ought to be allowed to apply for Federal grants just like everybody else should be allowed to apply. Faith-based groups will not be allowed to discriminate against who they serve, and they won't use the Federal money to proselytize. But they're allowed to use the money to change hearts and souls, to help save lives, to embetter the world we live in.

And so here's the principle we've established: Religious charities that are effectively helping the poor should have a fair and equal chance to compete for Federal money. That's the new—those are the new rules. And this—in 2003, discretionary grants to faith-based programs was over a billion dollars. We're making progress. We're using Federal taxpayers' money for effective use in helping to save lives. We're providing a social network of loving—helping loving souls interface with people so they can realize a better tomorrow.

Three years ago, I established the Compassion Capital Fund. It's an innovative idea. It was a—the fund gives money to intermediary organizations that provide faith-based and community organizations with training, technical assistance—what it is, is like a little incubator: "If you want to access Federal money, here's how you do it. If you want to start up a faith-based program, here's some of the lessons learned." In other words, what we're trying to say is not only are we going to allow those faith-based programs that already exist to access Federal money, we want to help others spring up and understand the pitfalls to succeed. The fund provides grants to faith-based and community organizations as well to help them fund their programs for the poor and the hungry and the homeless. We've awarded $56 million under this program. Today I release another $43 million to the compassionate Federal grant program.

We're moving forward on another initiative, which is mentoring for the children of prisoners. I mean, if the job of Government is to try to set priorities, a priority is to help children of prisoners find love. Imagine what a tough life it is for a young boy or girl to go see his or her mom or dad behind prison bars. These are children who need help. They're vulnerable to gangs and crime and despair. They're desperate for responsible adults in their life who can give them what many of them long for, which is love and tenderness.

The best way to do that is to encourage all groups, including faith-based groups, to provide mentors. And it's happening in America. For those of you who are mentoring the children of prisoners, thank you for what you're doing to make America a more welcoming place. We've awarded grants—today we've unleashed another $45.5 million of grants to programs, all aimed at doing this.

I'll tell you another program that's important is to help the addict, is to help the person so stuck on drugs that they can't realize the great human potential that God has given them, and they need desperate help. I believe that some counseling programs work, no question about it. But I also know programs that change the heart works. When a person changes their heart, they change their habits. Government is not good at changing hearts. The Almighty God is good at changing hearts, which happens to be the cornerstone of effective faith-based programs. And therefore, when it

comes to spending Federal money to help addicts, I've asked the Congress, and the Congress has agreed to allow us to use vouchers to go to the person who is seeking help. That person can use that voucher at any kind of program he or she chooses, including faith-based programs, to help heal hearts and save lives.

In other words, some of these are the ways that—what I'm telling you is, things are changing in the Nation's Capital when it comes to invigorating the Faith-Based Initiative, and the Knights have helped a lot. I appreciate your efforts to level the playing field when it comes to grantmaking. And because of your efforts, America is changing for the better.

I needed someone to lead this program, so guess who I turned to? The Knights. I found Towey. Jim Towey is the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. He's with me. You know what his job is? His job is to help the faith community—by the way, all faiths—all faiths, Christian, Jew, or Muslim—all faiths understand what is possible now. His job is also to make sure the Federal Government is a hospitable place for faith programs to work with. Let's be frank about it. Many faith-based programs don't want to interface with Government. You know why? They're afraid of losing the ability to practice their faith. How can you be a faith-based program if you're not allowed to practice your faith? Towey's job—so Towey has got a big job. It's to change a culture, a suspicious culture, and we're making progress—a suspicious culture in Washington, a suspicious culture in the grassroots.

Here's Towey's story. He goes to meet Mother Teresa for the first time. He shows up at one of her homes for the dying in India, and the sister who greeted him assumed he was there to work. [*Laughter*] That's what I assume every day that Towey shows up. [*Laughter*] So she gave Jim some cloth and said, "Go clean the sores of a dying man." He says it changed his life, that experience. He went on to work full-time for the Missionaries of Charity. Incredibly enough, Jim Towey, Director of the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in the White House, was Mother Teresa's lawyer. I ask you, what kind of society is it where Mother Teresa needs a lawyer? [*Laughter*] It's a society that needs tort reform. [*Laughter*] I appreciate your good work, friend. Thanks for coming today.

The Knights of Columbus are transferring lives with works of compassion, and, just as importantly, you're defending the values of faith and family that bind us as a nation. I appreciate your fight to protect children from obscenity. I appreciate your working to protect the Pledge of Allegiance, to keep us "one Nation under God." I want to thank you—I want to thank you for the defense of the traditional family. That is a most fundamental institution for our society. I appreciate the fact you're promoting the culture of life.

We're making progress here in America. Last November, I signed a law to end the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. This law is constitutional. This law is compassionate. This law is urgently needed, and my administration will vigorously defend it in the courts. I was pleased to sign the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. I want to thank the Knights on that piece of legislation. I signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. Common sense and conscience tells us that when an expectant mother is killed, two lives are ended, and the criminal should answer for both crimes.

I was pleased to sign legislation supporting maternity group homes. We'll continue to work to help crisis pregnancy centers. We'll work together to strengthen incentives for adoption and parental notification laws. The Knights have been helpful, and I appreciate your help. My 2005 budget, I proposed to more than triple Federal funds for abstinence programs in schools and community-based programs above 2001 levels.

I'll continue to work with Congress to pass a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning. Human life is a creation of God, not a commodity to be exploited by man.

I look forward to working with the Knights to defend the sacred bond of marriage. A few activist judges have taken it upon themselves to redefine the institution of marriage by court order. I support a constitutional amendment to protect the sanctity of marriage by ensuring it is always recognized as the union of a man and woman as husband and wife. I appreciate the Knights' stand on this issue.

I also appreciate the Knights of Columbus' stand on the Federal judiciary. I have a responsibility as President to make sure the Federal judicial system runs well. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal benches who will strictly and fully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

In all these areas, caring for the poor and protecting the vulnerable, affirming life, and defending the family, we're depending on the goodness and compassion of the American people. And that's good, because the American people are good and compassionate. See, the strength of this country is not our military might. It's not the size of our wallet. The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people. And it is an incredible honor to be the President of such a nation, a President of a nation of compassion and decency and honor and such powerful values that we're able to bring people from all walks of life under the rubric of being an American.

I appreciate the prayers of the people of this country. People I'll never get to say thanks to in person, lift Laura and me up in prayer. It's a remarkable aspect of the Presidency. More significantly, it's a remarkable aspect of the life of the United States of America. I'm grateful for your prayers. I'm grateful for your great service and the example you set for our country.

Thanks for having me today. May God bless your organization, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Dallas. In his remarks, he referred to Carl A. Anderson, supreme knight, and Virgil Dechant, past supreme knight, Knights of Columbus; Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, DC; Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York; Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, PA; Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, IL; William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, MD; Franciszek Cardinal Macharski, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland; and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks in Davenport, Iowa
August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all so very much for coming. Thanks for having me. It's great to be back here in the Quad Cities area. It's a great place to work and raise your family. It's what I would call the heart and soul of the country. We have a little difference of opinion about the heart and soul—some of them think you can find it in Hollywood.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I think you find it right here in Davenport, Iowa.

I'm looking forward to the race. I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help. Everywhere we're going, the crowds are

big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will have 4 more years.

I regret that Laura is not here to see this significant crowd. She is a fabulous First Lady. She is a great mother and a wonderful wife. Today I'm going to give you some reasons for you to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest one on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment and his experience. Dick Cheney is a great Vice President.

I want to thank my friend Jim Nussle. I appreciate his leadership in the United States Congress. He's the budget man. He's looking out after your money. He and I understand when we spend money in Washington, it's not the Government's money; it's the people's money.

I appreciate my friend Jim Leach joining us today. What a fine, fine citizen of the State of Iowa. I want to thank my friend Tom Latham for joining us, the Congressman from the other part of the State. Thanks for inviting him here to eastern Iowa. It's good for your Congressmen to get a taste for the decency of the folks that live in this part of the State.

I want to thank Chuck Gipp, David Vaudt, all the State officials here. I appreciate the mayor coming. Mr. Mayor, we're proud you're here. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Mayor Freemire of Bettendorf as well. I'm proud you're here. I want to thank my friend David Roederer, who is the campaign chairman for this great State of Iowa. I appreciate my friend Larry Gatlin. We were both raised in west Texas together. I was in Midland; he was in Odessa. I can't sing; he can. [*Laughter*]

Listen, I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank you for what you are going to do, which is to register the voters. We have a duty in this country to vote. Make sure you register people. Don't worry about what party they're in; we want everybody voting in America. However, now when you're convincing them who to vote for, don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents. [*Laughter*] When you get them headed toward the poll, nudge them our way. I'm counting on your help, and together we're going to win not only Iowa, but it's going to be a great victory in November nationwide. We were close in Iowa last time—not this time; we're going to carry it.

Every incumbent who's asking for the vote has to answer a question why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past years we've been through a lot together. We've been through a whole lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead our Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have more to do. We must work to move America forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our economy stronger. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our future brighter and better for every one of our citizens. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and there is still more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we know that they can be, so that no child is left behind in this country. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics.

So we've challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in making sure local folks are in charge of public schools. We believe in empowering parents. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Listen, we've got more to do. The world we're in is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and a higher-level skills, so we've got to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science so young people can compete in our high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence they need to realize the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties for years had promised prescription drug coverage for our seniors; we got it done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

I remember campaigning with Nussle and Leach and Latham and your fine United States Senator, Charles Grassley. I said, "We're going to strengthen Medicare to make sure rural hospitals in Iowa get the help they need," so we provided more funds to hospitals healing—handling a low volume of patients. We've increased payments for ambulance providers and suppliers in rural areas. We're giving better bonuses to physicians, so we can keep good doctors practicing in rural America. In other words, we delivered on our promise to the people of Iowa. The other folks talk a good game; we deliver.

To help people get access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save, tax-free, for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not going to turn back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

To improve health care, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive doctors out of medicine. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I will continue to work with Congress to pass medical liability reform for the patients of America.

We can do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We can do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make our economy stronger. Listen, we've come through a recession and terror attacks and corporate scandals and a stock market decline. We overcame these obstacles because of the hard work of Iowa's small-business people, because we've got the best workers in the

world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got the best farmers in the world.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax relief for the American people. Listen, we didn't pick winners and losers when it came to tax relief. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal income taxes. We gave tax relief for families with children. We gave tax relief for married couples. What kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? It's a Tax Code that needs to be changed. We gave tax relief for every small business that purchases equipment. And this time, the check really was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Because we acted, Iowa has added more than 11,000 jobs over the past year. Because we acted, Iowa's unemployment rate now is 4.3 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for American workers, we are turning the corner, and we're not going back.

We worked to strengthen our farmers and ranchers. We passed a good farm bill; I was proud to sign it. We phased out the death tax so America's family farmers can stay in the family. We've opened up foreign markets for Iowa's and Illinois farmers. You see, if you're good at something, you ought to have the opportunity to sell that which you're good at around the world.

Listen, this country needs an energy strategy. We must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want to keep jobs here in America. And one way to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy is to promote alternative sources of fuel like biodiesel and ethanol. I told the people of this State when I was running in 2000, I support ethanol. I have kept my promise to Iowa's farmers. In the last 3 years, America's farmers have posted record net-cash farm income—record—record exports, record farm equity and land values. I have made the success of America's farmers and ranchers a priority, and America is better off for it.

To keep jobs in America, regulations need to be reasonable and fair. To keep jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits which threaten our small businesses. To keep jobs in America, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low. To keep jobs in America, we will offer our workers a lifetime of learning and to make sure they get training for the jobs of the future, at our community colleges. The education and training community colleges offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

And we're going to make sure America's families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your parents, time to go to class to improve yourselves. Congress needs to work with the administration to enact comp-time and flex-time to help America's families better juggle their home needs and their work needs.

What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, the economy will be better, more small-business owners will be in America, better and higher paying jobs will exist here, and our farmers will be able to put something aside for the future generations.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base for Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set

up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is a place where many young girls now go to school for the first time. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists. America and the world are safer.

In Saudi Arabia, before September the 11th, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats in a new light. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, this country must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day.

After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his deadly capabilities with our enemies. We saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and saw a threat to America. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence, and it saw a threat and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons and weapons programs or face serious consequences. That's what the free world demanded.

After 12 years of defiance, the tyrant refused to comply. He continued to deceive the world. He deceived the weapons inspectors that the world had sent into Iraq. Now, I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because the dictator sits in a prison cell, the people of Iraq are better off. America and the world are safer.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world, when it comes to making America safer, when it comes to spreading peace, we're moving forward, and we're not turning back.

We've got more to do. I'm running for 4 more years because we've got more to do. We must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot negotiate with them.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage the enemies around

the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror, and that's necessary. Over 60 nations are involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. We will continue to build our alliances. We will continue to work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people who want the boys and girls of their respective countries to grow up in peace. They know what we know in America: Moms and dads long for a peaceful society; they long for their children to be able to be educated and realize their dreams. The people of these countries are stepping up, providing security for their own people. After years of brutality, they see a glimmer of hope, a chance to live in a free society. And these people can count on our help and the help of our coalition.

You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help set them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And our men and women in uniform deserve the full support of our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military and its mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how my opponent tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] Then he went on to say, he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against it, and he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror—that's poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be a powerful example to their neighbors in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams and aspirations of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're making the world a more peaceful place. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect us. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. Those who claim that America's war on terror is to blame for terror threats against the United States have a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of

the enemy. See, the 9/11 Commission said something wise: Our homeland is safer, but we are not yet safe.

Beginning immediately after September the 11th, we've started the hard process of reform. We transformed our defenses. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to help make America more secure. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We've taken action on a large majority of the Commission's recommendations.

We have more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capability. That's why this week I called on Congress to create a position of National Intelligence Director, so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and here at home.

These reforms are not going to be easy. I understand that. You see, reform is never easy in Washington. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests there. People don't like to have the status quo challenged. It's not enough, though, to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

And we're getting it done on behalf of the people of this country. When it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms that give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, results matter. When it comes to a strong farm economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and promoting the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. No, there's a lot of big talkers in the Nation's Capital. We just like to be known as the people who can get the job done. We're living in a time of great change. And it's an exciting time—it really is—to be an American. We got to make sure Government responds to these times by standing side by side with people, side by side with our workers, and side by side with our families.

The best way to do so, in my judgment, is to encourage people to own something, to encourage people to own their own homes. Listen, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high, and that's good news for our country. We want our workers to be able to own their own health care accounts so they can take them from job to job. We want younger workers to be able to own a Social Security personal retirement account that they can call their own and pass on from one generation to the next. We want people owning their own farm and their own small business. See, we understand when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of this country.

The world is—times have changed, but some things are not going to change. Our belief in liberty will not change. Our belief in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity will not change. Our desire to make sure opportunity, the great American experience, is spread throughout every corner of this country, will not change. The individual values we try to live by won't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose are important, our families, our schools, our religious congregation. They are so important and so fundamental; they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for things. We stand for something. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges

who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of ours is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Listen, the strength of this country is not our military. The strength of this country is not our wallets. The strength of this country is the heart and soul of the American people.

I want to be your President for 4 more years so we can continue to rally the armies of compassion, so we can help change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires strength and firm resolve. This is a time that requires courage and our willingness to lead.

Audience member. That's why we love you!

The President. None of us will ever forget that era—that week when one era ended and another one began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm. He had tears in his eyes; he was exhausted from searching through the rubble to find his friend. He said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people searching through the rubble took that day personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. No, we've come through much together. We've done hard work. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity all throughout our land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. And during the next 4 years, we'll continue to lead in the cause of freedom so the world will be a more peaceful place.

You know, 4 years ago I traveled your great State asking for the vote, and I made a pledge that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected, so help me God. And with your help, I will do so during the next 4 years.

May God bless you. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. at LeClaire Park and Bandshell. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Representative Chuck Gipp; Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Mayor Charles W. Brooke of Davenport, IA; Mayor Michael J. Freemire of Bettendorf, IA; entertainer Larry Gatlin; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks on the Conservation Reserve Program in Le Sueur, Minnesota
August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be on a farm. [*Laughter*] American farm and ranch families embody the best values of our country, don't they—love of family, love of the land, love of their country. These are good, hard-working people. Farming is what I like to call America's first industry, and that industry feeds us, and it clothes us. It's now providing more energy for us.

The success of America's farmers and ranchers is essential to the success of our country. That's why it's fitting we're here on a farm to talk about the success of America. I'm going to talk about another role that farmers play today, and that's the essential role of being good stewards of our land, and how the Federal Government can help. See, I like to tell people every day is Earth Day if you make a living off the land, because people care more about the land if the person has to make a living off the land.

And so today I'm going to talk about some initiatives where the Federal Government can help the best stewards of the land be better stewards of the land. I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate the Governor. Thank you for being here, sir. Thank you for your introduction. I particularly want to thank Mark and Shirley Katzenmeyer; they're the host family here. Little did they realize—where is Mark?

Mark Katzenmeyer. Right over here, sir.

The President. Oh, there you are. Good, you got a good seat. That's good. [*Laughter*] And Karen as well, their sweet daughter. Thanks for coming, Karen.

Guess what we talked about? Mountain biking. [*Laughter*] Mark is a mountain biker, and gosh, what a special place to mountain bike, isn't it? I'm sorry I didn't bring mine. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Katzenmeyer. You can borrow one.

The President. I could borrow one, yes. Well, I'm not that sorry. Anyway—[*Laughter*]. But I really appreciate your hospitality. Senator Norm Coleman is with us, and the Governor. We were on the same helicopter. He said, "I wonder if the Katzenmeyers really understood what was about to happen"—[*laughter*]—four choppers heading into their farm. But thanks for having us. I also want to thank your neighbors for putting up with us, and I appreciate you all coming. I want to thank Norm. He's a good friend, a fine United States Senator.

I appreciate Gil Gutknecht. And the Congressman for this area, John Kline, is with us too. Thank you both for being here. I'm honored you guys are here. I also want to thank—I want to thank Vicky, who is John's wife. I appreciate you coming, Vicky.

I thank the mayor of Le Sueur for being here. Mr. Mayor, appreciate you coming.

Mayor Bob Oberle. You're welcome.

The President. Yes, thank you. It's an honor for us to be here. I want to thank the other local officials who've come. I want to thank the conservation groups. I see some of my friends from the conservation groups, the people who want to make sure that the land is taken care of so wildlife can flourish. We're going to talk about something today that I think you'll appreciate. As a matter of fact, you've been instrumental in helping to construct the policy. I want to thank—and the farmers and ranchers who are here. It's really good to be here.

Bryan—there's Bryan. Yes, today when I landed—by the way, I always like to greet somebody in the community who is serving the community by volunteering. And Bryan Comstock is a volunteer firefighter for this part of the world. I want to thank you for being here. I told him I was a supporter of the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department. I know something about it. It's—

these volunteer fire departments are really important for rural America, and I want to thank Bryan and others who are volunteering time to help these farmers and ranchers who might get in trouble because of a sudden or instant fire.

At any rate, we—this country better appreciate our farmers and ranchers. I mean, it's—really the cornerstone of good economic policy is good farm policy, isn't it? And I'm—I appreciate the effects of the farm bill that we worked on and passed. It's a good bill. And it's making a difference. It has helped farmers because it helped them plan and operate on market realities, not based upon Government dictates. It's important any bill that deals with economics to understand the markets, and that we view the markets as important. And a market-oriented approach to farming is good, and it's working. It's making a difference for people right now.

One reason it is, is because we recognize there's a lot of consumers for American farm products outside the United States. Good farm policy is good trade policy. Listen, if you're good at something—and we're really good at growing things; we ought to be selling what we grow, not only here at home but elsewhere. I'm committed to making sure that markets are open and we're treated fairly. I like to explain trade to our people this way, that we've opened up our markets here in the United States, and it's good for consumers. We do. Think about it. When you get more products coming into the country, you can shop. You can make decisions. The more opportunities you have to decide, you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's just the way it is. That's the way the market works. We want to be treated in other countries the way we treat people here at home. That's good trade policy. And so we're opening up markets. The more markets we open up, the better it is for farmers and ranchers because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere just so long as the playing field is level.

And as a result—we also, by the way, cut taxes on our farmers and ranchers as well as everybody else who paid taxes. That helps. I like to tell people I think the people in southern Minnesota can spend their money better than the Federal Government can. Now, we'll set priorities; don't get me wrong. [*Laughter*] We got a war to win. We've got a homeland to protect. We got people to take care of that can't take of themselves. But by setting priorities, I believe that you can meet obligations and let people have more of their own money. It helps this economy grow; I'm telling you. When you got more money in your pocket, you demand an additional good or a service. And when you make that demand, somebody is going to produce it. And when somebody produces it, somebody is likely to find a job.

We also put the death tax on its way to extinction. In order to have a vibrant agricultural economy, it must be so that people can pass their farm from one generation to the next without the Federal Government getting in the way. We're going to have to make the death tax—the elimination of the death tax permanent. In order to get it out of the Congress, it's—it was a decision to say, "Okay, we're going to put it on its way to extinction," and then it comes back after 10 years. That's the way we had to get it out, which means in the year 2011, there's going to be some unusual decisions by people when the death tax comes into being. I'm pledged to eliminate it totally. I don't think it makes any sense. I don't think you ought to—[*applause*].

Anyway, we've taken action. And the productivity of our farmers are—it really means we can compete anywhere. And therefore, America's farmers have posted record net-cash farm income. I'm not talking about good—I'm talking about record. Our exports are way up. Farm equity and land values are strong. In other words, we got a good farm economy, and I intend

to keep it that way as best as I possibly can.

I'm going to talk about conserving the land. The best thing from the farm bill was the conservation title. It encouraged people to put aside lands for the right reasons: to protect the soil, protect the water, provide habitat for wildlife. The conservation title was doubled from the previous farm bill to this one. It's up to about $40 billion over a 10-year period of time. The Katzenmeyers understand it. Here's what Shirley said. She said, "You're giving back to nature when it comes to putting money—land aside for the CRP. You're giving back to nature. You're giving back something to the soil so it doesn't get depleted. All around, it's a good practice." I agree, and so do farmers all across America.

So the main reason I've asked you all to come, besides being in a beautiful part of the world, was to talk about three initiatives I think you'll find interesting; three initiatives important for our country; three initiatives which enable our farmers and sportsmen to continue their roles as citizen-stewards of the land. This initiative I think is good for the environment. It's good for the agricultural sector.

First, we're going to expand and extend the Conservation Reserve Program. The Conservation Reserve Program is the largest public-private conservation partnership in the Nation. Approximately 800,000 farmers participate in this program. In return for an annual payment from this program, farmers retire some of their land, letting it turn back to its natural state. As I told you, it's good for the soil. It's good for habitat. Interestingly enough, one of the things I like to ask is, does it work? The question we need to ask more often in Washington, DC—is it actually working? In this case, this program has helped reduce soil erosion by more than 40 percent since 1986. That is a positive development for America.

Right now we have 35 million acres of farmland in the CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program. Contracts covering roughly two-thirds of the existing land in the program are scheduled to expire in 2007 and 2008. To make sure these farmlands stay protected, I directed the Secretary of Agriculture to offer early reenrollments and extensions of existing contracts.

The farmers no longer need to worry about whether or not this—they'll be reenrolled in the program, as of this moment. You will be. We're taking action now rather than waiting so that there's certainty when it comes to planning. I'm also directing the Secretary to enroll farmers for an additional 800,000 acres of land.

Secondly, we're going to expand the conservation program to cover vital grasslands that often serve as borders of farmlands. I'm ordering the Secretary of Agriculture to help protect 250,000 acres of grasslands, which are the home of several species of birds, including the northern bobwhite quail. By expanding this program, our goal is to increase the quail population by about 750,000 birds a year.

Thirdly, we're going to expand the conservation program to cover wetlands that are not in—the CRP now covers wetlands that are in a flood plain. But if you're out of a flood plain—if your wetlands are out of a flood plain, you're not currently eligible for the program. These wetlands are what the farmers around here call "prairie potholes," and offer a home for pheasants and ducks and other birds. These prairie potholes will now be a part of the CRP, and that's good for wildlife. I'm also making available resources needed to help farmers protect 250,000 acres of such wetlands. This is part of an initiative that I outlined last Earth Day which was to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million wetland acres over the next 5 years.

Audience member. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And that's what I'm here to announce. I'm here to announce we can

do a good job of conserving nature by empowering our farmers and ranchers. I want to thank the wildlife people that are here. I want to thank you for your practical way of approaching important issues for our country. I particularly want to thank the farmers and ranchers who are here for doing what you were raised to do, which is feed us and help clothe us and, in the meantime, protect your land, which is good for the country.

I'm honored to be here. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. It's great to be in a part of the world where people work with their hands and make a living off the land.

God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Katzenmeyer family farm. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota.

Remarks in Mankato, Minnesota
August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. It's good to be in Mankato. I understand I'm the first President to have visited here since Harry Truman. I don't know what took the others so long to get here. [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm also here to ask for your help. I appreciate you coming. I understand I'm not the biggest deal in town. After all, the Vikings practice here. [*Laughter*] But it is great to be in a place where people work hard and make a living off the land, raise their families. It's what I call the heart and soul of the country. The other folks believe the heart and soul can be found in Hollywood. I think it's found right here in southern Minnesota.

I'm excited about the race. I'm looking forward to the contest. Everywhere we go, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will be reelected for 4 more years.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. I know you are too. You probably wish I had stayed at home and she was the speaker. [*Laughter*] She is a great wife, a fantastic mother, and a wonderful First Lady for our country. Today I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Admittedly, he's not the prettiest Vice Presidential candidate in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his sound advice.

I'm proud to be with Norm Coleman. He's doing a fine job as a United States Senator. And I'm proud of the job Governor Pawlenty is doing as well. He's a good man. Plus, I appreciate working with Congressman Gutknecht and Congressman Kline, two really fine people, as well. I appreciate you guys being here. Thank you.

I want to thank all the State people who are here and the local people who have come out. Thanks for being here today. I particularly want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. These are the folks who go out and get people to register to vote. Let me tell you something, here's what I believe: I believe all of us have a duty in our country to vote. We have a duty to exercise our right as free citizens. I want

to thank you for registering people and encouraging them to vote. Don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents. Get them to the polls, and when you get them headed our way, make sure they—give them a little nudge toward the Bush-Cheney ticket.

We came close in Minnesota last time. This time, we're going to win it. Every incumbent who asks for your vote has got to answer one central question, and that's why—why should the American people give me the high privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years. In the past few years, we've done a lot, and we've come through a lot together. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake in this election. We have much more to do to move America forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer, to make our economy stronger, and to make the future brighter and better for every single citizen.

From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and we have more to do. We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that not one single child is left behind in our country. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we've challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We trust the local folks to run the schools of America. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we are turning the corner, and we're not going back.

We have more to do. Listen, this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills. So that's why we need to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science education so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence they need to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. We got the job done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real and meaningful savings. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

You see, when we reformed Medicare, we did so with rural hospitals in mind as well. We provided more funds to hospitals handling low volumes of patients. We increased payments for ambulance providers and suppliers in rural areas. We're giving better bonuses to physicians so we can keep good doctors practicing in rural America. We made a difference for the older citizens of this country, and we made a difference for those who seek health care in rural America.

To help people get access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

Listen, most Americans get health care coverage through their work. But most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to

provide health care. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

To improve health care, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive good doctors out of medicine. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice, and on behalf of the patients and doctors of America, I will continue to urge Congress to pass medical liability reform.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and to prevent health care mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make sure our economy is stronger. Listen, we've come through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through terror attacks. We've been through a market decline. Listen—and we've overcome the obstacles. We've got great workers in America, is one reason we've overcome them. We've got great entrepreneurs. We've got great farmers and great ranchers in this country.

We've also overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts. Listen, when we cut the taxes, we didn't pick winners or losers. We said if you pay Federal income taxes, you get tax relief. Families with children got tax relief. Married couples got tax relief. It's an amazing Tax Code where we say we're going to have a marriage penalty. Why do we want to penalize marriage? We need to encourage marriage in the country.

A lot of the tax relief went to help small businesses, and the small-business sector of our economy is strong today. We promised all this. We delivered, and this time the check was actually in the mail. Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Minnesota has added 32,000 jobs over the past year. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in this State is now 4.4 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for America's workers, we've turned the corner, and we're not turning back.

I also told the people when I was running for President the last time, I said, "I understand the need to have a healthy farm economy." A good farm economy is good for the American economy. We passed a good farm bill. We're phasing out the death tax so farmers can pass their land from one generation to the next.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to make sure our farm economy is strong. And one way to make sure the farm economy is strong is to open up markets for Minnesota farm products. We want you selling your soybeans all around the world. We want you selling your corn all around the world. We want to be selling that Minnesota beef and hogs all around the world.

In order to make sure jobs stay here at home, we've got to have an energy strategy. See, we need to be better at conserving things, and we've got to be exploring for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. But for the sake of energy security, for the sake of economic security, we need more ethanol and biodiesel. I envision a day where sometime, somebody walks in and says, "Well, Mr. President, you'll be happy to hear the corn crop is up and we're growing more soybeans in America, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of oil as a result of it."

And when you're out gathering the vote, remind the folks that in the last 3 years American farmers have posted record net-cash farm income, record exports, and

record farm equity and land values. Our farm program is working.

Listen, we can do more to keep jobs here. You know, I'm sure the small-business owners will tell you they've got to fill out a lot of paperwork. I can't guarantee whether Government has read it or not. [*Laughter*] We need less regulation. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need tort reform. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure American workers have a lifetime of learning, and we've got to help them training—help them have training for the jobs of the 21st century. And a good place to start is at our community colleges.

And you know what else we need? We need to make sure that American families have something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with their kids, time to go to the Little League game or work in a Girl Scout troop, time to take care of an elderly parent, time to go to class to improve themselves. And that's why I think Congress ought to pass comp-time and flex-time rules.

In other words, what I'm telling you is Government needs to stand side by side with families. After 4 more years, this economy is going to be strong, more people will be working with better jobs. After 4 more years, there will be more small-business owners. After 4 more years, our farmers are going to be doing better. You know why? Because we've got a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agricultural economic agenda.

We've got to do more to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch. The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we've changed the world.

Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers who set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Today, Afghanistan is a firm ally in the war against terror. And today, many young girls go to school for the first time. Afghanistan is free, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against Al Qaida. Pakistani forces are helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money; they were recruiting; they were operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. Remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots which were enforcing the world's sanctions. The tyrant had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He'd harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. And he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th is that America must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant

who hated America, had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share the capability of those weapons with terrorist enemy. In other words, we saw a threat. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence and unanimously demanded that Saddam Hussein disclose, destroy weapons or weapons programs, or face serious consequences. The world spoke.

After 12 years of defiance, after 12 years of ignoring the demands of the free world, he once again refused to comply. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the weapons inspectors. So I had a choice to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman who is a sworn enemy of this country, or take action necessary to defend our people. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell, the Iraqi people are free, and America and the world are safer.

We have more to do. I'm seeking the office for 4 more years because I know we have more to do. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage them so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help defeat the enemies of freedom. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations in Iraq, and over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends in the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other nations.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become democratic, free, and, therefore, peaceful societies. These two nations are now governed by strong people, people who are willing to listen to the hopes and aspirations of the people. You know what the hopes and aspirations of mothers and dads are in Iraq and Afghanistan? They want their children to grow up in a peaceful world just like in—American moms and dads do. They want there to be hope for their kids. They want them to be able to realize their dreams. These leaders understand that. More and more Iraqis are now stepping up to defend the peace, to defend their freedom.

And my message to those people is that they can count on continued help from America and our coalition. You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to help set them on the road to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. First, I want to thank all the veterans who are here. I appreciate the example you've set for our troops today. I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our Nation's uniform. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

We owe our troops best pay, best training, best possible equipment. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream

minority of 12 senators voted against that help. Two of those twelve are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how my opponent tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That doesn't sound the way they talk here in southern Minnesota. I suspect the people around here, when they say something, they mean it. Now my opponent is offering a different explanation. He said he was proud he voted against it, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving a basic understanding of our country, a basic value of America. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running for 4 more years because I understand we have more to do to protect America. See, there are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting to harm us. Those who claim that America's war on terror, our efforts to defend ourselves, is to blame for terrorist threats against the United States have a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy we face. The 9/11 Commission said America homeland is safe, but—safer, but we're not yet safe. I agree. There's more to do here at home.

Immediately after September the 11th, we started the hard process of reform. We transformed our defenses and created the Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which was necessary to give law enforcement the tools necessary to defend the American people. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're already taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. And they did good work, and I thank them for their work.

We've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, and to dramatically improve our intelligence gathering capability. That's why, this week, I called on Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director, so that one person is in charge of coordinating all intelligence overseas and here at home. These reforms are not going to be easy, particularly in Washington. [*Laughter*] Reform is never easy there. See, there's a lot of entrenched interests that love to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get it done.

And that's what we have done. When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for all our children, we got the job done. Results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to having a strong farm economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

We live in an exciting time. It's a time of change. But we ought to make sure Government responds to these times by standing side by side with people. You know how I think the best way to do that is

to promote ownership society. You see, if you're a worker and you're changing jobs, you've got to be able to own your own health care plan so you can take it from job to job. We want people to own their own home in America. We want people to be able to say, "Welcome to my house. This is my piece of property." And more and more are, under this administration. We want younger workers to be able to own a Social Security personal retirement account they call their own, so they can pass it on to future generations. We want tax policy such that younger Americans can own their own farm. We want people owning their own small business. We understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, this world is changing, but there are some things that aren't going to change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose must not change, our families, and our schools, and our religious congregation. These institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, our culture is changing from one that 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're 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 that child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education here in this community, do something about it. You're responsible for taking action. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

In a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved yourself. I understand that the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people. I'm seeking 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion so we can help change our country, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. We need firm resolve, clear vision, a willingness to lead. And none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. I remember workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I'll never forget the guy that grabbed me by the arm—I don't remember if he was a firefighter or a policeman. I do know he had been in the rubble searching for a loved one. His eyes were bloodshot. He said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took it personally. Folks searching the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've done hard work. During the next 4 years, there's more to do, more to spread ownership and opportunity for every corner of this country—I mean every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. During the next 4

years, we'll lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace.

When I was campaigning in your great State in 2000, I said if you honored me with the great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected, so help me God. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at Southern Minnesota Construction Co., quarry. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005
August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated.

America and our allies are fighting a new kind of war against a different kind of enemy. This conflict places great demands on the men and women of our Armed Forces, including our Guard and Reserve. They have met every test. They've risen to every challenge.

The war also places demands on those of us in Government. We took an oath to protect our country. We have a solemn responsibility to support the service men and women who defend us in the field of battle. The Defense appropriations bill I will sign today commits $391 billion toward meeting that responsibility. With this legislation, America's military will know that their country stands behind them as they fight for our freedom and as they spread the peace. No enemy or friend can doubt that America has the resources to prevail, and we will.

I want to thank the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, for his steadfast and strong leadership of our Pentagon. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. Thank you, sir.

The President. I appreciate Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz for joining us today. I appreciate the other members of the Pentagon team who are here. I appreciate Jim Roche and Les Brownlee representing the Air Force and the Army. General Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, is with us. I appreciate the Chairman. I want to thank all the military generals who are here, who run their respective branches of the services. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for your leadership.

I appreciate Senator John Warner representing the United States Congress. Senator Warner is a strong leader when it comes to matters of defense. He's the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. This bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. I want thank you for that, sir.

America's military is fighting in many theaters, yet always for the same cause. We seek to preserve freedom and peace for ourselves and for our friends.

In the last 3 years, our military men and women have struck a series of decisive blows against the enemy. They have relentlessly attacked the Al Qaida network. They've killed or captured many of its leaders. They've destroyed its terror camps. We're disrupting its plans. We're doing our duty.

We've ended regimes in Kabul and Baghdad that supported and harbored terrorists and threatened America. They have helped to launch the nations of Iraq and Afghanistan on the path to lasting democracy and liberty. They have helped friendly nations build the strength and institutions necessary to fight terror. At this hour, our troops are staying on the offensive against Al Qaida. We're taking the fight to the enemies, those who can't stand the thought of a free Iraq and free Afghanistan. Our troops are making America safer, and we're grateful for their sacrifices.

These great achievements have come at a cost of human life and grief. America is grateful for the families of those who mourn a loved one. We will honor their memory by completing the mission and making the world a more peaceful place. We have made a commitment to the men and women of our Armed Forces. We will support them. We will provide them fair pay and good treatment. We will continue to ensure they have the tools they need to defeat the enemies of today. We will develop the weapons and systems to meet the threats of tomorrow.

The bill meets these commitments: first, by providing more than $103 billion to the greatest source of American strength, our servicepeople and their families. This appropriation is the fourth of my administration to include a pay raise for our troops. This year's raise of 3.5 percent brings the total pay raise over the last 4 years to nearly 21 percent. This money is well earned, well deserved, and well spent. The bill also fulfills my pledge to eliminate the costs that too many servicepeople have had to pay for off-base housing. It's a real boost to the quality of life for our military families. The excellence and professionalism of an all-volunteer force has never been higher. America must do all we can to encourage these special Americans to stay in uniform. And that starts with taking care of their families.

Second, this bill meets our commitments by making sure that our Armed Forces have every tool they need to meet and defeat the threats of our time. This bill provides $25 billion in emergency appropriations to support current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the frontlines in the war on terror. This money will buy more armored Humvees, more ammunition, more fuel, more spare parts. It will upgrade our helicopters with the latest equipment, allowing them to fly more safely in the dangerous theaters.

This bill helps America maintain the peace around the world and keep our commitments to our allies. It funds construction of three new state-of-the-art guided missile destroyers to patrol the seas, 42 new F/A–18 fighter aircraft to guard the skies. It provides $4 billion for new C–17 strategic air lifters, which will increase our ability to move forces quickly over long distances. And $200 million will buy more Predator unmanned surveillance aircraft to track and hunt our enemies.

This bill provides $10 billion for systems to defend against the threat from ballistic missiles. Later this year, the first components of America's missile defense system will become operational. This will fulfill a pledge I made to the American people more than 4 years ago. America and our allies face a deadly threat from ballistic missiles armed with the world's most dangerous weapons. And we will deploy the technologies necessary to protect our people.

Recent history has shown that threats to our shores can emerge from failing states half a world away. By acting early to end a crisis, we can make our world safer. That's why this bill provides $95 million to help the people of Darfur in western Sudan. Brutal militias there are causing human suffering on an immense scale. The

new funding will provide famine relief, assistance for refugees, and other humanitarian aid. Yet no amount of aid can substitute for true and lasting peace. The Government of Sudan must stop the violence of Janjaweed militias, and all parties must respect the cease-fire and allow the free movement of humanitarian workers and supplies.

Third, this bill meets our commitment to America's Armed Forces by preparing them to meet the threats of tomorrow. Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we. We must never stop thinking about how best to defend our country when we all must always be forward-thinking.

Over the past few years, new ideas and new technologies have increased the precision of our weapons, reduced battlefield casualties, and lessened the toll of war on innocent life. This bill continues that progress by funding the technologies that are changing the way we fight wars in order to keep the peace, technology such as the Army's Future Combat System, which will give every soldier precise tactical information in the heat of battle; the Littoral Combat Ship, which will increase the reach of our Navy into hostile shores and waterways; the versatile and cost-effective Joint Strike Fighter; and wideband satellite laser communications that will improve the ability of our forces to communicate over great distances.

I appreciate the solid and bipartisan support of this bill. I appreciate both people—people of both parties coming together to support our troops. We're doing our duty to the people who are out doing their duty to defend us and make the world a more peaceful place. The message is clear: In a time of conflict and challenge, America stands behind our military.

By taking care of our servicepeople in uniform, by addressing the threats of today, by preparing for the threats of a tomorrow, this bill will help make America a safer place.

And so I'm pleased to sign the Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Statement on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

August 5, 2004

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4613, the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005." The bill provides funds to pursue the war on terror, advance other United States interests around the globe, and support our Armed Forces.

Sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 of the Act prohibit the use of funds to initiate a special access program, a new overseas installation, or a new start program, unless the congressional defense committees receive advance notice. The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that the President's authority to classify and control access to information bearing on the national security flows from the Constitution and does not depend upon a legislative grant of authority. Although the advance notice contemplated by sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 can be provided in most situations as a matter of comity, situations may arise, especially in wartime, in which the President must act promptly under his constitutional grants of executive power and

authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces while protecting certain extraordinarily sensitive national security information. The executive branch shall construe sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

Section 8064 of the Act provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds available to the Department of Defense for FY 2005 may be used to transfer defense articles or services, other than intelligence services, to another nation or an international organization for international peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or humanitarian assistance operations, until 15 days after the executive branch notifies 6 committees of the Congress of the planned transfer. To the extent that protection of the U.S. Armed Forces deployed for international peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or humanitarian assistance operations might require action of a kind covered by section 8064 sooner than 15 days after notification, the executive branch shall construe section 8064 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief.

A proviso in the Act's appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide" purports to prohibit planning for consolidation of certain offices within the Department of Defense. Also, sections 8010(b), 8036, 8041(b), 8110, and 8116 purport to specify the content of a portion of a future budget request to the Congress for the Department. The executive branch shall construe these provisions relating to planning and making of budget recommendations in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to require the opinions of the heads of departments and to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

Section 8005 of the Act relating to requests to congressional committees for reprogramming of funds shall be construed as calling solely for notification, as any other construction would be inconsistent with the principles enunciated by the Supreme Court of the United States in *INS v. Chadha*.

A proviso within the appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Air Force" earmarks funds for a grant to a college for the purpose of funding minority aviation training, a proviso within the appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide" earmarks funds for a program for Asian American/Pacific Islander students, and sections 8014 and 8021 of the Act grant contracting-related exceptions or preferences to Native Hawaiian organizations. The executive branch shall implement the provisos and sections 8014 and 8021 in a manner consistent with the requirement to afford equal protection of the laws under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

The executive branch shall construe section 8101 of the Act, which purports to prohibit alteration of command responsibility or permanent assignment of forces until 270 days after submission of a plan for such alteration to the congressional defense committees, as advisory, as any other construction would be inconsistent with the constitutional grant to the President of the authority of Commander in Chief. Also, the executive branch shall construe section 8124, relating to integration of foreign intelligence information, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief, including for the conduct of intelligence operations, and to supervise the unitary executive branch. Finally, the Executive Branch shall construe section 12001, which purports to assign the Secretary of Defense the duty to negotiate with a foreign country, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, which includes the authority to determine who shall negotiate for the

United States under the President's direction with a foreign country.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
August 5, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the Designation of Emergency Funds in the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

August 5, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I hereby concur with the Congress in the designation of $25.856 billion provided as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2005 (H.R. 4613), as an emergency requirement.

These funds are necessary to support Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, the Department of State's Mission in Iraq, State and local law enforcement assistance for security and related costs associated with the 2004 Presidential Candidate Nominating Conventions, the Judiciary, and to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the attached letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Remarks in a Discussion in Columbus, Ohio

August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you all. That's what I'm here asking for, for 4 more years. Yes, I'm traveling our country—coming to Ohio a lot, by the way. I think you have to ask for the vote, and that's what I'm here doing. I want your vote and want your help.

I want to thank those of you who are involved with grassroots politics, the people who are helping to register the voters and the people who are going to be asking the voters to do their duty in democracy and go to the polls. I appreciate your work. And by the way, when you get them headed to the polls, kind of nudge them our way.

There's more to do for this country. That's what I want to talk about. We've got an unusual way of talking about the agenda for the future today. I want to share some thoughts with you. We've got some citizens from the Columbus area who are going to talk about some of the ideas that we're going to use to make America a compassionate place, a better place. And then I'll be glad to answer some of your questions.

First, let me tell you I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's got a valid excuse. Governor Bush's oldest son—that would be my youngest brother—oldest son is getting married. [*Applause*] Yes. And she's there

early. I'm going late, because I'm working. [*Laughter*] But she is a wonderful wife, a loving mother, and a great First Lady. I'm really proud of her. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

I was hoping she would come with me because I wanted her to come to the site where my grandfather was raised. I don't know if you know that or not—there you go—Grandfather Bush, raised right here in Columbus, Ohio. You know how we are in the political arena; we're always trying to find a local peg—[*laughter*]. I've got one here. [*Laughter*] And my family is better off having those Ohio roots in our background.

I also picked a good man to run with. I admit it, Dick Cheney is not the prettiest candidate in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because he knows what he's doing. He's a sound man with good judgment.

Before we get started here, I do want to thank my friend your Governor, Bob Taft, for joining me today. Thanks for coming, Governor. Appreciate your service. I've known him for quite a while. We were both Governors together, and we're both members of the famous father club.

I appreciate Congressman Pat Tiberi. He's from this area; he's doing a fine job. Who you got there? Tiberi tells me coming in that this is his daughter's first political speech. So when she starts dozing off, you know the reason why: I've been going on too long. But I appreciate the congressman coming. Thank you. I also appreciate my friend Deborah Pryce, Congresswoman Pryce, for being here too.

Governor Jennette Bradley is with us. She's a good friend of mine. I appreciate her service to the State. Thank you, Jennette.

I want to thank Doug Preisse, who emceed the event. He's also head of the grassroots. He's what we call the party chairman. That's the person in charge of making sure people who want to help have an opportunity to help to find the vote and turn people out to vote.

I want to thank my friend Bernie Kosar. I reminded him that the Dallas Cowboys are going to be starting a 40-year-old quarterback this year. It's not too late, Bernie. [*Laughter*] He got his ring, he said; he doesn't want another one. But I really appreciate you coming. Thank you all for being here.

Today I met a fellow named Jack Lehr. He's a soldier in the army of compassion. That means he's a person who is taking time out of his life to volunteer to help people. Jack has been involved with tutoring people in GED preparation programs. That means he's a mentor, see. Jack has taken time out of his life to help somebody who needs some help.

One of the reasons I'm running—where are you, Jack? Oh, there he is. Thanks for coming out at the airport. I appreciate you. He's also involved with Hospice. I know a lot of you are doing the same thing in your lives: You're coaching Little League; or you're involved with Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts; or you're feeding the hungry; or you're finding shelter for the homeless. All of you are soldiers in the army of compassion. And one of the reasons I'm seeking the office for 4 more years is to continue to call upon our fellow citizens to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. See, that means I understand the strength of our country is the heart and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America, and we can change America one soul at a time by encouraging people to spread something Government cannot spread, which is love.

One of the most important initiatives of this administration is what is called the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, that allows faith-based programs—people from all faiths—to access Federal monies to help them do their job of spreading love and compassion. If you're an addict, if you're

hooked on drugs or alcohol, sometimes government counseling can work. But sometimes it requires a change of heart in order to change habit. There are people who are empowered to change hearts in our society—not by Government, by a higher calling. And therefore, Government ought to welcome these works of compassion and healing.

I know we can change America for the better by calling on those who are change agents, those who are willing to put an arm around somebody who needs love and say, "I love you, brother. I love you, sister. What can I do to help you have a better life here in America?"

I'm running—I'm asking for your vote again, and I'm running because there's more to do to keep this country safer. You know, it's very important that we never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. I know I won't; I know many of you will never forget it, either.

Audience member. We'll never forget.

The President. There you go. Let me share with you some of the lessons that I remember. One, we're facing an enemy which has no heart, no compassion. And that puts them at an advantage, in a way, because we're a country of heart and compassion. See, these are ideological extremists who are willing to use terror to affect the conscience of the free world. They're willing to try to have their way by wanton destruction of innocent life. That stands the opposite of what America stands for, isn't it? We don't believe in that, yet they do. They're trying to shake our will and our confidence. One of the lessons of September the 11th is we face deadly foe who will kill on a moment's notice to try to shake our confidence and our will.

The second lesson of September the 11th is, is that in order to protect ourselves—and that's my most solemn duty, is to protect the American people—and by the way, it's the solemn duty of first-responders all across our country; it's the solemn duty of those who wear our uniform. There's a lot of people who understand the seriousness of the job and the responsibilities we have. We're lucky to have a nation of so many responsible citizens who are willing to work hard to defend our homeland.

The second lesson is, though, that in order to defend the homeland, we've got to be on the offense. We must deal with those people overseas so we don't have to face them here at home, and that's what we're doing. We've got a lot of fine troops out there. We've got other nations working with us to bring people to justice. And we're making progress, slowly but surely making progress. This is a different kind of war. Sometimes you'll see action; sometimes you won't. We're chasing people down in caves, in the dark recesses of the world. About two-thirds of the known Al Qaida leadership has been brought to justice, and we're safer for it.

Another lesson of September the 11th is, in order to be able to defend ourselves, we've got to say to people who are willing to harbor a terrorist or feed a terrorist, "You're just as guilty as the terrorist." And let me tell you something about leadership and about being the American President. If you say something, you'd better mean it. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And when I said to the Taliban—those are the folks running Afghanistan—"Give up your evil ways or face the consequences," I meant it. They ignored us, and they paid the price. They're no longer in power, no longer can Al Qaida use Afghanistan as a safe haven for training. Remember, thousands of people were trained in Afghanistan and then dispersed throughout the world, some of whom came here to inflict great harm on our people. The world is better off and America is safer because of the actions we have taken in Afghanistan.

Think about this: Afghanistan is going to hold elections this fall. It's amazing, isn't it, when you think about it. What a change—what a change in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Listen, it wasn't but 3 years ago or so that these

people lived under the clutches of one of the most brutal groups of people known to mankind, the Taliban. They wouldn't let young girls go to school in Afghanistan. They were so backward, their vision was so dim, that if you dared express an opinion that they didn't agree with, you were in trouble.

You know, I was in Cleveland the other day, and we went to the International Children's Games kickoff, and guess who was there—a girls soccer team from Afghanistan, right here in America. What I'm saying is, Afghanistan is a better place. They're an emerging democracy. Over 8 million people have registered to vote. They're an ally in the war on terror. And the world is better off because young girls and moms and dads have a chance to realize their ambitions for their families, not the ambitions of backward, barbaric people like the Taliban.

We've taken the lead in the world, and the world has changed for the better. Just think about Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan, for a minute. Because of our leadership and work with the Pakistan authorities, Al Qaida is now on the run in Pakistan. We've got an ally in the war on terror with President Musharraf. No, this world is getting better off.

A very important lesson of September the 11th, one this Nation must never forget, is that when we see threats, we must deal with them before they fully materialize. That's one of the vital lessons of that fateful day. See, with these people—remember, I described what they're like—you cannot negotiate with them; you cannot hope for the best. I like to say therapy doesn't work. [*Laughter*] They made up their minds—they made up their minds to inflict terrible harm on those who disagree with them.

That's why people who say that because we've been on the offense to protect America, we've created more enemies than before, just don't understand the war on terror. They do not understand. These were people plotting prior to us taking action around the world. These are people who look for weakness in the free world. These are people who are willing to exploit fear in the free world. And the United States of America will stand strong and resolute in the face of this new challenge.

Another lesson of September the 11th: I said if we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. We saw a threat in Iraq. And let me tell you why. Not only the intelligence say there was a threat there, but we remembered the history of the man. He was a sworn enemy of America. Terrorists were able to—and terrorist networks were able to operate in and out of his country. Remember Abu Nidal? He was the guy that killed the man, an American citizen, because he was Jewish. His network was there inside of Iraq. Zarqawi, who's still is running around in Iraq—his network was in Iraq. He is a—Saddam was a fellow who paid the families of suicide bombers. That's one of the—suiciding to kill innocent people as an act of terror. He paid the families as an incentive to do so. He had used weapons of mass destruction. Remember that? He had used them on his own people. He had used them against countries in his neighborhood. He was a source of instability. He was a threat, and we saw him as a threat.

Now, the United States Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at, the exact same intelligence, and came to the same conclusion. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations—remember I went to the U.N. and said, "You have forever condemned him. You've told him to get rid of his weapons, yet nothing has happened, so let's try her one more time." And the United Nations looked at the intelligence, saw a threat, and passed a resolution 15 to nothing. That was what the Security Council said. They said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

And so the world spoke, and again he defied us. And not only did he defy us, he systematically deceived the inspectors. You remember the period of time; we said, "Well, let's give the inspectors the chance to work." We agreed, until we found out he was deceiving them. What he was trying to do was buy time. Why? Because he wanted to reconstitute a weapons program. He wanted to make sure he had the capacity to make weapons. And if he had any, like we thought he did, he didn't want anybody to find them, that's why. I had a choice to make then: forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman; or take action to defend our country. Every time, I will defend America.

We are safer—we are safer and the world is better off because Saddam is sitting in a prison cell. I want to share something with you. Committing troops into harm's way is—in harm's way is the most difficult decision a President can make. That decision must always be last resort. That decision must be done when our vital interests are at stake, but after we've tried everything else. There must be a compelling national need to put our troops into harm's way. I felt that. I felt we had a compelling national need. I know we had tried diplomacy. I knew that diplomacy at this point couldn't possibly work because he had no intention of listening to demands of the free world. And when you put your troops in harm's way, they better have the best—the best equipment, the best support, and the best possible pay.

That's why I went to the Congress and said—last September—said we need more money for our troops, $87 billion more money. Some of it was for reconstruction; most of it was for the troops, over $60 billion for the troops—Humvees, spare parts, body armor, the things necessary that you would want. If you are a mom or dad—we probably got a mom or dad here whose child is in Iraq—you want your son or daughter to have the best. [*Applause*] Thank you, appreciate you.

There were two Senators—there were 12 Senators who voted against more funding for the troops, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I don't know if you heard the explanation. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That's not the way most folks speak in Ohio. As the Commander in Chief, I'll see to it our troops have the best—the best possible pay, the best possible training, the best possible equipment to defend the United States of America. [*Applause*] Thank you all. By the way, I know we've got some veterans here. Thanks for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniform today. I appreciate your service.

The world is changing. This is an historic times. Freedom equals peace. Listen, we've done the hard work, and there's more hard work to do. But I want you to know that we're headed for a peaceful world. That's my hope. My hope is that young children can grow up in a peaceful world. My hope is that we never have to live another day like we did on September the 11th.

And you achieve peace by spreading freedom. That's what America believes. And that's hard work. Free nations are peaceful nations. Free nations, nations that listen to the aspirations of their people, are nations in which it's hard to recruit people willing to kill themselves for a radical philosophy. That's what Americans believe. We believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

And therefore, our strategy for peace is to do everything we can to protect the homeland by being on the offense against an enemy. But it's also to spread liberty. These are historic times. That's why it's vital we stand with those who love freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, it's not easy to be a free society in a place like Iraq; it's just not. You can understand why. These people were brutalized. There were

mass graves of thousands of—of a thousand citizens.

I'll tell you an interesting story, and it's one that touched my heart. Seven people came to the Oval Office, seven Iraqi men. Walking in that Oval Office, by the way, is a pretty interesting experience—the kind of place people stand outside and say, "When I get in, I'm going to tell him whatfor." And they walk in, they get overwhelmed by the Oval Office, say, "Man, you're looking good, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

These people came in, and they said, "Liberator." I said, "You don't need to thank me; you need to thank the American people. You need to thank the mothers and fathers of those, and the husbands and wives of those, who served to free you." They had something in common besides being Iraqi men; all of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. That's the society that we've liberated. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed a scapegoat. So he found seven small-business men. For example, one of them was a jeweler, and he told me, he said, "I sold dinars to buy"—I think he said euros—"to buy gold so I could make a watch." And so what they were looking for, the authority, Saddam and his thugs, were looking for people who sold dinars that caused the currency to be devalued at that particular moment. They put them in prison, and he cut off their right hands and burned an X in their forehead. So in come seven guys who have got an X in their forehead. The good news is that they had been discovered by an American named Marvin Zindler from Houston, and he had a foundation to help people from around the world. They flew them into Houston. These seven guys had new hands, new prosthesis.

A guy took my Sharpie, wrapped his new fingers, and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. What a contrast—what a contrast in societies: On the one hand, a society that was so brutalized by a dictator that he could just say, "I'm going to cut off their hands," to a society which says, "We want to heal you, no matter who you are, no matter your religion, no matter where you're from." We believe in human dignity and human rights in the United States of America.

There's good people now running those countries, Karzai and Allawi. These are tough guys. Allawi, I'm told, woke up one night in London to a axe-wielding group of men that had been sent by Saddam Hussein to kill him with an axe. He got away from the axe-wielding thugs severely wounded. In other words, this guy has seen the worst of tyranny, and now he's leading the country. He believes in a free Iraq. He believes in a self-governing Iraq. He believes in listening to the aspirations of the people. And he's plenty tough to do the job.

And so we've got to stand with these people, see, because, you know what, a free world—a free Iraq in a part of the world that's desperate for freedom is an historic opportunity. Maybe I can put it to you best this way: You know, my dad, I'm sure some of your dads, fought in World War II against Japan. And right after World War II, there was a movement to rebuild Japan so it would be a self-governing nation. Some doubted whether that was possible. Some people in our country, they said, "Why are you wasting your time? Why worry about a self-governing Japan?" Fortunately, there were some optimists, some people who believed in the power of liberty to change societies and lives who stood the line and finally succeeded. We succeeded in helping Japan self-govern.

So I'm having Kobe beef one night with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan and a good friend of mine. We're talking about how to keep the peace. We're talking about how to deal with Mr. Kim Chong-il of North Korea—people are starving, by the way, and who wants to try to blackmail the free world with a nuclear weapon. And here we are

talking about peace. That's what we're talking about. See, free societies are peaceful societies. Someday, an American President will be talking to a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, and America will be better for it.

And the people of Iraq are watching carefully right now. Are we going to be a country of our word? When we say we believe people should be free, are we willing to stand by our word? Or are we going to go timid and weary and afraid of the barbaric behavior of a few? I want to be your President for 4 more years because I believe that freedom can change the world and the world will be more peaceful.

A couple of other—[*applause*]. Thank you all. Let me talk about domestic policies. And then we're going to call on some of our—some of your citizens to help me make some points. First of all, when I came to Washington, I said we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. That means the attitude that some kids can't learn; therefore, let's just shuffle them through the school. You know what I'm talking about. And people got shuffled from grade to grade, and society woke up, said, "Oh, what happened?" Well, what happened was, was that we didn't set high expectations and we never measured, really. We never—you see, if you believe a child can read, then you want to know whether that child is reading. And you want to know early, before it's too late. And when you can figure out whether a child is not reading early, it gives you a chance to correct the problems so that no child is left behind. That's why we called it the No Child Left Behind Act.

And we made good progress. There is more to do. That's what I'm here to tell you. There's more to do. We need intensive reading programs for junior high kids. We need to make sure that they've got the basic education as they head to high school. We must make sure that the Internet is in classrooms so that the free flow of information is vibrant and well. The broadbrand technology initiative of mine is essential to making sure information flows into our schools. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something.

There's more work to do. We want to make sure the community colleges are vibrant. We're about to talk to one of your citizens who has gone back to school, after years, to upgrade her skill level. If we want them to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure our kids are educated so they can compete. And we've got to make sure people have got the capacity to retrain for the jobs which exist. You've got jobs here.

Listen, I understand something about the job base in Ohio. I know people are nervous. People are skittish. But there's jobs being created, and we're going to talk to a job creator here as well. But one of the ways to make sure jobs stay here is that we train people for the jobs which actually exist. And we're going to talk to one of your citizens here pretty quick—or two citizens, actually, that are involved with work training.

Health care is an issue in this campaign—how do we keep it affordable and available. We've made some good progress in health care. We've expanded what's called community health centers. Those are for low-income Americans to get help with primary care so they're not getting help in your emergency rooms. One way to hold down costs—which I think is the crux of much of the problems; health care costs too much—is to provide care for people who can't afford health care in a cost-effective manner. And we're doing that by expanding community health centers.

We've got to make sure that small-business owners have the capacity to pool risk. See, most people who are working uninsured work for small businesses. And small businesses must be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries—associated health plans, they're called—so they get the same purchasing power as big companies

do in order to make sure there is health insurance available for employees.

We want to make sure there's health savings accounts available for people. We're going to talk to a new purchaser of a health savings account. You've probably heard of them, aren't sure what they mean. You're about to learn what they are. They are wonderful ways for people to save money, to make sure that the person or the family is in charge of their own health care decisions so that bureaucrats aren't making the decisions for people. And there are ways to save money. You'll hear—[*laughter*]—you'll like it. [*Laughter*]

We strengthened Medicare. Think back, now. You know, President after President, candidate after candidate said, "Elect me; I'll do something about Medicare." I got the job done, along with Congress. Medicare is better off. Four million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards. If you haven't, if you're eligible, sign up for one. You'll save money when it comes to purchasing prescription drugs. Next year, we're going to actually start screening seniors. Doesn't that make sense, to have a health care system that says let's screen you first so we can detect problems early, before they're too late. That was never a part of Medicare. Thanks to the reforms we worked together on, it's now an essential part and will save taxpayers money.

In 2006, prescription drugs will become available for the first time in Medicare, and seniors will have more choices. Seniors will be able to design the health care plan that meets their needs. That's never been a part of Medicare. And here's how you save money. Medicare would pay for the $100,000 or so heart operation. Medicare would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart condition from happening in the first place. See, you spend $2,000 of drugs to save the Government $100,000 of operating expenses. Inherent in my philosophy for health care is we want the patient and the doctor to be central to the decisionmaking process in health care, not Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Finally, let me tell you one other thing about health care. One reason your health care costs are going up, and one reason doctors are nervous and many doctors are leaving the practice of medicine is because of junk and frivolous lawsuits. See, you can't be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose, see. I think those of us in public life have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC, to help our patients and doctors.

A couple of other points. We've been through a lot. Ohio has been through a lot. Listen, when you go through a recession, corporate scandal, emergency, and war, you've been through a lot in a quick period of time, if you really think about it. Think about what we have been through as an economy and as a nation, and yet we're strong. You know why? We've got great workers. We've got the most productive workforce in the world. We've got great entrepreneurs. We've got wonderful farmers and ranchers. In other words, we've got good people in this country that are willing to work together to overcome obstacles. But Government can help.

I think one of the reasons why our economy is strong and getting stronger is because of tax relief. Remember what the tax relief was like. If you're a mother or a dad, you've got a child, you got—your child credit went up to 1,000. If you're married, we did something about the marriage penalty. I like to remind people, it's a different kind of Tax Code, isn't it, that says we'll penalize marriage. [*Laughter*] That's not what we believe. We ought to be strengthening marriage in America, not penalizing marriage.

A lot of the relief—a lot of the tax relief—also remember, when you're out there gathering the vote, what I'm trying to do is arm you up to get ready to convince

the undecideds. [*Laughter*] Just remember this: When we were for tax relief, we said if you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. In other words, we didn't try to play favorites. If you're going to have tax relief, the fairest way to do it, at Government, is to say, "If you pay taxes, you get relief." And it's working.

Part of the tax relief plan that's really important is the small-business tax relief. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Therefore, it makes sense to cut taxes on small businesses, doesn't it? Actually, I'll answer my own question: It only makes sense to cut taxes on small businesses if you understand the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish.

Let me make one other point on the small-business tax relief, so everybody understands it. Most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. Now, what that means is they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And so when you hear me talking about cutting individual income taxes, you've got to be thinking about the small businesses that are getting relief as well. See, one of the cornerstones of the economic recovery package, the economic stimulus package, was letting small businesses keep more money, which means it's more likely they're going to stay in business or more likely to hire somebody. It also encouraged small businesses to buy capital goods. We'll talk about a capital good purchaser here in a minute.

And so the economy is strong. There's more work to do. But remember, we created 1.5 million new jobs in the last year. Ohio's unemployment rate is 5.8 percent. It's getting better, is what I'm telling you—5.8 percent is good; we can do better. I'll tell you how you can do better: Don't raise taxes on the American people, for starters.

Just remember, they're out there promising every day. I think they're over $2 trillion—"they" being our opponents—have promised more than $2 trillion in new spending. They just haven't said how they're going to pay for it. Well, they have—they have to a certain extent. They said they're going to tax the rich. They're going to raise the rates. Well, first of all, I don't think anybody ought to pay more than 35 percent to the Federal Government. I think that's a fair amount of money that somebody ought to pay.

Secondly, when they say they're going to tax the rich, remember, when they're raising those income taxes, they're also taxing small businesses. Most small businesses pay individual income taxes. Thirdly, you know how the Tax Code works. When they say "tax the rich," those are the folks who have got the accountants to see to it they don't pay tax, so guess who gets stuck with the bill? You're going to get stuck with the bill. The worst thing for job creation is to be running up the taxes on the working people of this country, and we're not going to let him have a chance to do so.

I'm winding down here. [*Laughter*] Nobody started to fall out yet. A couple other points I want to make. I'm running because I understand there's some things we need to do to keep jobs here in America. We need tort reform to keep jobs here in America. We need good health policy to keep jobs here in America. We need an energy plan to keep jobs here in America. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Audience member. Get it done, George!

The President. I am going to get it done. I told you when I ran we would reform the schools, and we did. I told you when I ran we would reform Medicare, and we did. I told you when I ran we would cut the taxes on the working people, and we did. When this administration says something, we mean it, and we get it done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Okay. I've asked some citizens to come and help me make my points. First of all, the cornerstone of good policy, in my opinion, is to

encourage people to own something. See, I believe a society in which there is widespread ownership is a hopeful and helpful society. If you own something, you really care about the future of the country. That's why I like ownership. We want to have an environment so more people own their own business. We're going to talk to the CEO of a small business here in a minute. There's nothing more hopeful, is there, than saying, "Welcome to my home." We want more people owning their own home. And I'm proud to report the homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America today. We're going to talk about owning your own health care account. I also believe that younger workers ought to be allowed, at their option, to have personal savings accounts in Social Security so that the Social Security system can survive.

For us old guys, retired or nearly retired, nothing will change. But to make sure there's a Social Security system around for younger workers—I'm talking about down there in the thirties—[*laughter*]—they ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and have a personal savings account that they can pass on from one generation to the next.

The Jaminets are with us, Emily and John. Thanks for coming. As you can see, Emily is about ready to have her fourth child. She doesn't look old enough, does she, to have four children. Thanks for coming. Tell us—first of all, they have told me that they bought a home.

John Jaminet. That's right.

The President. First-time homebuyer.

Mr. Jaminet. That's right.

The President. Why?

Mr. Jaminet. Why? For our family.

The President. Good, well, most people buy a home for their families. That's good. [*Laughter*] And, so, like, tell—go ahead, tell me what you told me earlier. Refinanced it.

[*At this point, Mr. Jaminet made brief remarks.*]

The President. You like having your own home. First, the reason I asked him to come is, is that I told you I believe in ownership. There's nothing better than a story when somebody says, "We own our first home." They own their own home. That's what we want. We want people from all walks of life to stand up in America and say, "Hey, I own my own home. Welcome to my home"—not, "Welcome to the Government's home," but, "Welcome to my home."

These good folks saved money in the tax relief. That's what I wanted to share with you as well—2,200 in 2003.

Mr. Jaminet. That's right.

The President. Two thousand four—how much?

Mr. Jaminet. About the same.

The President. Same, okay. This is $2,300. Now, that's not a lot to people in Washington, I guess, the numbers counters up there. It's a lot to them. See, here's what I believe about tax relief. Government can set priority and it needs—and that's hard in Washington. Everybody has got their own priorities. My job is to set priorities: It's been the defense of the homeland; it's been winning the war on terror; it's been making sure education works well; making sure our seniors have a health care system that's reasonable. But I believe once Government sets priorities, these folks can spend their money better than the Federal Government can spend their money.

What did you do with all that money? First of all, it's your money. Get nervous when you hear people in Washington say, "Well, we're spending the Government's money." [*Laughter*] It's not the Government's money. It's John and Emily's money that we're spending. Now they've got more of their own to spend. It's an important distinction in the campaign. People have got to listen carefully to the words. I think they'll get a difference of philosophy.

Now, what did you do with all your own money? [*Laughter*]

Emily Jaminet. Well, I'm a stay-at-home mom, so it's allowed me to do that.

The President. Good.

Mrs. Jaminet. I'm just really—keep focused on our family values and continue, like John said, to pay off debt, and him going back to school is such a huge blessing, to be able to work at Honda and have a career that provides for all of us.

The President. You work at Honda?

Mr. Jaminet. Yes.

The President. That's good. It's interesting, isn't it, a foreign company investing in the United States. That's positive. I can see why they did. We've got great people here in America. They need to keep coming with their money. They'll find great workers here. Thank you all for coming.

One think I want to remind you of is, parts of the tax relief package expire. That's what happened when Congress passed the deal. It's going to stay low for a while, and then they go away. See, I've been calling on the Congress to make the tax relief permanent. Now, if they don't make it permanent, these good folks will pay $1,300 more in taxes. They'll have less of their own money. In other words, they'll have $1,300 less to spend. And I don't think that's good for the economy, to be taking—I know it's not good for their family. They're worried about their family. I'm worried about their family. I'm worried about the economy too. And taking that money out of their pockets is not good. Tax relief has got to be permanent in order to make sure this economy continues to grow. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

We've got an interesting story with Linda Wagner. Linda, thanks for coming. What's your job description?

Linda Wagner. Well, I happen to be a registered nurse, and I'm director of employee education for Ohio Health Corporation.

The President. Great. And how does it work?

[*Ms. Wagner made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me ask you something. Obviously somebody is looking for workers in those fields, I guess is why they're retraining people.

Ms. Wagner. Yes, that's a desperate need. Health care——

The President. Desperate need—there are jobs in this new society, jobs in a high-tech world that—where people need help in order to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's what we're talking about. A compassionate America is willing to retrain people for the jobs which exist.

[*Ms. Wagner made further remarks.*]

The President. Right, and there's Government money for that, trade adjustment assistance, displaced workers programs. I think it's a wise use of taxpayers' money, frankly, to help people who have been displaced from their work go back to school and gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs which exist. Interestingly enough—I don't know if, Linda, you're in a position to say this—but most people who go back to school for the new jobs end up making more money.

Ms. Wagner. Absolutely.

The President. Yes, she was. That's good. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wagner. You're talking somewhere between 200 and 300 percent difference in salaries between an unlicensed person and somebody who has got a license.

The President. Listen, if you're out there looking for work and you don't think there's work available, go to your one-stops, ask and look for what's available. Good Government policy has made money available for people to be retrained in institutions which are flexible and available and affordable. The community colleges, for example, are willing to change curriculum to help meet the needs of the workplace. And this is a private institution that's doing the same thing. You're doing great work.

Ms. Wagner. Well, we're pretty proud of our program.

The President. You ought to be.

Ms. Wagner. We pay for the tuition, expenses, books, and we also fund three clinical instructors to also assist Columbus State in getting our people educated.

The President. Well, thank you, Linda. Appreciate you. Good job. Pass that over to Jerry. See, the reason Linda came is because I was convinced that she would be able to explain it better than me, and she did. [*Laughter*]

Jerry Hurley. Absolutely.

The President. But I appreciate that. You didn't have to agree with her, Jerry. [*Laughter*] All right, Jerry.

Ms. Hurley. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Ms. Hurley. I am great today.

The President. Okay. You don't need to tell us your age, like you told me earlier.

Ms. Hurley. I am 53.

The President. And proud of it, I want you to know.

Ms. Hurley. Yes, I am.

The President. And you're probably a grandmother.

Ms. Hurley. I am a proud grandmother.

The President. There you go. Okay, tell us about—this is an interesting story. I hope people out there are listening to Jerry's story. Go ahead. I feel like a talk show host. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Hurley made brief remarks.*]

The President. There you go. Listen, the reason I asked—isn't that a great story? Thanks, Jerry. What a fabulous story. And, see, that's going to be the story of the 21st century, when you think about it. This is a changing world. The job picture changes quite rapidly. Some jobs don't change—like firefighters, guys. We'll need you forever. You don't have to worry about these guys. Thanks for your service.

But jobs change. When most of you were coming up, your dad worked, your mom stayed at home, your dad had the job at the same company, and everything was fine. But it's a different world we live in today. And the job picture changes, and it requires new skill sets. In order to make sure America is a competitive place, we've got to make sure education not only gets it right for the youngsters but that there's continuing education opportunity for people like Jerry.

Now, Government can't say, "Go back to school." Somebody has to make that choice herself or himself. But we darn sure can help. And the community college system is a great place to get people retrained for the jobs which exist. Not only is there great job satisfaction achieved by somebody choosing to take advantage of educational opportunities; they're making more money too. And that's what's important to realize. If you gain new skills and you become a more productive worker, productivity increases yield higher wages. And that's what's happening in America.

Some people are nervous—of course they're nervous—but there are jobs out there, and the role of Government is to help people train for the jobs which exist, just like Jerry. And I want to thank you for coming.

We've got an interesting story that Russ and Kathy Griffith are going to share with you. They're here with us. Russ is a self-employed consultant, engineering consultant. And he is—well, he's going to talk to you about health savings accounts, let me put it to you that way. Tell everybody what a health savings account is.

[*Russ Griffith made brief remarks.*]

The President. Right, so let's put it this way. Say you've got a—you buy a insurance policy that says they'll cover everything above the first $1,000 of expenses, which is not a very high premium policy. And then, you put $1,000—in his case, he's self-employed, so he puts $1,000 of his own money, tax-free, into a savings account which earns money tax-free, which he can withdraw tax-free to cover up the first $1,000 of expenses before the insurance policy kicks in. So in his case, the expense is the cost of the insurance policy plus the

$1,000 tax-free money into the account, is that accurate?

Mr. Griffith. That's true, yes.

The President. All right—and this is a new product, by the way, and it's going to take a while for the American people to figure it out, but it's a product that says he's in control of his health care decisions. See, he decides how the $1,000 is spent, not somebody you never see before, you know, somebody writing the insurance. It's his call to make. After all, it's his money. Probably going to cause him to make better health care choices, for starters, like exercise. [*Laughter*]

Now, let me ask you something, what were you spending prior to your health savings account, and give people a sense of the savings.

Mr. Griffith. We established our health savings account and insurance policy in the middle of June, and before that, we were spending $1,111 a month for our insurance policy. Since we established the HSA account and the insurance policy, we're now spending less than one-third of that on our monthly premium. We expect that on an annual basis, we will spend less than half—when you count the insurance premium as well as our out-of-pocket medical expenses—we'll be spending less than half of what we spent with our previous medical insurance.

The President. So he's saving money. So people say, "How can you—what can you put in place to help people save money in health care?" Well, here's the plan right here. And let me tell you the interesting thing about the plan, is, see, Russ and Kathy are responsible for the $1,000. It's their money they put in tax-free, so therefore, they're going to be wise shoppers when it comes to health care. They're going to be a better decisionmaker. If the doctor says, "You've got to spend $800 on this," they may say, "Well, I'm not so sure we want to spend 8, doc, you know." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Griffith. Tell me I need that——

The President. Go ahead. Seriously.

Mr. Griffith. I was going to say, "Tell me, doctor, that I need that."

The President. Yes, see, rational decisionmaking by patients where they're in control of the decisionmaking process, is part of how you hold costs down. If you've got people just spending your money and you just take it for granted that the decisionmaking process is wise, that's inflationary. As you're a part of the process of, kind of, discerning which is what's necessary and what's not, it also is when it's your money on the line and you see it on your line—on the line, you'll make better choices about your body. You'll realize savings by living healthy lives, which isn't the way the system is today. It's an interesting system.

And see, the way it works for small businesses—let's say Russ hires somebody and is doing quite well in his business—he can set up an HSA for his employee, and he can kick in the $1,000. The employer can kick in the $1,000 tax-free for the employee. That's how you fund a better health care system. It's going to take awhile for this product to evolve, but in the heart of it, the heart of the system, is that rather than bureaucrats making decisions for Russ, he and Kathy are making decisions for themselves and are rewarded on a tax-free return by making good and wise decisions in the health care.

Listen, thanks for coming. I appreciate you explaining this. Go ahead. Got anything else? Yes, hold on.

Mr. Griffith. I'd like to say also that even though we made that change, we were able to keep the doctors that we had under our previous policy. So we had no—have had no change at all in the health care we received, either in hospitals or doctors.

The President. Yes, the docs will like this because they like dealing directly with their patients. They'd rather be spending time healing than filling out paperwork, I can assure you. And at any rate, it's an interesting idea. Thank you all for coming. Very good job. It's working, in other words. A

man just stood up and said he saved half—from what he was spending, saved half of his previous expenses. That's a good deal. People ought to look into it.

Finally, Phil Derrow is with us, small-business guy, CEO and president, Ohio Transmission Corporation, New Albany, Ohio. Welcome.

Phil Derrow. Thank you.

The President. What's your business do?

[*Mr. Derrow made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good, that's—keep saying that, will you? [*Laughter*] Let me ask you, are you adding any jobs this year? That's what I'm interested in, and so are the people looking for work.

Mr. Derrow. We are.

The President. How many?

Mr. Derrow. We expect to add anywhere from 10 to 36 jobs this year depending on the business that we——

The President. See, here's what's happening in America today. Remember, I told you most new jobs are created by small businesses? That's what he's saying, 10 to 35 jobs here, 10 to 35 jobs there. The entrepreneurial sector of this country is strong. The small-business sector is vibrant and alive. We've been through tough times. He's growing. A lot of it had to do with tax policy. Let me ask you something. Are you going to make investment?

Mr. Derrow. Absolutely. We make investments each year. The reduction or the accelerated depreciation allowance has allowed us to make more investment than maybe we otherwise would have. It's also allowed our customers to purchase capital equipment that they may not have. We've had a number of customers tell us that they made capital equipment purchases because of the accelerated depreciation schedule.

The President. Yes, see, what that means is—that's accountant talk. He's not an accountant, though. He hires accountants, right?

Mr. Derrow. I do. I have one here.

The President. That's good. [*Laughter*] Okay. What he's telling you is that the tax relief we passed said that if you make an investment, you save money; you get a little tax break for making an investment. What will you invest in? Like, when you say "investment," what will you be buying?

Mr. Derrow. We purchase information technology equipment. We purchase capital equipment. We own and operate air compressor stations that deliver compressed air to our customers, and we have to make investments anywhere from several hundred thousand dollars to a couple of million dollars to purchase the equipment to build that station. And then we sell air to our customers.

The President. You and I are in the same business. [*Laughter*] Is it hot air, by any chance?

Mr. Derrow. Oh, no.

The President. When he makes an investment—listen, I want you to understand how the economy works. See, the tax relief said we're going to encourage him to make investment. He just said, "I'm going to purchase equipment." Somebody has to make the equipment that he is going to purchase. And that's how the economy—that's how good tax policy works. It says to Phil, "We want tax policy to make it more likely you'll make an investment," because when he makes an investment, somebody has got to build the product. And when somebody builds the product, somebody is more likely to keep a job or find work. That's why good tax policy has been working. And the key is to make sure that we don't disincent Phil—in other words, we changed the taxes at a time when he's still thinking about investing. Because if he chooses not to buy the equipment, then the person who is making the equipment may lose the job. That's how I think. I think about how to make the decisions of Phil easier, so he can stay in business and expand.

Tell me—he's got another interesting idea that I think is very important for the country to adopt: flex-time.

Mr. Derrow. I'm glad you told me what my interesting idea was. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm not a lawyer, but it looks like I'm leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Derrow. I always appreciate the help.

The President. You appreciate the fact I'm not a lawyer? That's good. A lot of people just say——

Mr. Derrow. I appreciate that quite a bit, actually.

The President. Nothing wrong with lawyers. We occasionally need a good one. But go ahead.

[*Mr. Derrow made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, I think the Government ought to change that. What I'm telling you is, I think the Government ought to allow employers to say to an employee, "If you want some time off and work different hours, you're allowed to do so. If you want to accumulate time to spend with your family, spend with your parents, spend for being reeducated, you're allowed to do so." Government ought to be standing side by side with people, not against people. Government ought to be helping families. Good job. Thanks, Phil.

Listen, I've got time for some questions. Yes, ma'am. Why don't you get up there and ask a question. Fire away.

Vocational Training/Association Health Care Plans

Q. I'm a small-business owner. We employ roughly—and I could talk to you about—20 percent increase every year in the last 7 years. However, we happen to be a trade school. We train people for hairdressing, barbering, manicuring, what have you. My people necessarily—are not necessarily college material, not necessarily community college material. There is a lack of ability for the people who are not high school graduates to take advantage of the kind of training that we offer, and we would have the ability to put many, many more people per year in the workforce if trade schools all over America had the ability to have discretion about accepting non-high-school-graduates or people who do not have GEDs.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. Thanks. I'll look into that.

Let me tell you something, though, what you need to do, you need to be able to pool risk. You're talking about the health care—you need to be able to pool risk with people who do the same thing you do, whether they be in Texas, Michigan, California, or Ohio. You're prevented from doing so now. In other words, the more people that she can insure or seek insurance for in a larger pool, the more likely it is she's got a better price. And that's what we need to be able to do. Your other issue, I need to look into it. Thanks.

Whoever made that grunt, please get up and yell a question. [*Laughter*] Sounded like a friendly grunt, doesn't it? [*Laughter*] Yes, sir. Okay. Yes, sir, go ahead. Right here. You didn't grunt, but go ahead.

[*At this point, a baby in the audience cried.*]

The President. Tell him to be steady; we're almost out of here. [*Laughter*] I don't blame you. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Q. I'm a pastor of a church in Lincoln County, which is just east of here. And I've agreed to be the chairman of a Christian coalition for that county. Our church has grown, and we're very interested in trying to acquire two old buildings in the Newark city that are kind of dilapidated or falling down to put a rehabilitation, reorientation kind of job vocational training there for people to finish their GEDs, for men and women to give them some basic faith training and to help them rediscover what they can become. But it's been difficult to know how to acquire or plug into faith-based funds——

The President. Yes, I appreciate that.

Q. ——and I could use your support.

The President. Sure. He's got a great question. His question is, "How can I, somebody who is trying to set up a program to help people, understand how the faith-based program works?" First of all, you've got to understand this has been a struggle to change the culture in Washington. There's a lot of people in Washington who argue process rather than results. They say, "Well, we better not do this; it might obscure a very important line in our society, which is the separation of church and state."

I happen to believe that the better question is, does the program work? Are we changing somebody's life for the better and, therefore, society is better off? And let's figure out how to make the process work, which is what we've done. This is a long answer I'm going to give you. I'm going to tell you how to do it in a minute. I'm just telling you there's a cultural issue, because nobody wants the church to become the state or the state to become a church. On the other hand, if a program is effective, we want that program to be able to compete for funds.

Now, there are some rules that you've got to understand. One, you can't proselytize. In other words, you've got to take all comers. If you're a faith-based program and a Christian faith-based program, and a Jewish person walks in looking for help, you've got to provide the help. In other words, it's open, which—that's not a problem for faith-based programs. People are willing to help cure and solve lives.

The other problem people have in the faith-based field, they're worried about interfacing with Government because they're afraid Government is going to give them so many rules and regulations they won't be able to actually practice their faith. It's hard to be a faith-based program if you can't practice your faith. That's our theory.

Now, so what I've had to do is set up offices, and we've got an Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in the White House. So, step one, contact the White House Faith-Based Office. Incredibly enough, you're not going to believe this, this guy is a great guy running the office. His name is Jim Towey. Guess what one of his jobs was. He was Mother Teresa's lawyer. [*Laughter*] Imagine—what kind of society is it where Mother Teresa needs a lawyer? [*Laughter*] That's what he was.

And the other thing is, sir, is that the State—have you got one? Yes, the State government has got an Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. Their purpose is to expedite the grant money that comes from the Federal Government. Some of the grant money is directly—goes directly to the programs, and you can apply for that through HHS, HUD, for example—Health and Human Services—the Justice Department grants. There are grants that people can apply to directly. There are grants that come through formula to the State, and then it's up to the State to see to it that the faith-based community has got appropriate access to the money. Bob has done a good job of setting up that office.

Thanks for that question. I appreciate it. Yes.

Support for the President

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that a lot.

Yes, sir. If you don't have a mike, just yell it out.

Antidrug Efforts/Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Andre Porter. I'm a 24-year-old law student here in Columbus and a proud member of FBA. We sang a song for you today before you got here.

The President. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Q. Just wanted to let you know.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We sang two songs. The second song was about antiviolence and antidrugs. And we grow up in an era right now where the culture is so centered on violence and drugs, and so our group—the song that we wrote, these gentlemen here, FBA, we wanted to know what you have planned for our generation to stop violence and increase the goodness of our culture?

The President. No, I appreciate you saying that. That's a great question. First, I think we have a duty to go on an education campaign to explain to people that drugs will destroy your life. In other words, the drug strategy has been interdiction, which is important—in other words, stop them from coming in from Colombia or wherever they may be coming in from.

There's two other aspects, though, that we need to really stay focused on, and one is the reduction in demand. You know, the way the market works, unfortunately, where there is demand, somebody will figure out how to supply. And so we've got to get into people's minds and heads early in life that drugs will destroy your life. There's community-based effort that Washington helps fund, but it requires grassroots organizations dedicated to suppressing demand for drugs.

We actually have got a national advertising campaign going on. The whole idea is to send a message to the kids that drugs will destroy your life. So that's a useful role for the Federal Government, is to be advertising and then stimulating community-based programs.

I happen to think the Faith-Based Initiative is a very important program to help teach kids that drugs can destroy. I'll give you an example of a program I'm talking about. I think we ought to have—I know we need to have a mentoring program for children whose moms or dads may be in prison, and surround that child with a loving adult that helps that child understand that right choices in life—in America, if you make the right choices, you have a chance to realizing your dreams. Obviously, you guys made the right choices. Somebody told you, somewhere in your life, about right choices. Now I don't know who it was—probably mom or dad. But if not mom or dad, somebody did. And they told you about the right choices because they had love in their hearts. And so, therefore, one of the most—I think best ways to help kids get the right message is through vibrant mentoring programs. And many of those mentoring programs come out of the faith community.

Thirdly, third aspect of a strategy on drugs is to help the addict. There are—you know, the truth of the matter is, a few consume most of the drugs, relatively few. The addicts are really the big drug users. I don't know all the statistics off the top of my head. I'm going to guess, maybe 15 percent of the drug users consume by far the vast majority of the drugs. They're hooked. They can't get off.

And so one of the things we've got to do at the Federal level, it seems like to me, and State and local level, is focus efforts on helping the addicts kick the habit. And you heard me say earlier that addiction sometimes requires more than just a counseling session. Addiction requires a change of heart, and that's where the faith community can play an integral role. And so I've asked Congress, and Congress has passed money to give a voucher to an addict, where the addict gets to make the decision of the type of program he or she thinks will best help save their life, faith-based or otherwise. And so there's a—that's our comprehensive strategy.

I've got some positive news to report: Drug use for youngsters is down 11 percent over the last couple of years. That's good. It depends on where we started from. But the point is, the trend line is good. And the role of Government, in my judgment, is to stand on the side of people in confirming the fact that people can and should make healthy choices with their life.

Counternarcotics Efforts in Colombia

Q. I'm from Colombia.

The President. Colombia, *que bueno. Bienvenidos.* We'll have the whole—conduct in Spanish. [*Laughter*] Actually, go ahead.

Q. I've been here for 20 years. I just took my wife and my kids to Colombia. Colombia is a country that has a lot of problems. At this point—[*inaudible*].

The President. Gracias, senor. I tell you, let me say something—[*applause*]. Thank you very much. We're standing strong with the Colombian Government. I want to thank you. You know why? I've got confidence in Uribe. He's the President, Uribe. He said, "Help us help ourselves." He understands that he has got to battle narcotraffickers in Colombia, for the sake of his own country. And so when he comes to the Oval Office, I take a look at him in the eye when he says, "I want your help." And I say, "Why?" And he says, "Because I want our country to be free from these narcotraffickers." It makes me feel comfortable that we're doing the right thing with the taxpayers' money to support Colombia. It's in our interest we do so. It's also in the interest of the Colombian people that we help.

And he's a freedom—this guy loves freedom. I mean, he is a strong leader. Tell him thanks, if you talk—I'll probably talk to him before you do. [*Laughter*]

Yes, ma'am.

Religious Freedom/President's Faith

Q. Hello. I just wanted to say that, being a young Christian, it's been very encouraging to me to see you, as our country's leader, being so open about your faith.

The President. Thank you. Thanks a lot.

Q. And I was just wondering, do you feel that your faith has been beneficial to your decisionmaking process? And if so, how?

The President. First, let me talk about faith in politics. It is essential that this country always guard the right for people to worship as they see fit. It's essential that people understand, if you choose to worship or choose not to worship, you're equally an American. It's very important for all our citizens to understand that—that you can worship or not worship, and you're equally patriotic.

Now, secondly, if you choose to worship, you're just as an American if you're a Jew, Christian, Muslim, or Hindu. That's what freedom of religion means. I want the youngsters out there to hear me on this. It's an essential part of the value of our country. It is an essential tradition and truth that we must pass from one generation to the next.

Now, having said that, I do have faith. And I want to thank—I'll tell you, the most sustaining aspect of the Presidency, one of the most interesting parts of the Presidency, one of the most touching parts of the Presidency is that people whom I have never known in my life take time to pray for me and Laura and our family.

And what that means is that's—it sustains us. It strengthens us. It—the prayers comfort us, and so do my own prayers. And so that's what religion means to me as the President. And I want to thank you for your question.

Yes, ma'am.

Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

Q. Mr. President, thank you for your stance on the sanctity of marriage between men and women. What can we do to keep judges who find in favor of relationships between homosexuals?

The President. Let me—again, this is an issue that people need to address with the utmost sensitivity and sincerity. It is an issue that is a—an issue that we must not allow to denigrate into emotional debate. It's an issue that requires thoughtful discussion.

I believe society is better off by a clear definition of traditional marriage. And the reason I do is because, one, traditional marriage between man and a woman has

served society and civilization well. Secondly, there is a firm commitment required in a marriage between a man and a woman that must not be undermined by redefinition. That commitment in itself provides stable, loving environments for families.

I am deeply concerned about the fact, on this very sensitive issue is being redefined by the courts, not by the people. I think that to the extent that—there needs to be a honest and open dialog about this issue amongst the people.

Now, Congress passed what's called DOMA, Defense of Marriage Act, signed by my predecessor, which defined marriage as between a man or a woman and prevented States from making a decision that would cause another State to have to accept that decision. Now, I think that law is a good law. I am worried about its constitutionality—in other words, whether or not it will be overturned by activist judges. As a matter of fact, a judge overturned the DOMA law of Washington State yesterday. In other words, judges are beginning to define the nature of marriage.

So I said that if you believe like I believe, that traditional marriage is important, that the best way to see to it that society—our society will continue to define marriage as between a man or woman is to—is the constitutional process, is to amend the Constitution so that a judge cannot define.

Now, the other thing that that will do is it will enable the people to be involved through the State legislatures. In other words, you've got to get it out of the Congress, the amendment, and then it has to be ratified by the States, which I think is a healthy process. In other words, it's the legislative branch that will be deciding the definition of marriage on this very important issue, and not the judicial branch. And so that's why I advocated what I advocated, and it's the right position for the country.

Go ahead, yell it out. If you don't like—if I don't like the question, I'll reinvent it. [*Laughter*] Oops, he didn't believe me. [*Laughter*]

Support for the President

Q. Mr. President, I don't have a question; I have three thank-yous.

The President. Thank you.

Q. One, thank you for your availability to serve.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. Two, your candle is burning brightly.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And three, thanks for accepting the call and answering the call to work for what's right in the country and in the world.

The President. Thank you, sir. God bless. Thank you. Thanks a lot. I'll tell you what, a guy just gave me the hook. I'm off to Saginaw, Michigan. I want to conclude by telling you this: It is an honor to be the President of such a great nation.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, sir. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and share some thoughts with you. I have a desire, a deep desire to serve this country for 4 more years, to make us a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

May God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. at the Aladdin Shrine Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gov. Bob Taft and Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley of Ohio; Doug Preisse, executive chairman, Franklin County Republican Party; former professional football player Bernie Kosar; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request
August 5, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with my constitutional authority and section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganization Act, as amended, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request Act.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For Fiscal Year 2005, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $6.26 billion.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks in Saginaw, Michigan
August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me here. I'm here to ask for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. It's been a great turnout. Thanks for coming.

It's going to be an interesting campaign. We have big differences of opinion. For example, we have a difference of opinion over the heart and soul of America. See, my opponents believe you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. I think you can find it right here in Saginaw, Michigan.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. That's not the only thing my opponent seems a little confused about. The other day in Ohio, he said that there's nothing better than Buckeye football, period.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then he came to Michigan. First he told the crowd, "I go for the Buckeye football. That's where I'm coming from." No, I know, that's not what the Michigan folks were expecting to hear. [*Laughter*] Then he remembered where he was and he called an audible. [*Laughter*] He said that the University of Michigan was a powerhouse of a team. You see, my opponent is a Washington politician who's taken both sides of just about every issue, including Big Ten football.

Listen, I want to thank you for welcoming Vice President Cheney here a couple of months ago. I admit it, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] That's not why I picked him. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, his ability to do the job. Everywhere I go, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will win 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am—my only regret is that Laura is not traveling with me. She is a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a excellent First Lady for our country. I'm really proud of her. I'm really proud of her. I'm going to give you some reasons

why to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Dave Camp, Congressman Camp. I appreciate you being here. Congresswoman Candice Miller, my good friend, is with us today. Thank you. Terri Lynn Land—I appreciate the secretary of state joining us. I wish Myrah Kirkwood all the best in her run for the United States Congress.

You invited the Gatlin Brothers. [*Applause*] I know. They grew up in Odessa, which is Ector County; I grew up in Midland County, which is right around the corner from here—just a different State. [*Laughter*] I appreciate my friends being here. They're good friends, and they're good guys who care a lot about our country.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. That means you're the people who put up the signs, make the phone calls; you're the people who are going to help register our fellow citizens. See, everybody needs to participate in elections. I believe we have a duty; I know you believe we have a duty to vote on election day. And so when you're out registering voters, please don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents because, like you, they want a safer and stronger and better America.

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has to answer a central question, why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together, and we have accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead our Nation forward.

I'm here asking for the vote because there's so much at stake. We have much more to do to move our country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to create more jobs, improve our schools, to spread the peace. We have made much progress; there is still more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child in our country is left behind. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We believe in setting high standards. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in empowering the parents of America. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We'll expand math and science education so our young people can compete in the high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training in the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation gain the skills and competence they need to realize the great promise of our country.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs. Medicare didn't pay for them, either. Leaders in both parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. You remember all the promises. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings for them. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

To help more people get access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

Listen, this world we're in is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work, but most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. And so, to help American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big corporations.

To improve health care, to make sure health care is available and affordable for our citizens, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of health care. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm going to continue to push Congress to pass real, meaningful medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures for diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make this economy stronger. We've come through a recession. We've come through a terror attack. We've come through corporate scandals. We've come through a lot. And we've overcome those obstacles because our workers are great, because the farmers are good at what they do, because the entrepreneurial spirit of this country is strong. We've overcome these obstacles as well because of well-timed tax cuts.

Listen, when it came time to cutting taxes, we didn't pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal taxes. The child credit went up to help families with children. We're reducing the marriage penalty. Imagine a Tax Code that penalizes marriage.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We need to be encouraging marriage in America.

We helped our small businesses with tax relief, and this time the check was really in the mail. Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added 1.5 million new jobs since last August.

Listen, I understand we face serious challenges in part of our country. The recovery here in Michigan has lagged behind other parts, but we've got a plan in place. The economy is improving; it's getting better. Factory orders are on the rise. Manufacturing jobs are coming back. Your unemployment rate has fallen a full percent. And we're not going to rest until everybody who wants to work can find a job.

To keep this economy strong, to keep jobs here at home, we need to end the endless regulations that strangle America's employers. To keep jobs here at home, we need tort reform in America. To keep jobs here at home, we need a reasonable energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs here at home, we'll be wise about how we spend your money, and we will keep your taxes low. Listen, to make sure this economy is strong we will offer American workers a lifetime of learning and help them get training for the jobs of the future at places like our community colleges. The education and training community colleges offer can be the bridge between people's lives as

they are and people's lives as they want to be.

Let me tell you something else I believe. In order to keep jobs here, we've got to reject economic isolationism. I believe that the American worker, the American farmer, the American entrepreneur, the American manufacturer can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

And you know what else? We're going to help American families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that's time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your parents, time to go back to school. Congress must enact comp-time and flex-time rules to give American families more opportunities to choose their time.

After 4 years, our farm economy will be strong. After 4 years, there will be more small-business owners. After 4 years, there will be better and—paying jobs under the Bush administration.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against the terrorists. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is going to have Presidential elections this fall. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time in their life. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war against terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistani troops are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued, and he had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored the terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat. After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. You see, one of the lessons of that fateful day was that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, who had ties to terror, who had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his capabilities with the terrorists. We saw a threat.

I went to the United States Congress, which looked at the same intelligence I did. Members of both political parties looked

at the same intelligence, including my opponent, and they reached the same conclusion. And in the United Nations, they looked at the same intelligence and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply with the demands of the free world. He deceived the weapons inspectors. And so I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the actions of a madman, or take measures necessary to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted, the dictator sits in a prison cell, and America and the world are safer.

I'm seeking the vote; I'm running for 4 more years because I understand we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists. You cannot negotiate with the terrorists. We must engage the enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition to help defeat terror: over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan; some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to build alliances and work with our friends in the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We must keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. Those two nations are now governed by strong leaders. See, these leaders care deeply about the future of their nations. They care deeply about the aspirations of their people. These are strong people, and many in their country are now stepping up because they realize the great promise of a free society. And the people of those countries, those who love freedom, can count on continued help from America and our allies. You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to set them on the path of liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a fine example for those who wear our uniform. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those of us in Government have a duty to support those who wear the uniform. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and in Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of them are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him about his vote, and he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Now he's offering a different explanation. He said, you know, he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding, and then he further went on to say the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing

complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples for their neighbors. Free societies do not export terror. Societies which listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people are peaceful societies. We long for peace. I want your children growing up in a peaceful world. And I understand that by serving the ideal of liberty, we will spread freedom and peace. By serving the ideal of liberty, we'll also represent the values of this country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Listen, we've got more to do to protect this country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. It's a fundamental and dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. As the 9/11 Report shows, terrorists had attracted recruits in the 1990s, long before America was at war with them. Now we're on the offense. We're striking the terrorists where they plot and plan before they can come and get us here. By taking—by staying on the offense, we have captured information that has proved critical to improving the security here at home. Listen, I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11. They said because of the actions we have taken since September the 11th, our homeland is safer, yet we're not totally safe. I understand that. The way to make America more secure is to continue fighting this war on the offense, continue bringing justice to our enemies.

Right after September the 11th, we started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses and created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to fight and find the terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're taking action on a large majority of the recommendations of that important Commission.

We've more to do. We've got more to do to secure our ports and borders, to train our first-responders, to dramatically improve intelligence gathering capability. That's why I called on Congress this week to create the position of National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and here at home.

Listen, these reforms are not going to be easy, particularly in Washington. There's some entrenched interests up there, people who defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you have to be able to get it done.

You see, when it comes to reforming schools and making sure we have an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to seeing to it we have a healthy agricultural economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Listen, we have—we're in changing times, and they're exciting times. The Government has got to stand on the side of people during changing times. That's why I will continue to promote what I call an ownership society. See, if you change jobs, you want to be able to own your health care plan so you can take it from job to job. If you're a younger worker, you're probably concerned about whether or not you'll see a dime from Social Security. Therefore, younger workers ought to be

given the option of managing some of their own money in personal retirement accounts.

We want more people in this country owning their own business. And you know, we want more people owning their own home. I love it when somebody says, "Welcome to my home. Thanks for visiting my home." See, we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States.

In this world of change, there are some things that will not change: our belief in liberty, opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. There are institutions in our society that give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for institutions like family and marriage, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. The culture is changing 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're responsible for the decisions you make in life.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you don't like the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. In a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

I'm seeking the office for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. The great strength of this Nation is the hearts and souls of our citizens. By rallying the love and the hearts and souls of our citizens, we can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires clear vision, firm resolve. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I will never forget. People in hardhats were screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working a ropeline, and a guy grabbed me—I don't know if he was a firefighter or a policeman; I do know that he was looking through the rubble for one of his buddies—and he said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people in that site took it personally. You took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how best to protect our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We have done hard work. We're moving America forward by extending freedom and peace around the world and by expanding opportunity here at home. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership throughout our country. We want everybody realizing the American Dream. We will pass enduring values of our country to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail. With your support and prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a world of change.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you honor me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. at Wendler Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; Myrah Kirkwood, candidate for Michigan's Fifth Congressional District; entertainers the Gatlin Brothers; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks to the UNITY: Journalists of Color Convention and a Question-and-Answer Session

August 6, 2004

The President. Thank you, Ernest. Thank you for having me. I appreciate the invitation. It's good that—Ernest tells me that there's nearly 10,000 members of your organization. I congratulate you for reaching out and including a lot of people. You represent a very important profession. It's one that I'm quite familiar with. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the chance to—I deal with my press corps on a regular basis. It's a beneficial—it's a mutual beneficial society, see. I need them to get the message out, and they need me to be a messenger. And we're working hard to make sure that our relationship is cordial and professional. And that's how I feel about coming here too—to establish a cordial and professional relationship with people who help spread the news.

You believe there ought to be diversity in the newsroom. I understand that. You believe there ought to be diversity on the editorial pages of America. I agree. You believe there ought to be diversity behind the managing editor's desk. I agree with that too. I also believe there ought to be diversity in the political parties in America, and that's why I'm going to work hard to tell people my message, to tell people what I believe. And I believe that Government should stand side by side with people and help them gain the tools necessary to realize the American Dream, not just some people but everybody.

I believe those of us who have been given the high honor of representing the people must work to reform parts of Government that are stagnant and don't stand side by side with people to give them the tools necessary to perform. I believe it's more important to be a doer than a talker. I believe it's important to say to people, "Judge me by my results." And so today I want to talk about some of the results of this administration, and then I look forward to answering some of your questions.

First, I want to thank the board of directors of this august organization. Thank you for having me. Thank you for greeting me behind stage. I want to thank the sponsor for providing the opportunity for people from all around the globe to come here—all around the country—to come here to talk about important issues.

I think one—you know, look, you can't read a newspaper if you can't read. And so one of the most important initiatives of this administration was to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what I mean by that. If you lower the bar, guess

what happens? You get lousy results. And that's the way it was in American public schools 3½ years ago. That's why you had kids just shuffled from grade to grade, year to year, without learning the basics of education. That's the way it was, because there was no accountability. See, we weren't measuring.

If you believe that every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, which I believe, then you must be willing to measure to determine whether or not the children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. No, here in this Capital there's a lot of focus on funding but very little focus on the result. We increased funding for K through 12 by 49 percent since 2001. We increased funding for Title I by 52 percent since 2001. But now, in return for increased funding, we're saying to local districts, show us whether or not a child can read, early, before it's too late. We're measuring.

And when there are schools that aren't teaching, there's extra help to make sure the children learn early, before it's too late. We've raised the bar. We believe in local control of schools, and we're insisting on accountability. And you know what? It's beginning to work.

There is a reading gap in America. We can play like there's not a reading gap in America, but there is. Too many of our African American kids cannot read at grade level by the third and fourth grade, and that's not right for America. Too many Latino youngsters can't read. And one of the reasons why is because it's so easy to quit on a classroom full of inner-city kids and kids whose parents maybe can't speak English as a first language. It's easy to walk in and say, "These kids are too hard to educate; let's just move them through." We've stopped the practice in America, and the schools are better off for it.

I'll tell you one other thing we've done, which I think is important, is we've started the process of giving parents more choice in schools. If your public school fails after a period of time, you ought to be allowed to move your child to another school. Why should a parent have their child trapped in a school that won't change? That doesn't make any sense to me.

Here in the District of Columbia, we've given $7,500 scholarships to the parents of low-income children so that they can move their kid from school to school—to another school if the public school is failing. I appreciate working with the Mayor of this city. See, my attitude is, if public—or school choice is good enough for the middle class and the upper class, it ought to be good enough for low-income Americans. And this is going to make a difference in Washington, DC.

No, we're making a difference here in the public schools of America. In a recent study of 61 urban school districts, 73 percent of African American fourth graders narrowed the achievement gap with white students in reading. See, that's how you—you know how you know that? Because you measured, because we say, show us whether or not a child can read, and if not, let's correct problems early, before it's too late.

We're making progress in this country. About 60 percent of Hispanic fourth graders narrowed the achievement gap. So long as there's an achievement gap, we've got more work to do. But we're making substantial progress toward achieving what we want to do, and that is every child reading at grade level by the third grade and remaining at grade level throughout their entire public school career.

There's more to do. We've got to make sure our higher education is available for everybody. We've increased the number of students receiving Pell grants by a million since I've been President. We've got historic levels of funding for our black colleges. I told the Native Americans we will see that their school systems were modernized. We spent $1.1 billion of Indian school construction repair since 2001, more than double spending in the previous 4 years.

I told people we'd focus on schools, and we are. And we're making progress in America.

You know, when I came into office we had a problem with our economy. It was in a recession. In order to make sure this country is hopeful and people have a better chance to realize their dreams, we need economic growth. That's why I cut the taxes on everybody. I didn't cut them; the Congress cut them. I asked them to cut them. It was to stimulate the economy. It was to help people have more money in their pocket so they would demand additional goods or services.

And the economic growth is strong and it's getting stronger, and that's good for everybody in America. I want you to remember the tax relief and how it worked. We didn't play favorites in the Tax Code. We said if you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief. Seems to make—a fair way to me to make policy. If you're paying taxes, you're going to have tax relief, and the Government ought not to pay favorites.

So everybody who paid taxes got relief. We paid special attention to parents with children. We raised the child credit. We provided relief for the marriage penalty. It's an unusual Tax Code that penalizes marriage. Seems like we ought to be trying to encourage marriage in America, not penalize it.

A lot of our tax relief was aimed at small businesses. Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. That's just a fact. By far, the majority of small businesses in America are what they call sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations. Since most new jobs in America are created by small businesses, it makes sense to provide relief for small-business owners. And so when you cut the taxes on individuals, you're cutting taxes on by far the vast majority of small businesses in America. And that's good for the economy.

It's also good to encourage an ownership society. I came to Washington aiming to help people own something. I want there to be more owners in America. The role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish. At least, that's my philosophy. And as a result of tax relief and a good economic environment, there are more small minority owners—businessowners today than ever before. More and more people are realizing their dreams by owning their own business, and that's healthy for this country. It's important for this country.

And there's more work to do. You've heard me talk about tort reform. Tort reform is necessary to make sure the business environment is such that people have the confidence necessary to start their own business. Good trade policy will help small businesses. We regulate a lot here in Washington, DC. I can't promise you whether or not any regulator has ever read the reports that we ask small-business owners to file in Washington. I suspect they haven't. But reasonable regulatory policy will help small-business owners. Small-business owners must be able to afford health care. That's why I strongly urge the Congress to pass association health plans, which will allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can get the same purchasing power that big businesses have. I have got a plan that will help all small businesses thrive in America.

When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of this country. Judge me on homeownership in America. I believe it's—I can't tell you how exciting it is to know more people in America can now say, "Welcome to my home. I'm glad you're here to visit me in my home." To me, those are hopeful words for our country.

I set a goal two summers ago to have 5.5 million new homeowners by the end of the decade—minority homeowners by the end of the decade. We're meeting that

goal—1.6 million new minority homeowners in the last 2 years. You know, they talk a good game up here sometimes in Washington; we're delivering. More minority families own their home today than ever before in the history of the United States of America. And that's a positive development for this country. A lot of it has to do with low interest rates. A lot of it has to do with good tax policy. A lot of it has to do with downpayment assistance, counseling out of Housing and Urban Development. Listen, if you're a first-time homeowner and you take a look at the contract, that fine print looks a little small; people get a little nervous. And so we're providing counseling to help people understand what it means to be a first-time homebuyer. And it's paying off.

Medicare—there's been a lot of talk about Medicare here in Washington, DC. You might remember that issue. At every single political campaign, people said, "I want to help our seniors; I'll help our seniors"—nothing got done. We got it done. We reformed a very important part of our health care system by enabling seniors to have choices of their own and providing prescription drug coverage for seniors for the first time in Medicare. They talk a lot up here. I want the people of this country to remember who actually has got the work done.

Now, let me tell you about the Medicare bill, the reform bill. It started off first by the distribution of drug discount cards, which provide real savings for our seniors. Over 4 million seniors have signed up so far. Low-income seniors get a $600 credit as well as the discount on their card. Next year, for the first time, there will be preventative screenings provided for in Medicare. Medicare has never done that before. I mean, it makes sense, doesn't it, to say in Medicare, we want to diagnose problems early, before they become acute, in order to save taxpayers money and, more importantly, in order to save lives.

In 2006, there will be a prescription drug coverage available in Medicare for seniors, with low-income seniors getting substantial help in the payment of—help in their prescription drugs. In other words, the system is better. Imagine a system where the Government would pay a $100,000 hospital stay for heart surgery but wouldn't pay the medicines necessary to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. We're changing that, for the good of our seniors.

We've added community health centers all across the country. These are primary care facilities for low-income Americans to get help. We want people to get help in primary care facilities, not in emergency rooms. It's one way to help hold down costs. We provided health savings accounts, which will be beneficial for people from all walks of life. These are tax-free health savings accounts that make sure the patient and the doctor are the center of the decisionmaking process in health care.

I'm concerned about the fact that doctors all across America are leaving the practice of medicine. And one reason they are is because of the frivolous lawsuits that plague the medical profession. I think everybody ought to have their day in court when they've got a legitimate injury, but these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine, and they're making medicine harder for people to access. We need tort reform in Washington, DC, medical liability reform. And I will continue to work so on behalf of the patients and doctors of America.

Look, I understand Washington; you understand Washington. There's a powerful group up here in the trial lawyers. I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you've got to make your choice, and I've made my choice.

I believe strongly that the Justice administration ought to enforce the civil rights laws, and we are. I'm the first President to have banned racial profiling in Federal

law enforcement. I believe that the benches ought to reflect as best as possible the diversity of our country. And I believe my administration ought to, too, and I've fulfilled that commitment. I've got people from all walks of life who advise me.

My Cabinet is diverse. The people who walk into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, you're not looking so good today," they're diverse. [*Laughter*] And I'm better off for it. I'm better off for listening from people from different walks of life. And our bench will be, too, if we can get people to have a fair hearing on the floor of the United States Senate. They need to stop playing politics with my nominees for the sake of good justice, for the sake of diversity, and for the sake of unclogging some of these Federal courts that have got loaded dockets because the Senate won't approve some of my nominees.

Finally, I believe a compassionate America is one that taps into the strength of the country. Those are the hearts and souls of our people. I like to remind our citizens, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody in need and says, "What can I do to help you?" That's the whole crux of the Faith and Community Initiative—Faith-Based and Community Initiative that I have worked with Congress on and worked with my administration on to spread compassion in America. Oh, I know there's a big debate here in Washington about separation of church and state, and I accept that debate. And I think it's important. The church should never be the state, and the state should never be the church. No question about it.

But when we find effective programs that are helping to save people's lives, the Government ought to open up Federal money to those programs for competitive bidding. We ought not to fear faith-based programs. We ought not to fear those who are willing to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Excuse me—excuse me. I think it's very important for the Faith-Based Initiative to continue on, because I know we can save America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

One of the most important initiatives is the drug rehabilitation initiative I've asked Congress to work with me on. Let me tell you how it works. They appropriated $100 million to help those who are hooked on drugs. A lot of times the Government counseling program can work. But a lot of times it requires a change of heart in order to change habits. And so therefore, a person who is desperately seeking help will be able to take a voucher and have that voucher redeemed at a program of his or her choice, faith-based or not. We need to give people who need help the opportunity to interface with those fantastic healers and helpers that literally are saving our country, one heart and one soul at a time.

I've got a duty as your President to work as hard as I can to secure our country. It's a duty that goes on. September the 11th changed the world. It changed how we must look at our internal security. There is some thinking here in America that says, "If you go on the offense against the terrorists, you're creating more terrorists." That is a woeful misunderstanding of the nature of the terrorist threat.

These were the people who were training for years to bring harm to freedom-loving people. These were the people who took—who gained confidence because there was no response when they wantonly killed around the world. These are people who you cannot negotiate with, you cannot bargain with. And these are people that you must not hope for the best, see. They're coldblooded killers; they will kill you just like that in order to create fear and intimidation. My most solemn duty is to protect our country. I will continue to do so by hunting these killers down around the world and bringing them to justice before they hurt us here at home. And as we

do so, we will continue to spread freedom and peace.

I want to tell you a story about an event that took place in the Oval Office. Seven men came to see me from Iraq. They had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed a scapegoat. In this case, he needed seven scapegoats. I asked one of the fellows who came in to see me, he said—I said, "Why you?" He said, well, because he happened to have sold dinars to buy euros, I think he said, to buy gold so he could manufacture the jewelry that he was making. He made this transaction on—evidently on the wrong date, because the dictator picked him out and said, "You're one of seven, and I'm cutting off your hand and burning an X in your forehead." And these were the fellows that came to see me.

They came to see me because their story was documented and Marvin Zindler—I don't know if there's any Houstonians here, but you know Marvin Zindler. He's a—[*applause*]. Yes, you know Big Marv——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, sir, born and raised in Houston; he knows—he was brought up by Marvin Zindler, Big 2 News. He flew them over to Houston, and they got new hands. And they were coming to see me in the Oval Office. And it was a very emotional moment for all of us. A guy took a Sharpie, folded it in his new hand, and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. You see, he said "God bless America" because he had been liberated from the clutches of a brutal tyrant who whimsically could cut off a hand.

The contrast was sharp to me, about the nature of freedom, a free society and a tyrannical society. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies help people realize their dream. Free societies are compassionate societies.

In the Oval, I told them, I said, "You know, I'm glad you're here. It's very important for you to know that a successful President is one who realizes he's not bigger than the office, that the office of President is always bigger than the person, and that as we help you build a free Iraq, the institutions must be bigger than the people so that never happens to you again."

While we pursue the terrorists to protect ourselves, we must also be confident in the ideals of liberty and how freedom can change societies. You might remember—you cover the news—you might remember a while back where there was some doubt as to whether or not anybody would show up to register to vote in Afghanistan. Expectations were quite low as to how many people would dare take risk to exercise their God-given right. You might remember the incident when the Taliban pulled four women off a bus. They saw that they had voter IDs and killed them. Since that time, millions of people in Afghanistan have registered to vote. I think the total now is over 8 million people are lining up to exercise their right as a citizen to participate in a free society.

The long-term solution to the world is to spread freedom and liberty, and America must continue to lead. We're the home of liberty. We believe in freedom. Deep in my soul, I know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world. And I believe the United States of America must lead, must lead the world toward a more peaceful tomorrow by spreading hope and liberty in places that are desperate for freedom.

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come today. It's my honor to be here. I look forward to answering some questions. I'm off to shake a few hands in New Hampshire. But what the heck, it's the season, isn't it? [*Laughter*] God bless you all.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We appreciate you being here this morning.

The President. By the way, it's Big 13 News, not Big 2. [*Laughter*] Thank you—yes, 11 numbers. [*Laughter*] Excuse me.

Civil Liberties and the War on Terror

Q. A little addition. [*Laughter*] Good morning, Mr. President. I'm Joie Chen with CBS News and the Asian American Journalist Association. [*Applause*]

The President. You've got quite a following out there.

Q. It is, after all, the season, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

I wanted to ask you about protecting all Americans as well. There are many Arab Americans and Muslims in this country who find themselves unfairly scrutinized by law enforcement and by society at large. Just yesterday we had arrests in Albany, New York. Immediately afterwards, some neighbors in the community said they feared that the law would come for them unfairly next. We have a new book out today that suggests perhaps we should reconsider internment camps. How do we balance the need to pursue and detain some individuals from not-well-known communities while at the same time keeping innocent people from being painted by the broad brush of suspicion?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. First, we don't need intern camps. I mean, forget it. Right after 9/11, I knew this was going to be an issue in our country. I knew that there would be people that say, "There goes a Muslim-looking person; therefore, that person might be viewed as a terrorist." I knew that was going to be a problem. That's why I went to a mosque, to send the signal, right after the attacks, that said let's uphold our values. People are innocent until judged guilty. Religious people, people that go to mosques, you know, need to be—Americans need to be viewed as equally American as their neighbor, be tolerant, let law enforcement, to the best of their ability, determine guilt or innocence, but our fellow citizens need to treat people with respect.

By far, most Americans in this country did that, not because I asked them to, just because by far the vast majority of Americans are decent people. They care about their neighbors. I don't care where you're from or what your walk of life is, by far the vast majority of our citizens are willing to reach out to somebody who is different. And that needed to be done. As a matter of fact, the anecdotal stories of neighbors helping neighbors across religious lines were heartwarming.

Now, in terms of the balance between running down intelligence and bringing people to justice obviously is—we need to be very sensitive on that. Lackawanna, for example, was a—there was a cell there. And it created a lot of nervousness in the community, because the FBI skillfully ferreted out intelligence that indicated that these people were in communication with terrorist networks. And I thought they handled the case very well, but at the time, there was a lot of nervousness. People said, "I may be next." But they weren't next, because it was just a focused, targeted investigation. And by the way, some were then incarcerated and told their stories, and it turned out that the intelligence was accurate intelligence.

I guess my answer to your question is, is that we've always got to make sure that people are judged innocent before guilty; that's the best insurance policy for law enforcement overstepping its bounds. I will also tell you, however, that the threats we're dealing with are real, and therefore we must do everything we can to ferret out the truth and follow leads.

We cannot—again—it's interesting, these recent threats, you know, they're becoming more and more enriched, as you're finding out. There was more than one thread line—threat line. People are now seeing there was other reasons why we took the action we took. When we find out intelligence that is real that threatens people, I believe we have an obligation as Government to share that with people. And imagine what would happen if we didn't share that information with the people in those buildings and something were to happen;

then what would you write, what would you say?

And so we have a—in terms of law enforcement, we have a duty to uphold innocence and guilt. In terms of a Government, we have the solemn duty to follow every lead we find and share information we have with people that could be harmed. And that's exactly what we've done, and I will continue to do as the President.

This is a dangerous time. I wish it wasn't this way. I wish I wasn't the war President. Who in the heck wants to be a war President? I don't. But this is what came our way. And this is our duty, to protect our people. It's a solemn duty, and I'll continue doing it to the best of my ability.

Native American Tribal Sovereignty/Federal Aid to Tribes

Q. Good morning. My name is Mark Trahant. I'm the editorial page editor of the Seattle Post Intelligencer and a member of the Native American Journalists Association. Most school kids learn about the government in the context of city, county, State, and Federal. And, of course, tribal governments are not part of that at all. Mr. President, you've been a Governor and a President so you have a unique experience, looking at it from two directions. What do you think tribal sovereignty means in the 21st century, and how do we resolve conflicts between tribes and the Federal and the State governments?

The President. Tribal sovereignty means that: It's sovereign. You're a—you've been given sovereignty, and you're viewed as a sovereign entity. And therefore, the relationship between the Federal Government and tribes is one between sovereign entities.

Now, the Federal Government has got a responsibility on matters like education and security to help, and health care. And it's a solemn duty. And from this perspective, we must continue to uphold that duty.

I think that one of the most promising areas of all is to help with economic development. And that means helping people understand what it means to start a business. That's why the Small Business Administration has increased loans. It means, obviously, encouraging capital flows. But none of that will happen unless the education systems flourish and are strong, and that's why I told you we've spent $1.1 billion in the reconstruction of Native American schools.

Diversity in College Administration and Admissions

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. Thanks for coming. I'm Ray Suarez, a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and—[*applause*]—there's a couple of others here too—and senior correspondent for the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer on PBS.

The President. Yes, I recognize you. [*Laughter*]

Q. In one of the most closely watched cases of the 2003 term, the Supreme Court split the difference on affirmative action, allowing *Bakke* to stand but rejecting the numerical formulas used by the University of Michigan undergraduate schools. I'd like to hear your own view about when and if race and ethnicity are admissible as factors for consideration both in college admissions and in hiring in the workplace.

The President. Yes. I think—I agreed with the Court in saying that we ought to reject quotas. I think quotas are discriminatory by nature. They discriminate—I think they discriminate on the bottom, and I know they discriminate on the top. And so I agreed with their assessment that a quota system was an unfair system for all.

As you might remember, we also agreed with the finding that, in terms of admissions policy, race-neutral admissions policies ought to be tried. If they don't work to achieve an objective, which is diversification, race ought to be a factor. I agree with that assessment. I think it's very important for all institutions to strive for diversity, and I believe there are ways to do so.

When I was the Governor of Texas, there was concerns that our big institutions were not—big educational institutions were not diversified enough. So I went to the legislature and said, "Why don't we work together and say that there's automatic admission to our universities if you finish in the top 10 percent of your high school class, no matter what high school you go to." And it worked. It worked because the student bodies began to diversify at the University of Texas and at Texas A&M. And—that's an inside joke up here. [*Laughter*] You're about to hear why.

You know, I have a responsibility to work for diversity as well in the administration. I've met the obligation. If you look at my administration, it's diverse. And I'm proud of that. Condi Rice is there because she happens to be a very competent, smart, capable woman. She's also African American. And she is my closest foreign policy adviser. I see her every day. When I see Condi, I think "brilliant person," and I'm glad she's there. Colin Powell—he was here yesterday, evidently. Rod Paige—Rod Paige was the superintendent of schools in Houston. I wanted somebody who knew what it meant to run a school district, not a theorist; somebody who knows what it means to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. He had. He's there. Alphonso Jackson, Elaine Chao, Norm Mineta—Mel Martinez was in my Cabinet—we've got a diverse Cabinet. I've got a diverse administration. Hopefully, that sets an example for people when it comes to hiring, including news organizations.

College Admissions in Texas

Q. Mr. President, Roland Martin.

The President. Tell them what it's about, Martin.

Q. Oh, I will—nationally syndicated columnist with Creators Syndicate and also the editorial consultant for the Chicago Defender, the Nation's only daily Black newspaper.

The President. Give them what——

Q. I will—and representing the National Association of Black Journalists, the world's largest minority media organization, and—the inside joke—a 1991 graduate of Texas A&M University. And Mr. President, before I ask the question, I hope you'll give our Governor, Rick Perry, a call. I know you spend a lot of time in DC, Mr. President, but they're trying to cap the top 10 percent in Texas, so that may have an impact on those students going to college.

The President. Yes, but I appreciate your recognizing that it's working in the first place.

Q. It is, but they actually—the percentage of white students increased as well.

The President. See, sometimes——

Q. I understand.

The President. ——they talk; sometimes they deliver.

Q. I understand. It's okay. I'm working with the A&M president on that. I also hope that you would take a second round of questions from Texan to Texan, so we can ask a second question. If you would do me that favor.

The President. All right, just ask your two questions.

Fairness in the Voting Process/Voter Participation

Q. Mr. President, you remarked—in your remarks you said that 8 million people in Afghanistan registered to vote and, as you said, exercised their God-given right to vote.

The President. Right.

Q. That may be a right from God, but it's not guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. In 2000, an estimated 2 million people—half African American—had their votes discounted, from Florida to Cook County, Illinois, to other cities. [*Applause*] Come on, that cuts into other questions. Are you going to order Attorney General John Ashcroft to send Federal election monitors to Florida and other southern States? And in this age of new constitutional amendments, will you endorse a constitutional

amendment guaranteeing every American the right to vote in Federal elections?

The President. First of all, look, I can understand why African Americans, in particular, are worried about being able to vote, since the vote had been denied for so long in the South, in particular. I understand that. And this administration wants everybody to vote.

Now, I—the best thing we did was to pass the Helping America Vote Act with over—I think it's $3 billion of help to States and local governments to make sure the voting process is fair. And it's not just the South, by the way. The voting process needs help all over the country to make sure that everybody's vote counts and everybody's vote matter. I understand that. And that's why I was happy to work with the Congress to achieve this important piece of legislation.

Just don't focus on Florida. Now, I'll talk to the Governor down there to make sure it works. [*Laughter*] But it's the whole country that needs—voter registration files need to be updated; the machines need to work. And that's why there's $3 billion in the budget to help, Roland. And obviously, everybody ought to have a vote. And what was your other question?

Q. Should we put it in——

The President. The Constitution amendment?

Q. Should we guarantee it in the Constitution?

The President. I'll consider it—I'll consider it. And what's your second question?

Q. Well, but you said it should be guaranteed in Iraq; why not America?

The President. Well, it's not guaranteed in Iraq. People have got to show up to vote in the first place. This is—the thing about democracy is people need to step up and decide to participate in the first place. There's no guarantees people are going to vote. They should be allowed to vote. But the problem we have in our society is too many people choose not to vote. And we have a duty in the political process and you have a duty as journalists to encourage people to register to vote, to do their duty. I'm not saying every—I'm saying people are choosing. It's not guaranteed they're going to. That's part of the problem we have in America: Not enough people do vote. And you have a duty on your radio stations, on your TV stations to encourage people to register to vote. I have a duty to call them out to vote. Of course, I'm going to try to call them out to vote for me. [*Laughter*]

Second round.

Q. All right, come back around, sir.

Immigration Reform/Free Trade Agreements

Q. Early in your administration, you talked a good deal about immigration reforms and possibilities there. I have not heard you talk to that issue so much recently. I wonder what you still think is possible, given the circumstances that we find ourselves in today. What is doable, particularly in the short term?

The President. Actually, I have talked about it lately. I talked about it this winter, because I think it's necessary that we reform our immigration laws. I believe where there's a willing worker and a willing employer, and they can't find work here in America, the people ought to be allowed to be here legally to work; that's what I believe. And I believe there ought to be a process that allows a person to work here legally and go home and come back without fear of being arrested.

I think there needs to be a—first of all, this will help bring people out of the shadows of our society. This will help kind of legalize a system that takes place everyday without employers feeling like they have got to be subjected or employees feeling like they're going to be arrested—subjected to fines or arrested. And so we need to reform our immigration laws.

Now, the issue there is whether or not people automatically get to step in the front of the line when it comes to citizenship.

I don't think they should. I think those who have been waiting in line to be a citizen ought to be allowed to keep that priority in line. I think people ought to—in this process ought to be allowed to apply for citizenship, but I don't think they ought to be treated specially in relation to those who have been in line for quite a while. And in order to solve the logjam for citizenship, Congress has got to raise the quotas on who can become a citizen. And I support raising the quotas on certain population groups, like the Mexican nationals, on who can become a citizen.

The long-run solution, particularly to Mexican immigration, is going to be to help Mexico develop a middle class. That's why free trade is so important between our countries. That's why we better be careful about rhetoric that begins to unwind a free trade agreement that is making an enormous difference in the lifestyles of people in Mexico. See, trade, to me, is the great hope for developing nations. That's why I was a strong supporter of AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act. It gives people a chance to have a job that's a meaningful job, because of the trade between the world's largest market and their countries. NAFTA has made a big difference in lifting lives of people. It has improved the living standard in Mexico.

Listen, people are coming to the United States to work from Mexico because they want to make a living for their families. And if they can't make a living for their families at home, they'll come here to work. And therefore, we must work with Mexico to develop a middle class in the long run, so people can do their duty as a parent at home. That's what they want. And we need to change our immigration laws. Will it get done? Probably not this year. This is an election year; not much gets done, except for a lot of yelling and elbowing. But I would like to see reasonable immigration reform come out of the Congress.

Payroll Tax

Q. A few minutes ago you mentioned the—every American received a tax cut that's working. The most onerous tax for many Americans, particularly on the low end of the scale, is the payroll tax. What can be done about payroll taxes?

The President. Well, obviously, I chose to provide tax relief by income tax cuts, not by payroll taxes, and the reason why is payroll taxes relief will affect the solvency of Social Security. So I chose not to deal with the payroll tax.

U.S. Mission in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, this week, General Tommy Franks, your former CENTCOM commander, has been on tour, talking about his book, talking about his Iraqi experience. And he conservatively estimated 2 to 4 more years of a large-scale American presence in Iraq. This morning there is fresh fighting in Najaf, Nasiriyah, Samara. What is the mission at this point, for 140,000 American forces? And how will we know when they're done?

The President. The mission is for there—the mission is there to be a democratic Iraq where they have elections to elect their government. That's the mission, to help them achieve that. And that's important. And that's necessary work. The tactics to achieve that are, one, we help provide security to the Allawi government as they move toward elections. Obviously, there are people there that are still trying to disrupt the elections process. They can't stand the thought of a free society in the midst of a part of the world that's just desperate for freedom. These people don't like freedom. You know why? Because it clashes with their ideology. We actually misnamed the war on terror. It ought to be the struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world. [*Laughter*]

No, that's what they do. They use terror to—and they use it effectively, because we've got good hearts. We're people of conscience. They aren't. They will cut off a person's head like that, and not even care about it. That's why I tell you, you can't talk sense to them. Maybe some think you can; I don't. I don't think you can negotiate with them. Let me——

Q. That 2-to-4-year projections——

The President. No, let me finish. Let me finish, please, sir. Thank you, though.

We will stay there until the job is completed and our commanders on the ground tell us. See, I think it's very important for those of us in the political arena to listen to the commanders on the ground. Tommy was a great commander on the ground. I listened to him. And now I'll listen to General Casey as to—and Ambassador Negroponte as to when they think we've achieved our mission.

The second stage, by the way, Ray—he's trying to get me to put a timetable out there. I'm not going to do it, see. And when the timetable is busted, they'll say, "I told you." [*Laughter*] Anyway——

Q. We've got to try. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, A for effort.

It's still dangerous there, no question about it. The dynamics have changed, however, because Prime Minister Allawi, who's now in charge of the Interim Government—he's a tough, strong guy who believes that Iraq can be free and democratic. And that's an important step. It was—he's willing to step up and say clearly to the Iraqi people, "Let's reject this violence and terrorism that is threatening a better way of life." He's the fellow who woke up in bed one night in London to confront an axe-wielding thug—thugs from Saddam Hussein that tried to hatchet him to pieces, axe him to pieces. And so he's seen firsthand what tyranny can do, and he's made a decision, obviously, to take risk on behalf of a free society.

The key to success, to answer your question about when, is how quickly the Iraqis are trained and prepared to take action themselves. The ultimate success of our venture in Iraq, which is a free and democratic country, will depend upon how quickly we can help the Iraqis defend themselves. The will is there, and now they must have the training and equipment to provide them what is necessary to do their duty in a free society.

One of the biggest fears many Iraqi citizens have is that we're not a country of our word. People don't want to take risks. They understand that at this point in time, if a vacuum were created, anarchy would reign and there would be mayhem and bloodshed. And they're fearful that the United States will once again say something and not mean it. I say "once again" because you might remember at different times during Iraqi history they were—they believed they heard something in terms of U.S. support, and it didn't happen. And then there was a lot of death as a result of unfulfilled expectations. We've got to stay with them until they achieve the objective.

Nice try.

Diversity and Legacy in College Admissions

Q. Mr. President, you say, quote, "Quotas are an unfair system for all," with regards to your opposition to affirmative action.

The President. No, no, no, whoa, whoa, whoa—with regard to my opposition to quota systems.

Q. To quotas, okay. But I've never heard you speak against legacy. Now, the president of Texas A&M, Robert Gates, said that he would not use race in admissions, and then he later said he would not use legacy. If you say it's a matter of merit and not race, shouldn't colleges also get rid of legacy? Because that's not based upon merit; that's based upon if my daddy or my granddaddy went to my college.

The President. Yes. I thought you were referring to my legacy. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's why I allowed you to go ahead and bring it out.

The President. Well, in my case, I had to knock on a lot of doors to follow the old man's footsteps. [*Laughter*] No, look, if what you're saying is, is there going to be special treatment for people—in other words, we're going to have a special exception for certain people in a system that's supposed to be fair—I agree. I don't think there ought to be.

Q. So the colleges should get rid of legacy.

The President. Well, I think so, yes. I think it ought to be based upon merit. And I think it also ought to be based upon—and I think colleges need to work hard for diversity. Don't get me wrong—don't get me wrong. You said "against affirmative action," is what you said. You put words in my mouth. What I am for is——

Q. I just read the speech, Mr. President.

The President. What speech?

Q. In terms of when you came out against the Michigan affirmative action policy, and——

The President. No, I said was I against quotas.

Q. So you support affirmative action but not quotas.

The President. I support colleges affirmatively taking action to get more minorities in their school.

Q. That's a long headline, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

The President. I support diversity. I don't support quotas. I think quotas are wrong. I think quotas are wrong for people, and so do a lot of people.

Q. Just to be clear, you believe that colleges should not use legacy.

The President. I think colleges ought to use merit in order for people to get in, and I think they ought to use a merit system like the one I put out.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:21 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ernest R. Sotomayor, president, UNITY, and Long Island editor, Newsday.com; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel R. Martinez; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte. Discussion participant Roland Martin referred to Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

Remarks in Stratham, New Hampshire
August 6, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Listen, there's no better way to spend a Friday afternoon than at a picnic in New Hampshire. Thanks for coming. Gosh, what a fine gathering. Thanks for coming. I'm thrilled to be here.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm back in your important State one more time, saying I've got something to do on behalf of your country. I'd like your vote, and I'd like your help. We won New Hampshire last time; we're going to win it this time. We're on our way to a great victory in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction: Why didn't you send her instead of yourself? [*Laughter*] But what a great First Lady she is. She is a wonderful mother, a wonderful wife. She's doing a wonderful job for the American people. I'm going to

give you some reasons to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

We're working our way up the coast here. Brother Jeb's son, George P., who spent a lot of time here in New Hampshire, is getting married tomorrow.

Audience member. Oh.

The President. Yes, so we're having a little family wedding. My brother Marvin is with me today. I can't wait to say—see old number 41. You might remember him. He's got a lot of friends in New Hampshire. And Mother, of course, will be there. She can't wait for me to arrive so she can tell me what to do. [*Laughter*] I'm still listening too.

I want to thank Doug Scamman and Stella Scamman for their beautiful hospitality. Thanks for opening up your farm. What a beautiful place. You know, the amazing thing about the Scammans is they're both candidates for the statehouse. They're not running against each other; that's the good news. Otherwise Stella would win. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate Doug, a onetime speaker of the house, going back into office. It's such a good example for somebody willing to serve. And I appreciate Stella serving as well. I wish them all the best in their race. If they want my help, they can have it. If it helps me—not to be for them, I'll try there too. I just want them to win.

But I do appreciate their hospitality. I love families, and this is a great farm family. I say every day is Earth Day when you own a piece of the land. These people are taking care of their property, and you can see it when you look around at what a beautiful spot.

I appreciate my friend Judd Gregg. You know, he is an amazing Senator. He gets the work done. He is a serious-minded guy who I find a lot of fun to be around. He is a——

Audience member. Six more years!

The President. That's right, 6 more years; you need to put him back up there. [*Laughter*] You're lucky to have had him representing you; you really are. He's a good, sound man, as is Sununu, Jr. John Sununu is doing a great job as well. I enjoy working with the two United States Senators from New Hampshire.

I appreciate your Governor, Craig Benson, being here. I'm honored that he has agreed to serve. He's a good fellow, as is Congressman Jeb Bradley, running for the United States Congress. We've got to make sure you put him back in. And I know his mother, Helen, is here. That's good, Jeb, you listen to your mother too. [*Laughter*]

And then my friend Charlie Bass is with us today. He's a congressman—the other congressman from New Hampshire who's doing a great job for the people of this State. I'm proud they're here.

It's good to see my friend Ruth Griffin and "Wiz" Wieczorek. These are people I've known for—you might remember, I was knocking on doors here a while ago—like, 4 years ago. [*Laughter*] And I met a lot of good folks in New Hampshire, people that I've never forgotten. The Scammans, for example, hosted a deal for Laura and me here. It's kind of like old home week, and it's very nostalgic for us to come back and—for me to come back and look around and see many of the folks that worked so hard in 2000. I appreciate you staying with it.

We've got work to do. There's a reason I'm running for office. I want this country to be safer, stronger, and better for the American people.

I want to thank all the State folks who are here, the elected officials. I want to thank Cheryl McGuinness, the widow of American Flight 11 pilot. Cheryl is a woman of deep faith who has taken on, you know, an incredible burden on that day of September the 11th, and has dealt with it in such a strong fashion that she

shines in her courage and strength. We love you, Cheryl. Thank you for being here.

I want to thank Jayne Millerick and Nancy Merrill and my old buddy Tom Rath for being in charge of the grassroots organization. These are the people who put up the signs, people who do all the heavy lifting in a political campaign. I want to thank you for what you're doing. I want to thank you for what you're going to do. It's really important we turn the vote out. And I'm counting on you. I'm counting on your help.

Every incumbent who comes to ask for the vote has got to answer one sensible question of why—why should the people put me back in office for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together and we have accomplished a lot. But the only reason to look backward is to best tell who to lead us forward.

And that's what I'm here to tell you. We've got more to do for our country. I'm running for a reason. I want to make our country the best country it can be by improving jobs and improving our schools. I will continue to fight the war against terror. But you've got to know I'm going to continue to push for the peace. I'm going to continue to make this world a more peaceful place.

We have done a lot. I'm here to ask for your help, because there's more to do. I'm running with a good Vice President, a really good Vice President. I admit, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I'm sure Lynne got a little upset with me when she hears me say that. I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience and a man who can do the job.

Dick Cheney and I understand we have more to do for our country to achieve big goals and big objectives. We've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago—remember back—too many kids were getting shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I've called the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, and we expect every child to learn the basics.

So we believe in accountability. We believe in empowering parents. We believe in local control of schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving our public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We've got more to do. See, the jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills. And so we've got to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We want to make sure math and science education are spread throughout our schools to give our kids the skills necessary to compete. We'll use the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. What I'm telling you is, is that after 4 more years, a rising generation will have more skills and more confidence so they can realize the great promise of our country.

We've got more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. Remember, when we came to office, too many older Americans had trouble with prescription drugs and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember previous campaigns where you heard, time in and time out, "Oh, don't worry, I'll do something about Medicare," and nothing happened. We got the job done.

More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. You need to sign up if you're eligible. It will make a difference for you. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and will give—and that gives them prescription drug coverage. To help people have access to quality care, we've

expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We want those citizens getting health care in these centers, not in emergency rooms. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax free for their own health care needs.

Let me—hear this: When it comes to giving Americans more choices about health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving forward, and we're not going backwards.

Most people get their health care coverage through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses today. And many small businesses too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. So to help our families get health coverage, we must allow small employers to join together to be able to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

Let me tell you what else we need to do to make sure you've got affordable health care and available health care. We need to get rid of these frivolous and junk lawsuits. You can't be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I'm standing with the docs and the patients. I strongly support medical liability reform.

Listen, we're going to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for terrible disease. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

There's more work to do to make this economy stronger. Remember what we've been through. We've been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a terrorist attack. But we've overcome these obstacles because our workers are great, because our farmers are really good at what they do. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We felt that if you're paying Federal income taxes, you ought to get relief. It's the only fair way to do it. And so families with children got relief. We provided relief for married couples. You know, we've got a Tax Code that says there is a marriage penalty.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, that's not—we ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage.

We helped our small-business owners. That tax relief helped small-business owners. And this time, the check was really in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Our economy has been through a lot. Today's employment report shows our economy is continuing to move forward. And it reminds us that we're in a changing economy, and we've got more to do. I'm not going to be satisfied until everybody who wants to work can find a job. I'm running because I understand how to take a strong economy and make it stronger. I say we have a strong economy, and it's getting stronger. Our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

In the last year, we've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent. Here in New Hampshire, your unemployment rate is 3.9 percent. Listen, when it comes to creating jobs for American workers, in places like New Hampshire you've proved that we're moving Americans forward, and we're not turning back.

Let me tell you what else we need to do. We need to make sure our regulations are reasonable on our employers. I know

some of you file out—file a lot of paperwork. I can't promise anybody in Government has ever read it. [*Laughter*] We need tort reform if we want to keep our jobs in America. We need a fair and balanced legal system. If we want to keep our jobs in America, we need an energy policy that is wise, that encourages conservation, that encourages renewable sources of energy, that encourages exploration in environmentally friendly ways. To keep jobs here, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we need reasonable trade policy. See, here's what I believe. I believe America's workers, farmers, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. We're going to be opening up markets for the good people of New Hampshire. We want you selling New Hampshire goods not only in the United States of America but all around the world. And my administration will give you a chance to compete in a fair way.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. We've got to set priorities and not overspend it. You know how to start? The best way to start with understanding fiscal responsibility in Washington is to understand we're not spending the Government's money. You listen closely to the rhetoric of these campaigns, you hear, "Well, we're going to spend the Government's money." That's not what I think. I know whose money we spend. We spend the people's money.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we're going to keep your taxes low. This campaign is just getting started, and the other fellow has already promised over $2 trillion of new programs. Imagine what's going to be coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] And the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. But given his record, I bet we can figure out how he's going to pay for it. He's going to raise your taxes. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I'll tell you what else we've got to do to make sure jobs stay here, is to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to offer American workers a lifetime of learning. We're going to make sure our community colleges are accessible and affordable so people who need to can be retrained for the jobs which will exist. Listen, education is crucial to making sure the jobs stay here at home.

I'll tell you what else we're going to do. We're going to make sure American families keep more of something they do not have enough of, and that's time—time to coach your kids. I want to thank the football coaches, the youth football coaches who are here today. I told the coaches, I said, "Thanks for passing on values to our children." I want to thank those of you who work with the kids in the community here. Thanks for being good moms and dads. I want to thank the 4–H Clubs that were here, doing good work to help others.

See, I'm going to work with Senator Gregg. He's proposed legislation to allow workers to have flex-time. That means they can adjust their schedules to meet their needs so they can do their duty as a mom or a dad or as a community activist. Senator Gregg makes good sense in his legislation; I strongly embrace it. Government needs to stand side by side with the families of America.

I'm running for 4 more years because I want this economy to be stronger. I want our farm economy stronger. I want the entrepreneurial spirit stronger. I want there to be higher and better paying jobs. I'm running for 4 more years to continue to work for a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business economic agenda that is good for America.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends

on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our country. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against these thugs. Many young girls now go to school in Afghanistan for the first time. Afghanistan is becoming free, and America and the world are safer for it.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistani forces are aggressively to—helping round up Al Qaida and their friends and associates, and America and the world are safer.

In Saudi Arabia, before September the 11th, terrorists were raising money and they were recruiting and they were operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots which were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. I want you to remember, a lesson of September the 11th was that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, who had ties to terror, who had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his capabilities with enemies.

See, we saw a threat. We looked at the intelligence of the day and saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations looked at the intelligence and recognized Saddam was a threat. They unanimously passed a resolution—unanimously passed a resolution—which said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." After defying the free world for 12 years, he did so again. He deceived the weapons inspectors. And so I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Do I trust a madman? Or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell, America and the world are safer.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, we did the right thing. He had the capability, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies.

Now, there are some questions that a Commander in Chief needs to answer with

a clear yes or no. My opponent hasn't answered the question of whether, knowing what we know now, he would have supported going into Iraq. That's an important question, and the American people deserve a clear yes or no answer. I have given my answer. We did the right thing, and the world is better off for it.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with them. You can't hope for the best with people who take airplanes and killed thousands of our citizens. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition. We're working together—there's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative, 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, nearly 30 nations involved in Iraq. These are good people leading these countries. Our friends and allies will continue to work together for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to the leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. This is important work; it's hard work, to go from being brutalized by a tyrant to having confidence enough to live in a free world. These two countries are now governed by strong leaders. Prime Minister Allawi in Iraq and President Karzai in Afghanistan are strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. They want freedom, and so do the people of their countries. More and more of their folks are stepping up and taking responsibility. More people are becoming trained to defend their country against those who hate freedom. And the people of those countries can count on the United States and our coalition. See, when we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path of liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. I want to thank the 94th Military Police Army Reserve Unit of New Hampshire for their service. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And I have an obligation and our Government has an obligation to make sure those who defend us have the very best pay, training, and equipment. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This important legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay and health benefits, for ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. Only a handful of United States Senators voted against the help to our military.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how he tried to explain his vote—[*laughter*]—"I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Listen, I've spent a lot of quality time in New Hampshire. That's not how the people of New Hampshire talk. Now he's offering a different explanation. He said he's proud of his vote, and he said the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

No, as Commander in Chief of these folks, I'm proud to stand with them. I'm proud of the veterans who have served so

well and set such a great example to those who serve.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. They live in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. We believe in America—we know in America that free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies do not export terror. See, by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving our own national interests. As freedom spreads, America becomes more secure, and the world will be more peaceful. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest beliefs of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I'm running for 4 more years to make our country more secure and to help spread peace throughout the world. And we've got to do more to protect our country. You've read recently the threats. They're real, because there's an enemy that still wants to harm us. My opponent said something the other day I strongly disagree with. He said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. No, it's upside-down logic. It shows a misunderstanding of the enemy. During the nineties, these people were recruiting and training and preparing long before—long before—we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred, and it is wrong to blame America for the anger and the evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back. We defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission that said the homeland is safer because of the actions we've taken, but not yet safe. And so we've got work to do to make this country more secure. We'll stay on the offense, but we've got work here at home. And we've started the process of reform. We've transformed our defenses. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. It's a very important piece of legislation to give law enforcement the tools necessary to disrupt and find terrorist cells.

The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a lot of this important Commission's recommendations. We've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders. I want to thank the first-responders who are here, by the way—those are your police and firefighters and emergency teams.

I called on Congress to create a position of National Intelligence Director to dramatically improve our coordination and gathering efforts. Listen, these reforms aren't going to be easy. It's never easy in Washington. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests, a lot of people defending the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you've got to be able to get the job done. And that's what we've done in this administration.

When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education, we got the job done, and results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter. This world we're in is a——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This is an exciting time to be an American, in many ways. It's a changing world, and Government has got to understand that. You know, you've got workers—when most of our dads were

coming up, they worked for the same company, didn't change jobs, and so the pension plans or the health care plans were adjusted for that. Now it's a different world. People are changing jobs; people are working out of their homes. Oftentimes, moms and dads are both working. And policy has got to reflect these changing times, which means, it seems like to me, the best way to do so is to encourage an ownership society. For example, we want people owning and managing their own health care accounts that they can take with them job to job or go from job to home.

In terms of pensions, you know, older guys like me are set for Social Security, but younger workers needed a different approach for Social Security. We ought to allow younger workers to manage their own personal retirement accounts that they can pass from one generation to the next.

When people tell me the number of small-businesses owners in America are increasing, that's really good news. I want people to own something in our country. I'm going to continue to work for an ownership society. Homeownership is at an all-time high now in America. That's fantastic news. Isn't it wonderful to have somebody for the first time be able to say, "Welcome to my home. I'm glad you're here at my piece of property."

This administration understands that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. Now, in times of change, some things will never change: our belief in liberty, our belief in opportunity for every citizen, our nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. We believe in the individual values that we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We believe in the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundation of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in our country. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility era, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, I understand Government can hand out money. We do a pretty good job of it in Washington. [*Laughter*] But what Government cannot do is put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That's done when a loving soul puts his arm around somebody in need and says, "Brother," or "Sister, I love you. How can I help you?"

Listen, we can rally the armies of compassion. The great strength of America is the heart and soul of our people, and we can change this blessed country one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, dedication to freedom and peace.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. As Judd said, I stood in the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbing me by the arm—I don't know if he was a firefighter or a policeman; I do know that he had been searching in the rubble for a loved one. He looked at me with bloodshot eyes and said, "Do not let me down."

These are vivid impressions I will never forget. Obviously, he took it personally. The people searching through the rubble took that day personally. You took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. It is a solemn duty to defend our country, which I will do, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We have done a lot of hard work. But there's more to do. There's more to do to spread opportunity and freedom and peace. During the next 4 years, I will work to make sure the American Dream shines brightly for everybody and that we encourage an ownership society. We will pass enduring values of our country to the next generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State. I said if you gave me the honor of serving, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help—and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

May God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. at Bittersweet Farm. In his remarks, he referred to Jayne Millerick, chairman, Nancy Merrill, national committeewoman, and Tom Rath, national committeeman, New Hampshire Republican State Committee; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of Emergency Regarding Export Control Regulations

August 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended, is to continue in effect beyond August 17, 2004, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Export of Certain Items to the People's Republic of China
August 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

1. One linear accelerator for Huanggang Customs, for inspection of cargo entering the Port of Shenzhen, People's Republic of China.
2. Fifty-thousand pounds of fine-grained graphite, for Shanghai Carbone Lorraine Chemical, located in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, to use in manufacturing temperature-resistant industrial machinery components.
3. One linear accelerator for Harbin Boiler Company, Ltd., located in Harbin, People's Republic of China, to use in nondestructive testing and inspection of utility boilers and valves for conventional power and auxiliary equipment.
4. One hot isostatic press, for Guizhou Anji Foundry Company, located in Anshun City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China, to use in consolidation of titanium and aluminum castings for chemical equipment parts.
5. Two environmental test chambers, for Flextronics Industrial Company, Ltd., located in Jingan, Doumen Zhuhai, People's Republic of China, to test Xbox game consoles for the Microsoft Corporation.
6. One environmental test chamber, for Hon Hai Precision Industries Company, Ltd., located in Guangdong, People's Republic of China, to test personal computers and peripheral equipment for Apple, Compaq, and Dell.
7. One filament winding machine, for Weifang Dongming Extinguisher Equipment, located in Weifang, Shandong, People's Republic of China, to use in manufacturing 600,000 carbon dioxide fire extinguisher bottles per year.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address
August 7, 2004

Good morning. My most solemn duty as President is to protect our country, and in the 3 years since our country was attacked, we have taken important steps to overcome terrorist threats to this Nation.

We have pursued terrorists across the world, destroying their leadership and denying them sanctuaries. We are working with other governments to break up terror cells and stop planned attacks, on virtually

every continent. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security to win the battle against terror on the homefront. We are working to secure our borders, air and sea ports, and critical infrastructure. We are bringing the best technologies to bear against the threat of chemical and biological warfare.

We're using the tools of the PATRIOT Act to track terrorists within our borders and stop them before they kill our people. We have transformed the FBI to focus on the prevention of terrorist attacks. We've established a Terrorist Threat Integration Center to merge and analyze foreign and domestic intelligence on global terror in a single place. And we are sharing that intelligence in unprecedented ways with local officials and first-responders who need it to protect our communities.

I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission. Because of these steps at home and abroad, our country is safer than it was on September the 11th, 2001. Yet, we're still not safe. The elevation of the threat level in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, DC, is a grim reminder of the dangers we continue to face. Information from arrests in Pakistan, taken together with information gathered by the U.S. intelligence community, indicated that Al Qaida has cased financial targets in New York, New Jersey, and Washington, DC, and has recently updated their targeting information. This information was buttressed by other information we already had.

We and our allies are working to protect our people from these threats. As we fight the ongoing terrorist threat, we will continue moving forward with additional changes to protect our country.

This week I asked Congress to create the position of a National Intelligence Director. The person in that office will be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and will serve at the pleasure of the President. The Director will serve as the President's principal intelligence adviser and will oversee and coordinate the foreign and domestic intelligence community. The CIA will be managed by a separate Director. The National Intelligence Director will assume the broader responsibility of leading the intelligence community across our Government, and he or she will have the resources and authority to meet that responsibility.

This week I also announced that we establish a new National Counterterrorism Center. This new center will build on the excellent work of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center and will become our Government's knowledge bank for information about known and suspected terrorists. This center will also be responsible for preparing the daily terrorism threat report for the President and senior officials, and its Director will report to the National Intelligence Director, once that position is created.

We will act on other valuable recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission. In the coming days, I will issue a series of directives to various departments on essential steps for the Government on the war on terror. As we take these steps, our Nation is grateful to the dedicated, hard-working men and women of our intelligence community who are working day and night to keep our country safe.

We're a nation in danger. We're doing everything we can in our power to confront the danger. We're making good progress in protecting our people and bringing our enemies to account. But one thing is certain: We'll keep our focus; we'll keep our resolve; and we will do our duty to best secure our country.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:51 a.m. on August 6 in Kennebunkport, ME, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to the Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The Office

of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. The related Executive orders of August 27 on the National Counterterrorism Center, management of the intelligence community, and sharing of terrorism information are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in a Discussion at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia
August 9, 2004

The President. Thank you for being here.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Okay. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated.

Thanks for coming. I appreciate the warm welcome. I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come and explain why I want to be your President for 4 more years.

We've done a lot since I got elected. We, the country, have worked together. It is—and we've accomplished a lot, and we've been through a lot. It's been tough times. The only reason to look backward is to best determine who to lead us forward. So today I'm going to talk about some ideas as to how to make this country a safer, stronger, and better place for every citizen, for every single person who lives in this country.

First, I'm sorry that Laura is not here. She's out campaigning. I tell the people, in front of these enthusiastic and large crowds we've been having, that, you know, probably the wisest reason to put me back in there is so that she'll be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man. I admit it, that Dick Cheney is not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] But that's not why I picked him. I picked him because of his sound judgment, his experience, his ability to do the job.

I want to thank Dr. Bob Templin for allowing us to use this important facility. I say "important"; it's because the community college system is an integral part of making sure that this country is a hopeful country. I'll tell you why. Part of the reasons I'm seeking the Presidency again is because I understand that if we use our community college system wisely, people will be trained for the jobs which will exist. See, in order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to have a workforce that is capable of filling the jobs of the 21st century. And one of the crucial links in making sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are coming is the community college system. And Bob understands that. I appreciate you being here, Doc. Thanks for giving us a chance to come by.

I want to thank my friend Senator George Allen for being here. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank Frank Wolf and Ed Schrock. I appreciate Frank's concern and dedication for those who need American help. He understands what I know, that we have a responsibility in the world to help those who hunger and those who are afflicted by disease and those who suffer under tyranny. And I appreciate Frank's deep concern not only about the citizens of this State and our country but also the deep concern about those to whom we can deliver help. And we are. Just remember, when people talk about America, just remember they're talking about a country which is leading the fight against HIV/

AIDS, not only here at home but on the continent of Africa.

And I appreciate Ed coming over. Thanks for being here, Ed. I appreciate your leadership as well.

The attorney general is with us today. General, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming.

We've got some of our citizens up here because we're going to talk about a crucial aspect of our vision, which is how to encourage an ownership society to flourish in America. I'm going to get to that in a minute.

Before I do, I want to talk about a couple of other points. One is that we're making progress in spreading the peace. See, we know that a free society is going to be a peaceful society. We also know that freedom is not our country's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each person in this world. And that's why—that's why over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work to spread freedom, for our own security and for the sake of others.

We've done some hard work over the past 3 years. We must never forget the lessons of September the 11th. First of all, the enemy that we face is cruel. Unlike Americans, they don't have a conscience. They're willing to kill innocent people in order to shake our will and our resolve. As we work to secure our country, we must never forget the nature of the people. And those people cannot be negotiated with. You can't reason with them. You can't sit down and say, "Look, why won't you change your ways?" That's not the way they think. And your President must clearly understand that. That's why it's important for us—that's why over the next 4 years, we will engage them in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

Secondly, when this country speaks, it better mean what it says, in order to make the world a more peaceful place. In other words, when we say things, we must mean what we say. And when I said that if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist, I meant exactly that. And that's why we made the decision—a tough decision, by the way; nobody wants to commit kids to war. That's what you got to understand. It's the hardest decision a President can make, and you only do so if you're convinced it's going to lead to peace.

It's a different kind of war we're in, and therefore, we had to say clearly to those that were providing safe haven that you're going to be held accountable as well. Because, remember, Al Qaida was training in Afghanistan. They had taken over the country. We could not allow that to continue for our own security and for the sake of the people who lived underneath the brutal dictatorship of the Taliban. And so thanks to our United States military and our friends and allies, Afghanistan is now free. Afghanistan is an ally. Afghanistan is an ally on the war on terror.

I'll tell you something really interesting—two things I want to share with you about Afghanistan. I can remember earlier in the spring, I think it was, people were talking about how maybe people aren't going to vote. Don't you remember, there was some serious terrorist attacks on women, in particular, that had got their registration cards and were in the process. The world was kind of predicting people weren't going to show up to vote. Turns out, over 8 million—I think the number is 8 million—Afghan citizens have registered to vote, far exceeding expectations. People want to be free. People want to be free. They want to live in a free society. They want to be able to exercise their rights as a human being. It's a universal desire and a universal love.

Secondly, when I was in Cleveland a while back—this is like the last couple of weeks—I've been traveling a lot, so it's kind of hard for me to remember exactly where I've been. [*Laughter*] I went to the International Children's Game. I helped kick it

off. And I was there speaking to the athletes, and right to my right—I'll never forget it—was the Afghan girls soccer team. Now, let me tell you what's interesting about that. They would not have been in the United States—they wouldn't even have been playing soccer under the Taliban. These people were so brutal, so dark in their vision that many young girls didn't have a chance to be educated.

Not only do we have an ally in the war on terror, there is a more compassionate and decent society growing in Afghanistan, which is in our interests, and it's in the world's interests.

As the American people look at this election, they must take a look at the candidates and determine who best understands the lessons to be learned from September the 11th. Another lesson is, is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. In this world of threats to our homeland, in this world where there are folks who cannot stand our country and our way of life, we must deal with threats. It used to be we didn't have to. Now you just can't hope they go away. They must be dealt with—hopefully, diplomatically; hopefully, we can cure things, problems peacefully. That ought to be the first priority of any President. However, if diplomacy fails, we must be a country that is willing to take action to defend ourselves.

I want you to remember, Saddam Hussein was a threat; he was a clear threat. He had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He had terrorist organizations in his country. He was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He is a person that invaded countries in his neighborhood. We all looked at the intelligence. I looked at it. Members of Congress from both political parties looked at it. My opponent looked at it. We all came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. The United Nations Security Council—the U.N. Security Council concluded Saddam was a threat and passed a resolution unanimously which said, "Disarm, disclose, or face serious consequences." That's what the free world said.

And he deceived the world again. I say "again" because that's what he'd been doing for a decade. And then he deceived the inspectors. Remember, with that period of time, we said, "Oh, let the inspections work." We were all for that. We wanted the inspectors to work. But it was clear that he was deceiving them. So I had a choice to make, and that is, whether or not to trust a man who had used weapons of mass destruction, somebody who had used—somebody who had defied the free world. My choice was, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do I take actions necessary to defend our country? And given that very difficult choice, I chose to defend America. I will do so every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

We didn't find the stockpiles that we thought we would find. Everybody thought they would be there. We haven't found them yet. But he did have the capability of making weapons. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. We couldn't afford to take the chance that a sworn enemy of America would share capabilities with an enemy which hates us. That's a chance we couldn't afford to take.

I'll tell you an interesting story—and by the way, I think the candidates for President must say yes or no, whether or not they would have made the same decision.

I tell the story about the seven men that came to see me in the Oval Office. They had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein because his currency had devalued and he was looking for a scapegoat. And they had a X burned in their forehead as well, to brand them as enemies of the state, I guess; I don't know what the symbol was. But they came to see me in the Oval Office. Needless to say, it was a powerful moment. The fellows walked in and were just overwhelmed by the majesty of a shrine to democracy, and it was—imagine, seeing the President of the United States. And I was emotional because the

contrast between what we believe and what Saddam Hussein did to his people is just so amazing, because these people had just come from Houston, Texas, where they had received new hands because of the generosity of an American citizen named Marvin Zindler. It was just a clear contrast between the brutality of a man who whimsically could have somebody's hand cut off and the great generosity and love of compassion of the American citizens who are willing to help heal somebody, no matter their religion or where they're from.

A free Iraq is going to change the world. For those of you with young kids, I want you to think about a world that is going to be much more peaceful, a country more secure because, during these difficult days, we're standing true to our firm belief and our ideals that freedom equals peace. And it's hard work. It's hard work. It's hard work because there are people in that—in the Middle East that can't stand the thought of a free society. It just scares them. And they don't scare us. They're tough, but we're resolute because we understand the charge of history, the charge that history has given us. We have a duty. We have a duty to keep our word. We have told the Iraqi people and the people of Afghanistan that we're with you. And they're watching carefully. They're watching carefully to determine whether or not they can take a risk for freedom, or whether or not America's word doesn't mean anything.

I'm convinced that these are historic times. These are times when people will look back and say, thank goodness the American people stood true to our belief that liberty is a transforming moment in the history of the world.

A couple of other points. I talk about a stronger and better America; it means our economy needs to be strong. The economy is growing, and there's more to do. One of the things we better make sure is we don't raise the taxes on the people. This is going to be a campaign issue. I'm going to talk about good education policy to help train workers. I'll talk about energy policy to make sure we're not—that we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy. Of course, I'm going to talk about liability reform, medical liability reform. I'll talk about tort reform, so our business people can thrive and hire people.

I mean, the economy is strong. It's getting stronger. And there are policies we need to put in place to make sure this is the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs to stay in America, like I do, this better be a place where people feel comfortable taking risks and expanding the job base. So I've spent a lot of time talking about that in the course of the campaign.

Today we're going to talk about how to encourage an ownership society in America. Listen, these are changing times. If you really think about it, they are much different from the times when we came up. Most of our dads—at least guys my age—dads worked for one company. Mine did move around a little bit, but—[*laughter*]. Georges generally worked for one company. [*Laughter*]

At any rate, when we think about it, it was a different society back a couple of decades ago because a person stayed with the same company, had the health plan from the company, retirement plan from the company. Now people are moving around. It's a different world. And there is some uncertainty in that kind of world. You've got moms and dads that are both working, sometimes out of the house. And the economy is changing, and therefore, Government policy ought to change with the times. And one way to bring stability and security into a person's life is to encourage ownership. See, if you own and control your own health care plan, you can move from job to job without worrying as to whether or not you're going to get health coverage for your family. If you own your own home and building equity in your own

home and you're changing from job to job, it provides great security and relief.

And so we're going to talk about different forms of ownership here. But the point here is, I want you to understand that over the next 4 years we'll be working to build a culture of ownership in America. We want more people owning things in this country.

Let me put it to you bluntly. In a changing world, we want more people to have control over your own life. And that's a difference—there's a difference in philosophy, when you think about it. A lot of the Government policies are, you know—as I like to put it, we'll give you the orders, and you pay the bills. [*Laughter*] If you really think about it, there's a philosophical divide here in this campaign. My judgment is, Government ought to be empowering people by giving them more control over their lives. And we'll talk about some practical ways to do that.

Now, look, one of the things we'll always work to do is to take care of those people who cannot help themselves. As a matter of fact, a proper policy of Government is to give people the tools necessary to be able to realize their own dreams. That's why education is vital. That's why the No Child Left Behind Act must be strengthened. It's making a big difference. I'm telling you, when you start asking the question, "Can you read and write and add and subtract?"—all of a sudden people start learning better. There's accountability. It holds people to account. We've got to end this—it's a mediocre system when you quit on kids basically because of the color of their skin, you know? We're not going to do that anymore in America.

In terms of health care, there's some smart things we can do. We've got to recognize there are people who can't help themselves. That's why these health centers we've opened up around the country make eminent sense—so primary care for low-income people can be delivered at these centers, as opposed to emergency rooms.

There are things we're doing throughout our administration but all aimed at encouraging people to help themselves and eventually being able to own something too. And so what I want to talk to you today about is some interesting examples of what I'm saying.

We're going to start off with Sharon Rainey. She's sitting right here. She's an entrepreneur. Isn't that a lovely word? You know, entrepreneur—we want entrepreneurs. See, the job of Government is not to create wealth but to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and alive and well. And it is under the Bush administration and will continue to be.

Ready to go? All right. Sharon started her own business. True or false?

Sharon Rainey. True. [*Laughter*]

The President. This is a warm-up. I'm not even a lawyer, and here I am leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rainey. She needs the leading. [*Laughter*]

The President. Tell us what you do.

[*At this point, Ms. Rainey made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, let me stop you there. First of all, what Government cannot do is encourage Sharon to start her own business. [*Laughter*] We can't tell her to. I beg your pardon, we can encourage her to, by good policy; we can't tell her to. See, you can't make her be an entrepreneur. Secondly, she's got to design the product herself. She's got to be smart enough to figure out how to meet demand, which she did. But one thing we can do is not overtax her.

Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. That's really important for people to understand. I hope you know that. The tax relief we passed—the well-timed tax relief we passed, I might add—recognized the importance of small businesses in our society. See, most people probably do not understand that, by far,

the vast majority of small businesses are organized like Sharon's business is organized and pay individual income taxes. They're called Subchapter S's or, in this case, an LLC or a sole proprietorship. And therefore, when she files her business tax returns, she pays individual income taxes. And therefore, when you hear us talking about providing tax relief to individuals, it ought to be providing tax relief to individuals and to the small-business sector of America. See, we want taxes low for Sharon so her business, which has now gone from not-for-profit to for-profit—that's always a good sign, by the way, if you're a businessperson. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right?

Ms. Rainey. Yes, sir.

The President. You can say "for-profit." We want her business to flourish. She hired a person recently, I understand—or not?

Ms. Rainey. I've hired three people recently. I've now gone up to six part-time employees.

The President. Let me talk to you about—see, she hired three. And when the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in the country, the Sharons of America hire three people here, three people there, and all of a sudden it starts to amount to something. And it's—that's why the people are finding work, because the small-business sector of the country is strong.

I asked Sharon to come because I think it's such a wonderful example of somebody who created her own business because of her own ingenuity and her own drive. And now the role of Government is not to—is to make sure that the environment is such that she can continue to grow. She's got to figure out the right product, don't get me wrong. There are no guarantees in the business world. But I can tell you one guarantee: If we run the prices up on—run the taxes up on Sharon, it's going to be hard for her to expand.

That's why you've got to be careful about this rhetoric, "We're only going to tax the rich." You know who the—the rich in America happen to be the small-business owners. That's what that means. Just remember, when you're talking about, oh, "We're just going to run up the taxes on a certain number of people." First of all, real rich people figure out how to dodge taxes. [*Laughter*] And the small-business owners end up paying a lot of the burden of this taxation. Third, I want to make another point. We shouldn't be taking more than 35 percent of anybody's money anyway, Federal taxes ought to be—[*applause*].

Sharon is a small-business owner. We want more people owning their own small business. There's some incredibly helpful—hopeful signs in this country. The number of minority small-business owners are increasing—is increasing. It's—the number is going up, and that's really important and hopeful. The number of women-owned businesses is increasing, and that is, I think, really positive news for the country. We want people to say, "This is my business; I own my business," just like we want people saying, "I own my own home."

And so, therefore, policies over the next 4 years will be to encourage others to own their own home, to expand the homeownership in America. Right now the homeownership rate is the highest ever. We want more people owning their own home.

And so we've got Kevin with us, Kevin Brault, first-time homeowner. He's a fellow that walks out for the first time and says, "Welcome to my home." So what's it like to say, "Welcome to my home"?

Kevin Brault. It feels great. So I purchased my home, first home, in November of 2001. And at that time, it was close to 2 months after September 11th. So I was a little hesitant as to, you know, whether the economy was going to stay strong, what was going to happen in this area, because my home is just a couple miles away. So I went forward and decided to take that step, to create my own ownership and create my own net worth. And it's been a great decision. Since then, the net worth of the home has increased over 50 percent. Then with interest rates coming down last

summer, I was able to refinance from 6.5 percent to 5 percent, thus saving over $300 a month on my mortgage.

The President. That's good, yes. You know, when a homeowner starts talking about his own home—in this case, he starts talking about, "My value has gone up"—[*laughter*]—that means his worth. That means that in a changing time, it is helpful to know that your portfolio, your asset base, that which you own, has got a little more value to it. It kind of changes your attitude, doesn't it, a little bit. You know something, it changes it so much, he's getting married. That's good. Where's Lisa?

Mr. Brault. Right there in the blue shirt.

The President. You've probably got some ideas about how to remodel the home, don't you?

Mr. Brault. Big time, absolutely.

The President. That's a word we use in this administration a lot, "big time." [*Laughter*] Anyway, this man got relief from taxes, and I think it says you saved about $800 in '03, same amount in '04, because when we provided tax relief, we said, "If you pay taxes, you get relief." That's not the way sometimes tax relief works in Washington. Sometimes it's, "We're going to make sure only certain people get tax relief." If you're going to provide relief, it's only fair that everybody ought to get relief. That's why we reduced all rates, which seems to make sense. And old Kevin Brault here got him $800. I like to put it this way: Once you set priorities at the Federal level, Kevin Brault can spend his own money better than the Government can. Right, Kevin?

Mr. Brault. That's right.

The President. I was hoping that would be your answer. [*Laughter*] And if the tax relief isn't made permanent, his taxes go up; so do Sharon's. That's why we're having this debate. So does yours; that's right. That's why we're having this debate in Washington, DC. You see, when Congress passed the tax relief, parts of the tax relief plan were set to expire. If Congress doesn't act, the child credit is going to go down, which means you're going to—if you've got a child, you're paying higher taxes. The marriage penalty goes up if Congress doesn't act, which means if you're married, you're going to pay higher taxes. The 10-percent bracket goes away, which means if you're benefiting from the 10-percent bracket, you're paying higher taxes. We don't need to be raising taxes on the American people right now. The taxes ought to be lower, to keep the economy growing. Good job, Kevin.

Let me talk to you about savings for retirement. We've got Susie and Chris Ensign with us today. They're savers. Good policy encourages people to save. And one of the interesting questions that we'll be confronted with in Government when the baby boomers begin to—really begin to retire is how to make sure the Social Security system is strong so that the Ensigns will be able to see something from Social Security. This is a very important issue for young workers. Old guys like me don't need to worry about it because the system is solvent for those who have retired or are near retirement. What we need to worry about is younger folks, like the Ensigns. And so we're going to talk a little bit about savings. I want them to share with the people who might be listening how they think about savings, what savings means as a young couple. And maybe they've got some suggestions on Social Security, how to strengthen the system, how to make it fulfill the promise—better fulfill the promise that our Government has made.

Welcome. Thank you all for coming. Which one of you going to lead off?

Chris Ensign. My name is Chris, and this is my wife, Susie.

The President. Right.

[*Mr. Ensign made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, what you're hearing is—that's a very interesting—see, what Chris just said is part of an attitudinal shift

towards Social Security that is taking place in the country. When I was coming up, it was pretty well assumed that Social Security would be all right—until people began to calculate the fact that there's a lot of baby boomers who are going to be on the system relative to the number of payers into the system, like Chris. And the fundamental question is, can we change the system by strengthening it, so that Chris can realize there's something available for him after he pays for me? That's really what we're talking about, isn't it?

And what he just said was, he said, look, if you look at the rates of return on the money in the Social Security trust fund, they are so abysmally low that it is impossible—virtually impossible from a fiscal perspective to make the system work without raising taxes on him and his family to the point where it chokes productivity and progress.

And then what he said was, he said, "Well, would Government please consider putting aside some of my own money"—at his choice—in a personal account, an account that he could manage under obviously strict guidelines but could get a better rate of return for his money than that which we're now getting inside the Social Security trust. And by the way, it would be an account that is his own—or their own, that they could then pass on to whomever they wanted to pass it on to. I support the idea of creating a personal saving account for younger workers in order to make sure the system is solvent.

By the way, tax relief provided this family $2,000 in '03 and '04. I know it doesn't sound like a lot to people inside the Capital, I guess; that doesn't sound all that much, maybe. It's a lot to these people, and it enabled them to take advantage of the increased contribution levels for the IRAs, right? You went from 2,000 to 3,000 for your IRA. That's helpful. In other words, these good folks decided to take the tax relief and add to their savings accounts, which provide security in a changing world.

And so we need to do two things. We need to help people save with good policy on current plans, perhaps simplify the process. There's now a lot of savings opportunities. There are IRAs—this kind of IRA, that kind of IRA—and good policy will be to simplify it and make the rules clear so as to encourage more savings so people have got their own nest egg to help them in a changing world. And then, of course, we talked about Social Security.

I want to thank you all for coming. Good job. You want to say anything?

Susie Ensign. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Okay, one other thing we're going to talk about today is health care. I told you we're expanding community health centers so that low-income folks can get primary care. That's important. The Government policies, because of helping States with waiver requests, have expanded SCHIP—those are—that's health care for low-income children. That was an important policy.

We changed Medicare for the better. We strengthened Medicare. Remember, Medicare was a system that said, we'll pay for your hospital stay, in case you've got a heart problem, but we won't pay for the medicine necessary to prevent you from going to the hospital in the first place. That doesn't seem to make much sense, did it? And so we've begun to modernize the system, make it better for our seniors, starting with the drug discount card. By the way, if you're a senior, you need to look into the drug discount cards. They'll help you save money.

Next year we're going to have preventative screenings for the first time in Medicare. Seniors signing up for Medicare will be able to have a checkup, which seems to make sense for the Government. If you're interested in trying to save money through rational policy, you ought to be checking people early, before it's too late. That's what we're going to start doing in

Medicare. And then in '06, seniors will have a prescription drug benefit attached to Medicare, and they'll have the choice necessary to make—to design a program to suit their needs. This is good policy. You might remember the issue of Medicare. Year after year after year, politicians talked about it. This administration got it done.

Most people get their insurance through their business. And small businesses are having trouble paying for health care. That's the problem we've got in the country today. A lot of it has to do with frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. By the way, you can't be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You can't be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I'm going to work with Congress for liability reform and for tort reform.

Health savings accounts are a new option for Americans to be able to say, "I own my own health savings account," and the doctor-patient relationship is central to the decisionmaking process. That's the core of our philosophy. I want—we've got Roger Wells. Rog is a vet who has looked into and utilized a health savings account. I've asked him to come to explain how they work. Health savings accounts are new. Anything new in society, when it comes to health, requires a certain amount of education.

Now, if you're a small-business owner like Sharon is, I want you to listen to these accounts, because part of the problem we have in our society is the cost of health care is too high. These accounts will help reduce the cost of health care for small businesses as well as for individuals.

Roger, you have got a health savings account. Tell us about it.

[*Dr. Roger Wells made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me tell you what he just said, see if I can try it. I appreciate it. He buys a catastrophic plan that says the insurance company will pay for anything over $5,000 of health care coverage. So he's got the comfort of knowing that if something goes terribly wrong, he's taken care of by the insurance company. He then contributes, tax-free, into his own account, $5,000. So in other words, he doesn't have to contribute anything; he can come out of his pocket. But, nevertheless, there's a tax incentive to do so—so that from zero to $5,000, he takes care of it.

Now, this is a small-business owner. She can, for her employees, buy a catastrophic plan with a lower deductible and help the employee with the money for the incidentals, for the ongoing daily medical expenses.

But anyway, in Roger's case, he puts the $5,000 in tax-free; his money earns interest tax-free; and if he needs the money to pay medical expenses in the year, up to $5,000, it comes out tax-free. Now, if he continues to make good choices—he's from New Hampshire—if he continues walking those mountains of New Hampshire so that he's healthy, and he only spends 1,000 of the 5,000, that 4,000 is his. He can put another 5,000 in next year if he chooses. He can use some of the 4,000 to buy the catastrophic plan. Anyway, my point to you is, is that he gets to decide, as opposed to a program where somebody else is making the health care decisions, an insurance bureaucrat, for example, is making the decisions. And so Roger is now in total charge on a tax-free basis.

These plans will change small businesses. And so small-business owners need to take a look at health savings accounts. It's a way to provide good health coverage for employees at a much lower cost basis than you're probably having to provide now. So I want to thank you for sharing that with us. Go ahead.

Dr. Wells. Can I say that there is one big problem with this program?

The President. Sure.

Dr. Wells. It didn't start 10 years ago.

The President. That's right. Are you a big animal or a little animal?

Dr. Wells. I do horses only.

The President. Horses only?

Dr. Wells. Horses only.

The President. I was going to say, Barney has got him a headache and—[*laughter*]—you know who Barney is, don't you? [*Laughter*]

I hope you found this discussion interesting. I certainly did. What we're talking about here is we want people—when you hear me talk about ownership society, that's what I'm talking about, how to help people control their own lives. If you really think about what we're talking about, we're talking about policies that say to the American people, "You're in control of your life, not the Government. The Government is not dictating how you do things; you are."

And I want to thank you all for sharing these with us. I've got time to answer a couple of questions, if you might have some. I'm not—it kind of gives me a chance to warm up for press conferences. [*Laughter*]

I do want to say something about the Faith-Based Initiative that I talk a lot about. I understand the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of our citizens. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to rally what I call the armies of compassion, because I believe that society can change, one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time, when people who have got love in their hearts put their arm around somebody in need and says, "How can I help you, brother or sister? What can I do to help save your life?"

Listen, there are wonderful Government programs, and they will continue to exist so long as they're producing good results. But one of the things we've got to recognize in this country is that coming out of our churches and synagogues and mosques are programs all designed to help save lives. And our society should not fear allowing faith-based programs to competitively bid for social service grants, if we're focused on changing the country.

I'm running again and asking for your help because I've got a plan to make the country safer. I know what we need to do. We've got a plan to make the country stronger, and we've got a plan to make the country better for every citizen. I'm not talking about a handful; I'm talking about everyone, in every corner of America.

I'll tell you what, let me answer some questions. I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions, and then I've got to head back downtown to get some work done.

Yes, ma'am.

Education

Q. Yes, education. I'm a fourth grade teacher.

The President. First, let me stop you. Thank you for teaching.

Q. You're welcome. What can you do for our children in public education, private education, that will make a difference in America today?

The President. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to continue to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, is what we're going to do. And by that, I mean—let me tell you what that means. That means if you set the bar low, you're going to get lousy results. It starts with recognizing that every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract and that we must not allow systems to develop that just shuffle kids through. That's what's happening; let's be frank about it. We had systems—school systems around this country that evidently didn't think certain kids could learn, so they just moved them on, you know? And guess what happened? When they came out at the end, they couldn't read. And everybody went, "Oops, what went wrong?"

So we've changed that in Washington. We've increased Federal funding. Title I money is up by 52 percent since I became the President. Elementary and secondary

school programs are up by 49 percent. Those are healthy increases in spending. But—well, there's more than just spending when it comes to schools. Now we're asking the question, show us. See, for the first time the Federal Government is saying to school districts, we expect to see results. We want our kids reading by—at grade level by the third grade. There's nothing wrong with asking that. It seems like a legitimate request.

And in this program, the No Child Left Behind law, it says that if you are not reading by grade level by the third grade, there's extra help. See, what we know—and the Congressman and the Senator understand this very well—is that we know accountability systems can be used to change lives, as opposed—you don't use the accountability system to punish people. You use the accountability system to determine where you need extra help. It's a way to determine whether or not the curriculum is working.

Listen, some of the reading programs around the country don't work. They've got—they use the wrong methodology. And we need to know that, don't we? If we expect every child to be learning at grade level, we need to know. And so first thing we've done is, we've changed the whole attitude toward public schools. It's an optimistic attitude. It says, we know every child can read and we expect every child to read, and therefore, why don't you show us? And if not, there will be extra help.

We need to, by the way, bring that attitude to our preschool programs. I believe that—I know there's curriculum available for preschoolers that provide them the basics for reading. And I think our Head Start programs ought to be encouraged to adopt very simple curricula, but based upon the science of reading. My friend Reid Lyons at the NIH is a pro, an expert. He understands how kids learn to read. And therefore, it seems to make sense, since we're spending Federal dollars on Head Start, if as part of the core curriculum of Head Start be to lay the foundation for little kids reading.

We need intensive reading programs. You got me started here, and I'm going to keep going. I've laid out intensive reading programs for kids in junior high and high school. We need to intervene now, before it's too late. We can no longer say, "Gosh, let's hope for the best," because we're now living in a world where if you can't think, it's going to be hard to be a productive worker in the workplace. And so, therefore, this economy is changing; education must change with it.

By the way, we've added a million kids over my administration who've received Pell grants to go to college. That's an achievement; I want to thank the Congress for working with us on that. It says, basically, when you're coming out of high school with the ability to go to college and you're poor, we're going to help you go. See, part of making sure that kids work hard in high school is that they realize there's help coming out of high school in order to be able to continue to realize their dreams.

No, we're making great progress on education. There's more to do, and that's why I want to continue being the President.

Any other questions here? Yes, ma'am.

Small and Minority Business/Tax Policy

Q. Hi. I'm a woman businessowner, along with my husband. And I'd like to know what encouragement you have for minority business development at a Federal and local level for contracting. Thank you.

The President. Yes. No, I appreciate that. First of all, the SBA is geared up to help small minority businesses. We've increased the number of loans out of SBA by 40 percent, all aimed at spreading the entrepreneurial spirit.

Secondly, the best thing that can happen—I can't speak for local government. You're going to have to call the mayor or

the Governor or something like that, anyway. [*Laughter*] But I can talk about Federal contracting. And the best thing—I think Federal contracting ought to be used to enhance entrepreneurship and small businesses. And therefore, we've got to make sure that Federal contracts are broken down to small—smaller contracts so small businesses have a chance to participate.

By the way, good tax policy—I can't emphasize enough the need to have good tax policy. If you're a small business and your small business is beginning to grow, and the Government runs the taxes up on you, it's going to make it harder to survive, pure and simple. And that's why it's very important for us in this campaign—for people listening to this campaign to remember that when you got about $2.2 trillion of new money promised to spend, you've got to figure out how to pay for it. Yes, I know how he's going to pay for it: You're going to pay for it. But we're not going to let him. That's why we're going to win the campaign.

Yes.

Iran/North Korea/Cooperation in Foreign Policy

Q. I'm concerned about the nuclear threat coming out of Iran.

The President. Yes.

Q. I was just wondering if you could comment on that.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. He's concerned about Iran, as am I. That's why early in my administration I talked about Iran in vivid terms. First of all, you've got to understand that every situation requires a different response when it comes to foreign policy, and so we tailor our responses based upon the reality of the moment. And first is to make it clear to the world that Iran must abandon her nuclear ambitions. That's part of the role of the United States, and to work with others to send that same message. The IAEA is the agency principally responsible for the Iranian nuclear program. We're working closely with them. We're making sure that we ask the hard questions to the IAEA so they ask the hard questions to the Iranians. We got the Iranians to sign what's called—not we, the world got the Iranians to decide—to sign what's called an additional protocol, which will allow for site inspections that normally would not have been allowed under IAEA. In other words, the groundwork, the ability to inspect as best as possible, is in place.

Secondly, the tactics of our—as you know, we don't have relationships with Iran. I mean, that's—ever since the late seventies we have no contacts with them, and we've totally sanctioned them. In other words, there's no sanctions—you can't—we're out of sanctions. And so we've relied upon others to send the message for us. And the foreign ministers of Germany, France, and Great Britain have gone in as a group to send a message on behalf of the free world that Iran must comply with the demands of the free world. And that's where we sit right now. And my attitude is we've got to continue to keep pressure on the Government and help others keep pressure on the Government, so there's kind of a universal condemnation of illegal weapons activities.

As well, the United States does have an opportunity to speak clearly to those who love freedom inside of Iran, and we are. There is a significant diaspora, here in the United States, of Iranian Americans who long for their homeland to be liberated and free. We're working with them to send messages to their loved ones and their relatives through different methodology. And one method—and very overt, I might add—we've got radio broadcasts, a new radio broadcast system going into Iran—say, "Listen, we hear your voice. We know you want to be free, and we stand with you in your desire to be free."

I will tell you, a free Iraq is going to send a clear message to people in Iran as well, that free societies are possible. That's

why I say this is an historic moment in our history, and it really is. When you think about it, a free country in the midst of the Middle East will send a very clear signal that freedom is possible. In other words, there are reformers and people who want to be free watching carefully as to whether or not this country, which is the beacon of freedom, is strong enough not to wilt when the pressure gets significant.

I tell this story a lot—I'll share it with you—about my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. And we were having Kobe beef one day and—it's quite good, I might add, and—[*laughter*]—this was in Tokyo. And you know what? We were talking about another subject that I'm sure is a concern of yours as well, and that's North Korea. And it was an amazing conversation, when you think about it, wasn't it, that I was talking to my friend, 55 years or so after World War II had ended, about how to keep the peace in a troubled part of the world. We made the decision—I made the decision that, on North Korea, that the kind of bilateral negotiations weren't working. If you might recall, my predecessor thought he had an arrangement with the North Koreans that they did not honor. And it's a lesson that it's important to remember.

So I made the decision to bring other nations in to help send the same message to North Korea. It's a more effective way of doing things if there's more than one voice willing to say the same thing. That's why China is very much involved in the process now, which is helpful. And Japan is too. And so Prime Minister Koizumi and I were talking about how to make sure the six-party talks sent the same message to Kim Chong-il, which is, get rid of your nuclear weapons program and there will be—in a verifiable way that gives us all confidence that he has done so, and then perhaps there's a way to help them economically.

And during the course of the conversation, I became very thankful because my predecessors believed that Japan could self-govern. If you read some of the editorials and some of the writings right after World War II, there was a lot of doubt as to whether or not a country like Japan could self-govern, could be a democracy. But there were people here who had great faith in the transformation power—the transformative power of liberty and stood their ground. And there I was talking to a duly elected official of Japan about peace.

Someday, an American President is going to be talking to elected officials, an elected official from Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace. Free societies are peaceful societies. And free societies join this fantastic alliance of those of us who long for peace deep in our heart, an alliance of countries willing to work on the tough issues like Iran and North Korea, all aimed at bringing these difficult solutions to a peaceful conclusion.

And anyway, it's a long answer to an important question, but nevertheless, it's one—[*applause*]—let me finish; one other thing. It says that good foreign policy works with other countries, and we will. Remember now, one of the dangers of this world is the proliferation of weapons and technologies. And there's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative, an initiative that we helped put together during my administration. Some 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Nearly 30 nations are involved in Iraq. We've got good, strong alliances of people working together. I'm never going to turn over our national security needs to leaders of other countries, however.

Yes, sir. You look like a man with a question.

Q. I drive a school bus, so I don't need your microphone. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay, good.

Judicial Nominees

Q. [*Inaudible*]—concerned about the judicial nominees. I watch it every day on

C–SPAN. I'd like to know what—[*inaudible*].

The President. I appreciate that. Listen, his question is about the judicial nominees and the fact that they're roadblocked in the United States Senate by procedures that—have they ever been used before, George, the filibuster on judicial nominees? Never been used? According to Allen, they've never been used before. [*Laughter*] Not to this extent—he qualified it. [*Laughter*]

But it's a problem, because I think my nominees deserve an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate. So I guess, you know, they're playing politics. I appreciate your question, because they're playing politics. That's all that is. And I'm picking good people from all walks of life. I named a man to be on the DC District Court, Miguel Estrada, first-generation American citizen, a brilliant man. What a story. He comes over from—comes up from Honduras, learns the language, works hard, got a family that loved him. He's now named for the circuit court and gets turned down. They wouldn't even give him a vote. And that's just pure politics.

You know what the answer to your question is? We've got to elect more Senators who aren't going to play politics with my nominees. I'm going to keep talking about it too. They may think they're going to wear me down; they're not. I'm going to keep talking about it. I'm going to keep telling the people of this country they've got a clear choice when it comes to President. They want people on the court who will strictly interpret the law, they ought to put me back in. If they want somebody who is going to put judges that will try to write the law from the bench, they got the wrong man in George W. I'm not changing, either.

All right, last question. You've got one? Go ahead, and yell her out. Oh, then he better take the mike, then. Yes, put it up there. Say that again so everybody can hear it.

Support for Volunteer Fire Departments/ Trade Policy

Q. I'm from Southside, Virginia, and I've helped the volunteer fire departments a number of years. We've had times raising money. And since you've been in, the Federal money that you appropriated to us, we appreciate it a lot.

The President. You bet, thanks. First of all, he and I share a couple of things in common. We're both voting for me. [*Laughter*] And we both support volunteer fire departments. I'm a proud supporter of the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department. And you're—what's your volunteer fire department?

Q. Chase City.

The President. There you go. Chase City, Virginia.

Let me talk about rural life real quick. One of the things—are there any farmers here? Yes, there you go. The farm economy is strong. You know why? One, good policy; good tax policy; and secondly—and thirdly, because we're opening up markets. If you're good at something like growing things, like people in Virginia are, they ought to be selling their product overseas in different markets around the world.

Let me tell you real quick about trade policy. There's a lot of talk about it, and the temptation for the other side is to say, "We'll—I'll handle it by becoming economic isolationists." That's no good, to kind of wall ourselves off from the rest of the world. That's pessimistic. And that will make it harder for small businesses to thrive and people to find good-paying jobs. Here's what—here's the reality of trade. Most Presidents believe that we should open up U.S. markets for foreign goods. You know why? Because it's good for consumers. The more opportunities consumers have to choose, the better price they'll get at better quality. That's the way the marketplace works. And that's the policy today, and opening up our markets has been beneficial to U.S. consumers.

And so the fundamental question is, can we get other countries to treat us the way we treat them? That's trade policy. And the answer is, absolutely, we will.

One way you do so is through agreements—is you negotiate free trade agreements. And we've done so for the benefit of U.S. farmers and manufacturers and entrepreneurs and, eventually, workers, because if you're selling product, for example, in Australia—we just got a new deal with Australia—if you're selling products in Australia, you're going to be working in order to make the product that the Australians are buying.

And the second thing to do is to enforce laws. That's why we've gone after China a couple of times, to say to China, "You must, if you're going to trade with us, be fair about how you treat our people and our products."

Now, you had a question? What is it? Both of you combine your question; then I've got to go back to work. Okay, you've got two.

Taiwan

Q. Yes, I am Taiwanese American, and I am concerned about China has more than 500 missiles against Taiwan. How do you be able to keep the key area of peace for Taiwan and the world?

The President. Yes, we just make it clear to both sides that our policy hasn't changed—"one China" policy based upon the three communiques, and neither side shall unilaterally change the circumstances by which a peaceful resolution will be achieved. And that's just where we'll keep working both sides to see if we can't see that that very important issue be resolved peacefully. It's essential that both sides understand my position as clearly stated, and I've stated it publicly just like I just did, and I will continue to state it. And I'm convinced this issue can be solved peacefully. It's just going to take some time to do so. And we'll continue to work to see to it that it does.

Where is the lady that wanted to ask a question? Do you have the same question he did or another one? Another one. Okay, this is the last question.

Government Fiscal Accountability/Federal Deficit

Q. Mine is sort of different. I am more concerned about the Government waste. How do you propose to control either domestic waste within the spending, accountability for spending?

The President. Yes.

Q. And also, especially foreign aid. I tend to develop compassion fatigue when it comes to foreign aid when I hear about the U.N. Oil for Food Programme fraud. That's a very big concern——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——because I pay taxes, and I expect it to be spent wisely.

The President. I appreciate that. That's a good question. I was hoping somebody would ask that question. [*Laughter*] Let me talk about budgeting and spending, and then I'll talk about accountability when it comes to spending.

Let me—I'll start with that. I just came from a meeting with Clay Johnson. He's my close friend that—he was my college roommate, actually—who is the "M" in OMB, Office of Management and Budget. And his job as the "M" in OMB is to say to agencies, "We expect there to be results-oriented systems throughout your agencies." And we've actually got a scorecard, a management scorecard, of how well agencies are doing with, for example, responding to taxpayers through e-mail, how well they're doing to make sure their programs are actually delivering results. And so we're working hard to see to it that these giant bureaucracies become results-oriented. There are all kinds of ways to measure, and we've got a good measurement system in place to do so.

There is a—look, my job is to submit budgets that will bring confidence to the marketplaces, as well as to the taxpayers.

And that means setting priorities and meeting those priorities without overtaxing the American people. And we have done that. I want you to know that—let me put in the context of the deficit.

Yes, we've got a deficit, for three reasons. One, there was a recession. And a recession costs the Treasury money unless there's a corresponding cut in spending. And there wasn't.

Two, there is a deficit because I made the decision to go after the enemy, and we were going to spend whatever money was necessary to defend ourselves. And the Congress supported me, by and large. Some in the Senate didn't support the $87 billion. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But most of them did, guys like George Allen who said, if you're going to put people in harm's way, they deserve the right pay and right equipment.

Thirdly, part of the reason we have this deficit is because I believed in order to get the economy moving forward, there should be tax relief. And it's working; the tax relief is working. It's going to be one of the interesting arguments in the campaign. I will make the case that it is working and that you don't need to run up taxes.

Now, when I first came into office, nonhomeland, nondefense discretionary spending increased at 15 percent. This year, the budget we've requested from the House and the Senate is—nondefense, nonhomeland spending, discretionary spending, is increasing at less than 1 percent. And so the step one—step one is to set priorities and hold Congress to working with those priorities. And Congress has been very good. Speaker Hastert and Leader Frist have worked very closely with the administration to achieve good top-line budget numbers. So I can say to you that the deficit will be cut in half over the next 5 years, and we've just got to keep working that way.

And so there's two—I kind of took two points from your questions. One was, the overall budget numbers, how does it relate—are we able to contain spending to the point where we can say to the people that this deficit is beginning to decrease? Now remember, the deficit, again, was caused by recession. We're coming out of that—we're out of it. Secondly, it was caused by the war. We're still in the war. And, thirdly, the tax relief helped us generate more revenues.

And by the way, in the midseason—midsession review—I don't know if you saw this, George, or not, but the projected deficit of last February has already been decreased fairly significantly because the economy is getting stronger. And when the economy strengthens, more revenues come into—[*applause*].

I've got to go back—listen, I've got to get back to the White House and make sure we're spending money wisely. But I want to thank you for your question. I want to thank you all for coming today. I want to thank you for support. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Ernst Community Cultural Center gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Robert G. Templin, Jr., president, Northern Virginia Community College; Virginia State Attorney General Jerry W. Kilgore; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; G. Reid Lyon, Chief, Child Development and Behavior Branch, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Marek Belka of Poland and an Exchange With Reporters
August 9, 2004

President Bush. We'll have two opening statements and two questions per side. I'll call on somebody, and the Prime Minister will call on somebody.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. Thank you for coming. We've just had a very good visit, but that's what you would expect when two friends are talking about important issues.

We talked about foreign policy. We talked about economic issues. We talked about the close ties between our respective peoples. And it's my honor to welcome you here, sir. I appreciate your candid observations and appreciate the fact that not only did you serve your nation and frankly, the world, in Baghdad, you've now agreed to serve your nation as the Prime Minister of your country. So welcome here to Washington, DC.

Prime Minister Belka. Well, it's one of a series of very important visits in our dialog. Next month in Warsaw, we're having the beginning of strategic dialog between the United States and Poland. And what happened here was really a beginning of this dialog or at least an introduction to these talks.

We covered a very broad range of issues, from Euro-Atlantic alliance, from the state of relationship between Europe and America, to Middle East, a wider Middle East initiative, and Iraq. We also touched upon our bilateral issues, including our economic cooperation, traveling, and so on and so on.

Well, it's almost unbelievable how we could squeeze so many issues in a relatively short conversation. It was a very good conversation, very good exchange of opinions. And, well, it sets ground for further cooperation and further good, good talks between our people and ourselves.

President Bush. Good job.

We'll start off with Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Iraqi Insurgents in Najaf

Q. Mr. President, U.S. forces have been fighting for 5 days in Najaf against the militia of Muqtada Al Sadr. The U.S. once said it was going to capture or kill him. What's our policy now?

President Bush. Our policy is to work with Prime Minister Allawi and support the Iraqis as they move toward elections. Our troops were engaged against Sadr's militia, and so were the Iraqis. And it appears that we're making pretty good progress about stabilizing Najaf. But Prime Minister Allawi is now in charge of the country. He is a good, strong leader who cares deeply about the aspirations of his people, and he is somebody we're working with. And if he's got some suggestions to make, we're more than willing to listen to him. That's why Ambassador Negroponte is there, and the Ambassador will interface with the Iraqi government at their request.

Polish Forces in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, Polish Government is going to significantly reduce number of Polish troops in Iraq early next year. Did you ask Polish Prime Minister not to do that? And could you both comment on the fact that 73 percent of Poles are opposed to Polish military presence in Iraq?

President Bush. I'll be glad to talk about opinion polls. I try to make my decisions based upon what I think is right. And removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right thing to do. The world is safer for it, and the American people are safer for it. The Polish people are safer for it, and the Iraqi people are better off because of it.

And I'll let the Prime Minister talk about troops. The Poles have been great allies. When we first went in to enforce the demands of the free world after Saddam Hussein once again defied the demands of the free world, Polish special forces were right there. And they performed brilliantly. They're great troops, and they're a great credit to the people of Poland.

And then when the—it became apparent we would need stabilizing forces to help this country become a free country, the Polish Government and the Polish people were very generous and provided not only troops but leadership in a very important sector of the country. So the Prime Minister, I know, is very proud, justifiably so, about the contributions that Poland has made to making the world a better place.

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Hold on a second, please.

Prime Minister Belka. Well, I guess, no one wants to stay in Iraq forever. It's a sovereign country. It has its own internationally recognized government. It has its own rules, that is—that are developing. And we treat our presence in Iraq as serving this country to stabilize and stand on its own feet. We didn't discuss dates, numbers. What we discussed is the way—how the situation in Iraq develops, how the political calendar, how the political process is going on, and how is it—how it shapes the character and size of our presence in this country. That's what is most important in our presence in Iraq.

I confirm that Polish troops, in our opinion, are doing right things. They behave gallantly. They show professionalism and also are quite successful in developing good working relations with the local leaders, helping them not only in keeping order but also in developing institutions, rebuilding their economy, their schools, hospitals. Well, this is not a typical military operation. It's a stabilization in all sense of this word.

President Bush. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

National Economy

Q. Mr. President, with the economy not producing a whole lot of new jobs, are you considering adjustments or additions to your economic plan to try to give it a boost? And would an increase in interest rates tomorrow help or hurt?

President Bush. Monetary policy is decided independently from the White House. Secondly, the economy is strong, and it's getting better. Imagine me being able to say to the Prime Minister of Poland, in spite of a recession, emergency, attacks, war, and corporate scandals, we're growing and growing quite substantially. We've added nearly 1.5 million jobs over the last 12 months.

And what we don't need to do is run up the taxes on the American people. This campaign is going to be talking about visions, about how to keep the economic recovery going, and there's a clear difference of opinion as to how to do it. I believe taxes ought to be low. I know we need tort reform. I know we need an energy policy. I know we need reasonable health policy to help hold down the costs, and that stands in stark contrast to my opponents who are willing to raise taxes and not willing to fight for tort reform, for example. But I'm optimistic about the economic vitality of the country.

Visa Policy

Q. Mr. President, when is the United States going to lift visas for Polish citizens, or at least this $100 fee for visas——

President Bush. Well, listen——

Q. ——as a gesture of reciprocation?

Prime Minister Belka. We discussed this.

President Bush. Well, I'll tell you, we sure did discuss it, and the Prime Minister was very strong on the subject. He made it very clear what—what his opinion is and the opinion of his Government and the expectations of the Polish people. And because of his persuasiveness, there's now a preclearance procedure that will be taking place at the Warsaw airport. Secretary Tom

Ridge is—Ridge is here today, and he'll be given instructions to accommodate the Prime Minister's wishes that we begin a reform of the process. And it will start with preclearance process.

And I want to thank the Prime Minister for being such a strong advocate and—pretty clear where he stands. And hopefully, this will be a step in the right direction for the people of a country whose friendship we value.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Muqtada Al Sadr, Iraqi Shiite cleric whose militia engaged in an uprising in Iraq which began in early April; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on Signing the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004

August 9, 2004

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2443, the "Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004." The Act authorizes appropriations for the United States Coast Guard, facilitates navigation and shipping, and strengthens the security of maritime transportation.

To the extent that provisions of the Act, including sections 217, 708(c)(2), and 803(c)(11), call for submission of legislative 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 and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient. Accordingly, the affected departments and agencies shall ensure that any reports or recommendations submitted to the Congress are subjected to appropriate executive branch review and approval before submission.

To ensure consistency with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution, the executive branch shall construe the phrase "if acceptable to the President and the Senate" as used in section 220 of the Act to require nomination by the President and the advise and consent of the Senate for the appointments addressed by that section.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
August 9, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 2443, approved August 9, was assigned Public Law No. 108–293.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Porter J. Goss To Be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

August 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm pleased to announce my decision to nominate Congressman Porter Goss as the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Porter Goss is a leader with strong experience in intelligence and in the fight

against terrorism. He knows the CIA inside and out. He's the right man to lead this important agency at this critical moment in our Nation's history.

The work of the CIA is vital to our security. America faces determined enemies who plan in many nations, send trained killers to live among us, and attack without warning. This threat is unprecedented, and to stop them from killing our citizens, we must have the best intelligence possible. The men and women of the CIA must penetrate closed societies and secretive organizations. They must overcome challenges of language and culture and learn things that our adversaries don't want us to know. Because their work is secret, the men and women of the CIA receive little recognition, but they're protecting our country every day.

Since September the 11th, our intelligence professionals have worked with great determination to stop another attack on America, and our country is grateful.

Director George Tenet and acting Director John McLaughlin have served our Nation with distinction and honor. And now, with the agreement of the U.S. Senate, the CIA will have another strong leader in Porter Goss.

I've given Porter an essential mission to lead the Agency for the challenges and threats of a dangerous new century. He is well prepared for this mission. Porter Goss brings a broad experience to this critical job. He's a former Army intelligence officer with a decade of experience in the CIA's clandestine service. He knows the agency, and he knows what is needed to strengthen it. He understands the importance of human intelligence. He was a CIA field officer on two continents. He'll make sure that the men and women of the CIA have the capabilities and skills they need to penetrate the hard targets and denied areas and to get to know the enemy firsthand. He also knows the importance of investing in technologies that allow us to look and listen better. And he will work to ensure the agency remains on the cutting edge of technological change.

As Chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence since 1997, and as a Member on the Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community, he has been a leading voice on intelligence and national security and terrorism. He's been a force for positive change. His experience on Capitol Hill will serve him well at the CIA, because he's respected on both sides of the aisle and because he understands the important role Congress must play in the effort to improve our Nation's intelligence capabilities.

Over 15 years of service, Porter Goss has built a reputation as a reformer. He'll be a reformer at the Central Intelligence Agency. I look forward to his counsel and his judgments as to how best to implement broader intel reform, including the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

I appreciate your many years, Porter, of service to our country. I appreciate your willingness to serve. I'm grateful that you've agreed to step forward and serve once again. Welcome.

[*At this point, Director-designate Goss made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good job. Thank you, sir.

Director-designate Goss. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:31 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director-designate Goss. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in Pensacola, Florida
August 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. What a great welcome. I'm so honored. You know, you're in good country when you've got a guy holding a sign up that says "Bubbas for Bush." No, the heart and soul of America is right here in Pensacola, Florida.

It's an honor to land Air Force One at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, right here in the cradle of naval aviation. And it's an honor to stand with one of the really fine naval aviators in our Nation's history, Senator John McCain. Forty-six years ago this month, Ensign John McCain reported for duty in Pensacola. He trained to fly here; he launched a life of true service to America that continues to this day. As a naval officer, as a Congressman, as a United States Senator from Arizona, John McCain has embodied honor and integrity, courage and strength. And I'm honored to have him by my side.

We're kicking off a bus trip. We're starting here, and we're heading east across the panhandle of this important State. I'm asking for the vote. Everywhere we're going the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, and with your help, Dick Cheney and I will be honored to serve this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I wish Laura was here today. She is a wonderful wife, a great mom, and she's doing a fabulous job as this country's First Lady. I'll give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. Listen, I recognize he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his experience and his sound judgment and his ability to do the job.

I've been looking around for the Governor. [*Laughter*] I had a few words for the Governor. Actually, I saw him over the weekend. His son George P. got married. Yes, it was a great wedding. He's working. He's doing what you want him to do. He's working on behalf of all the people of Florida. I'm proud of the job Jeb is doing as the Governor of this vital State.

I'm honored that your very fine Congressman, Jeff Miller, is traveling with us today. He's doing a heck of a job for the people of the Panhandle.

I want to thank all the local and State officials who are here. Thanks for serving your State and our country. I appreciate Joe Scarborough. I'm glad to know he's still standing and making a living. I kissed his little girl on the way down the stairs. Fortunately, she's got her mom's looks. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Ricky Skaggs. I'm honored Ricky took time to come over and sing for you all.

I'm honored to be with the men and women who wear our uniform, proud to be here. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today. I want to thank you for setting such a good example.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls and register the voters. I'm here to ask for your help. Not only I want your vote, I'd like for your help. I'd like you to go to your neighbors—listen, find those discerning Democrats and wise independents as well as our fellow Republicans, and urge them to do their duty on Election Day. See, we have a duty in this country to participate when it comes to voting time. And when you get them headed towards the polls, give them a nudge our way.

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has to answer an essential question, why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past years, Americans have been through a lot together, a whole lot, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who will best lead our Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have much more to do to move this country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make this country safer, to make our economy stronger, and to make the future better and brighter for every single citizen.

From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading peace, we've made much progress, and there's more work to be done. We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America.

Remember, when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We believe in accountability because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in challenging the status quo when the status quo is failing the children of this country. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. There's more work to do. The world is changing, and the jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science education so our young people can compete in the high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into our classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember the past debates. Leaders of both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage in campaign after campaign. We got the job done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

To help more people get access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. But today, most of the new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I'm going to continue

to work with the United States Congress for medical liability reform.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We will expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We'll do more to make this economy stronger. We've come through a lot. We've come through a recession and corporate scandals and terrorist attacks. We've overcome these obstacles because of the hard work of the American people. We've got great workers. We've got great farmers. We've got great ranchers. We've got great entrepreneurs. I also think one of the reasons we've come through this tough period is because of well-timed tax cuts. We didn't try to pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way: If you paid taxes, you got relief. That's a fair way for tax relief. The tax relief helped families with children. The tax relief helped married couples. I mean, what kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in our society. We helped our small businesses. And this time, the check really was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, we've added about a million—1.5 million new jobs since last year, last August. The unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, well below the national average of the seventies, eighties, and nineties. Because we acted, Florida has added nearly 300,000 jobs since the end of 2001. Florida's unemployment rate is now 4.7 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for American workers, here in Florida you have proved we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

There's more work to do. We need to make our economy more job-friendly, America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs here in America, regulations must be reasonable and must be fair. Many of you small-business owners know what I'm talking about when it comes to regulations. I can't guarantee anybody in Washington has ever read the forms you filled out. [*Laughter*] To keep jobs here in America, we must reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits and enact tort reform. To keep American jobs in America, to keep American jobs here in our country, we must not overspend your money. And we will keep your taxes low.

Listen, to keep jobs here, we must not become economic isolationists. We must be bold about our ability to compete in the world. I believe America's workers and farmers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair. To keep jobs here, we've got to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to offer American workers a lifetime of learning. And to be aggressive in helping them get the training they need for the jobs of the future at places like our community colleges—the education training they offer can be a bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

You know what else we need to do? We need to make sure our families have something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to volunteer in your community, time to take care of your parents, time to go back to school. I'm going to work with Congress to enact comp-time and flex-time to help American families better juggle the demands of the workplace.

When you give us 4 more years, this economy is going to be stronger, more small businesses, better and higher-paying jobs. And America will continue to lead the world with the world's strongest economy.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

See, the world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base for Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And thanks to the United States and thanks to members of our coalition, many young girls now go to school for the first time in Afghanistan.

Because we acted, America and the world are safer. Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists. Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. One of the lessons of September the 11th is that America must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. We saw a threat. My administration looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The United States Congress looked at the same intelligence—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion.

We went to the United Nations, which looked at the intelligence and demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He deceived the weapons inspectors. So I had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman who hated America, or defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right thing to do. Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction. And he could have passed that capability on to terrorist enemies. After September the 11th, that was a chance we could not afford to take. And America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and almost 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, Senator Kerry now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we

know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up—although there are still 84 days left in the campaign.

We have more to do. I'm seeking the office because we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat the terror. There's 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I know you join me in thanking the leaders of those countries who have committed their troops to peace and freedom around the world. We'll continue to strengthen our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I'll never turn over national—America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. Listen, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders. These are people who are willing to listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. The moms and dads of Afghanistan and Iraq want their children to grow up in a peaceful and hopeful society. That's what they want. People of Afghanistan and Iraq are beginning the make the hard work of going from tyranny to freedom. More and more troops are stepping up in Iraq—Iraqis saying, "What can I do to secure my country so my family can grow up in a peaceful world?"

The people of these countries can count on us. When we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And anytime—and those who wear our Nation's uniform deserve the full support of our Nation's Government.

Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote this way: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That's not the way they talk here in the Panhandle of Florida. He's had some different explanations. He said he was proud of his vote, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness, resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in their neighborhood, a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. See, free nations do not export terror.

Free nations enhance the dreams of their citizens. Free nations are peaceful nations.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the highest values of our own country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There's enemies who still hate us, and they're plotting. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. The logic is upsidedown. It shows a dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. During the nineties, these terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us—long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It is wrong to blame America for the anger and evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat terrorist by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion the 9/11 Commission has said: Because of the actions we have taken since September the 11th, our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. I understand that. The way to make this country more secure is to be on the offense, is to find these terrorists and to bring the enemies to justice. And the way to make this country more secure is to start the hard process of reform.

We've transformed our defenses. We created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give our law enforcement officers tools to track terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're already taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission Report. And we've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders and to train our first-responders, to dramatically improve intelligence gathering capability.

Today I nominated a fine Floridian, Congressman Porter Goss, to head the Central Intelligence Agency. And we'll work with Congress to create a position of the National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and at home.

These reforms aren't going to be easy. Reform is never easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests there, people who are willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You've got to be able to get the job done. See, when it came to reforming schools, provide excellent education for our children, we got the job done, and results matter. When it came to health care reforms to give our families more access and more choices, we're getting the job done, and results matter. When it came to improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, when it comes to spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Listen, we're living in changing times. These are changing times, and they're exciting times. And Government needs to stand side by side with the American people during these changing times. Do you know what that says to me? It says to me, we've got to continue to promote an ownership society in America. We want you to own and control your own health care accounts, so that if you go from one job to the next, the health care account is yours and stays with you.

You know, I'm worried about younger workers in America. I'm worried about whether or not the Social Security system is fiscally sound enough for our younger workers. Old guys like me and McCain, we're set when it comes to Social Security. But to make sure the Social Security system works, we've got to let our younger workers have an option of taking some of their own money and establishing a personal savings

account that they can pass from one generation to the next.

I'll tell you, I love the fact that more people now own their home in America than ever before. We love homeownership in my administration. I met Jack and Julie Broomes behind stage. They said, "This year, thanks to your tax relief, we were able to buy a home." What a fantastic thought, to have that good family open their door and say, "Welcome to my house."

We believe in ownership in this administration. We want more people owning their small business. I love the fact that more minority—minorities are owning their own business. It's a hopeful sign for America. In a changing world, one way to help the American people is to promote an ownership society. When you own something you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In this world of rapid change, there's going to be some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. We believe in the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We honor the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of our country is changing 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 understands we're 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. Listen, if you're worried about the quality of the education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of our citizens; that's the strength of America. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to rally the armies of compassion and call upon people to help solve some of the most difficult problems of our society. Government can hand out money; it can't put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around a lonely heart and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you?" I'm running for 4 more years to continue to call upon the great strength of America so we can change our country, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time when we need firm resolve and clear vision. See, none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. I remember the people in hardhats yelling, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking the ropeline. A guy grabbed me by his arm. He had just been searching in the rubble for a loved one. He said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, that fellow and the people searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking how best to keep America safe. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

We have come through a lot together. We've done hard work. We're moving this country forward. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to ever corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled this great State and our wonderful country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

May God bless you. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. at the Pensacola Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; former Representative Joe Scarborough of Florida; entertainer Ricky Skaggs; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in a Discussion at Okaloosa-Walton College in Niceville, Florida
August 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Let's get started here. We'd better get started before all the oxygen leaves. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. I'm on a bus tour today. You know why? I think you have to ask for the vote if you're running for office, and I'm here to ask for the vote. That's what I'm doing.

I'm here to tell you there's more to do. We've done a lot, but there's more to do. I have a reason for running, and I'm going to share some of those reasons with you in a little bit. But first, I want to thank you all for coming. I'm here for another reason, and that's to ask for your help. I need your help to get people registered to vote. Listen, there's a lot of people for us out there. If that many people are standing in the rain, it means we got a pretty good shot here in the Panhandle.

But I can't win it without your help. And so I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors. See, I believe everybody has a duty to vote. I believe that's a—you know, the other day in Afghanistan they were talking about, "Oh, maybe they're not too interested in voting." And I think there was maybe 3 or 4 million had registered to vote. And the Taliban drug some women out of a bus and killed them because they were involved in the electoral process, and a lot of people say, "Well, gosh, that's going to discourage people from doing their duty, from participating in a free society." Now there is over 8 million people who've registered to vote in Afghanistan.

It's an amazing story, isn't it? It's an amazing story how people respond when given a chance to exercise their—what we believe are their God-given rights as free people. We need to do the same thing here in America. So I'm here to ask you to get your fellow citizens to participate. Of course, once you get them headed to the polls, I've got a suggestion on who they might be for. [*Laughter*] And that's what we're going to talk about today.

I'm proud of brother Jeb. I had the honor of spending the weekend with him. His oldest son, George P., got married, and the father of the groom handled his duties perfectly. [*Laughter*] He's a great Governor

and a great brother. And I love him a lot. I love him a lot.

And I love the First Lady a lot too. When I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian. [*Applause*] There you go, yes! She didn't care for politics or politicians. [*Laughter*] Now she's the First Lady of the United States, and she's doing a great job. She really is. I wish she were here today, but she's campaigning in the Midwest, and she's doing a really neat experience. I like to tell people I've got reasons why I'd like you to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm going to talk a little bit about what I'd like to do. We've got some citizens here who are going to help me make some points about how America can be a better place. And then I'm going to answer some questions if we've got time.

I first want to say thanks to my friend John McCain. John is an amazing guy who—he's an amazing person. He's a great public servant. He served his Nation in many ways. And I'm proud to be traveling with him. It's—he's a lot of fun to be with. Plus, it helps—[*laughter*]—helps to have him stand by my side. So thanks for coming, friend. Appreciate you being here.

After the ranch, he and I are going to go over to Crawford—I mean, after campaigning here in Panama City, he and I are going to go over to Crawford, and I'm going to show him the ranch. Then we're going to New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Iowa.

I want to thank Congressman Jeff Miller, who is doing a fine job for the people. You're doing a great job, Congressman. Thanks for coming.

Statehouse Speaker-designate Allan Bense—he's with us today. Allan, thank you for traveling. Where are you? He was with us. He probably heard I'm going to talk for about 45 minutes and left. [*Laughter*] I'm proud to be traveling as well with Bev Kilmer. She's running for the congressional seat right next door to this one. Good luck to you. Thanks for coming.

I'm proud to be here at Okaloosa-Walton College. I want to thank Bob Richburg, the president of this fine institution.

I tell people I'm running again because I want to work to make America safer, stronger, and better. The biggest task we have in this country is to fight and win this war on terror. The most solemn duty a President has, the most solemn duty those of us who hold high office have is to do everything we can to safeguard our country.

I never thought I'd be having to say this when I ran in 2000—John, we campaigned together. I don't remember saying, "I anticipate war." Nobody wants to be the war President. People want to be the peace President. People want to be able to say, "Gosh, the world is peaceful." But that's not what happened under my watch. The country changed on September the 11th, 2001, and it's vital for the President to clearly see the world the way it is.

I'll tell you some lessons I've learned that I don't think the country should ever forget. First of all, these people that killed us, they were training for years. They were preparing for years. They're evil people who cannot stand what we believe in. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot—these are not the kind of people you can reason with. You cannot hope for the best. That's just the nature of these people. It's hard for the American people to understand the nature of somebody who's willing to kill an innocent child to achieve an objective. That's not the way we think. Nevertheless, we must be realistic about the nature of these folks.

The second lesson after September the 11th is when you say something, you better mean it, in order to make the world a more peaceful place. I recognized right after September the 11th, we were in a different kind of conflict. I noticed some World War II veterans who are here who fought a different kind of war. Freedom and liberty

were at stake, but it was a different kind of war. This is a different kind of war here. This is a war that said not only must we bring justice to our enemies, wherever they hide, we cannot allow nations to provide them safe harbor or training or to feed or equip them. We just can't do that. In order to be able to protect ourselves—[*applause*].

So that's why I said to the Taliban—we gave the Taliban a warning: Quit harboring these people; quit feeding these people; quit providing safe haven so they can train to come and kill. And the Taliban chose defiance. And thanks to the United States and a coalition of the willing, the Taliban no longer is in power. And the world is safer for it. The world is safer for it. You know why? We've now got an ally in the war on terror. Al Qaida can no longer find—you know, attack and escape into the confines of a sovereign nation. That no longer is possible. But guess what else happened that is important? We liberated people. We freed people.

You know, I was in Cleveland the other evening. I helped kick off the International Children's Games. And I was standing up giving this welcoming address, and right to my right was a group of young girls from Afghanistan. They were part of a soccer team, a young girls soccer team. Now, that probably doesn't sound like a momentous event, but think about it. These young children couldn't even go to school under the Taliban. Their mothers were often paraded into public squares and humiliated, because this country was under the clutches of a barbaric regime that had evil in their hearts.

Our action in Afghanistan fulfilled a word. It said, "If you harbor, you'll be held accountable." The world is peaceful for it when we keep our word. Our action in Afghanistan has converted an enemy into an ally in the war on terror. And our action in Afghanistan is a part of freeing 50 million people—25 in Afghanistan, 25 in Iraq. And the world is better for it.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that when we see threats, we must deal with them before they fully materialize. See, prior to September the 11th, we thought if we saw a threat, we could deal with it if we felt like it or maybe it would go away; maybe it wouldn't happen, because we felt secure. Remember those days? I do. I also know what it's like now to be vulnerable to the attacks of enemies that could care less about the rules of warfare. I mean, these are uncivilized people. And probably the most dangerous—not probably—the most dangerous worry that we should have is whether or not these killers are able to get weapons of mass destruction. And where would they get them? Well, they'd get them from people who have the capability of making them, and they'd get them from people that hate us.

So I looked at Iraq and saw a threat. Think about Iraq. This is a country that had—were firing at our pilots. This is a country with which we'd already had a war. This is a country which had used weapons of mass destruction against its own people and against its neighbors. This is a country that paid families of suiciders. This is a country that allowed terrorist networks to be in and out of their borders. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. His network was in Iraq. Zarqawi—he's still in there chopping people's heads off. His network was in Iraq. And they were in and out of the country.

And so we looked at the facts and said this guy is a threat. That's what we looked at. And then we all looked at the intelligence as well. And my administration looked at it. The United States Congress looked at it. Members of both parties in the Congress looked at that intelligence. My opponent looked at that intelligence. And we all came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Now, I recognize it's important to rally the world on issues such as these. And so I went to the United Nations and said, "We think he's a threat. What do you

think?" And the United Nations Security Council voted 15 to nothing, saying—and here's what they said. They said, "We think you're a threat, so disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the world said. By the way, it's not the first time the world had said it, is it? The world had been saying it for over a decade. And every time the world said it, Saddam kind of—didn't take it very seriously, and he became dangerous.

And so I had a choice to make. I had a choice as to whether or not to trust this madman, to trust whether or not we would be more secure with him in his own country, defying the demands of the free world once again. This is a guy who had used weapons of mass destruction. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do what I think is necessary to protect this country? Given that choice, I'll protect America every time.

You know, they ask you, they say, "Well, you haven't found the stockpiles you thought were going to be there." And they're right. We thought there would be stockpiles of weapons there. But we do know that he had the capability of making weapons. And we do know that he had the capability of passing that knowledge on to an enemy which hates us. He was dangerous. Knowing what I know today, I would have still made the same decision. The world is better off, and America is safer. No question about it.

Let me tell you something. I want you all to think about a world in which Saddam Hussein was still in power. There's an enemy out there. He'd have been stronger if he had been in power still. The world is safer and America is safer because he sits in a prison cell.

I want to share a story with you about seven Iraqi citizens who came to see me in the Oval Office. The Oval Office is a powerful place. It's the kind of place where my mother walks in and feels so overwhelmed, she won't tell me what to do. [*Laughter*] That's powerful. In walk seven Iraqis. They had all had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because the dinar had declined in value—that was his currency—and he was looking for a scapegoat. And he found these seven small merchants, small-business people. I asked one guy, "Why you?" And he said, well, he happened to sell dinars on that particular day to buy, I think he said euros, so he could buy gold to make jewelry. And he just sold on the wrong day, because he got plucked out of the population and, like his other six friends there, had his right hand cut off and an X branded into his forehead.

And these fellows walk into the Oval Office—the reason why is, is a fellow named Marvin Zindler; he's a newsman out of Houston—[*applause*]—there you go—who heard of their plight. He's done well, set up a foundation, flew them over to Houston so they could be outfitted with new hands. [*Applause.*] Yes. The contrast between a society where one person gets to decide the fate of somebody's right hand and a society that's willing to raise people who contribute to heal the hands is the difference between Iraq and totalitarianism and tyranny, and a free country like America.

It's hard work. It is hard work to go from a society in which somebody can cut your right hand off just like that, to a society that adopts the responsibilities and habits of a free country. And that's what you're seeing. You're seeing that conversion. And it's hard. I'm telling you, it's hard. But we've got some strong allies, staring with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Prime Minister Allawi. They tell me the story of him. He was in London, England. He was in exile from his country because Saddam hated him. He wakes up one night and an ax-wielding group of men tried to hatchet him to death, or ax him to death. I guess you don't hatchet somebody with an ax. [*Laughter*] And you don't ax them with a hatchet. [*Laughter*] He wakes up, the glint of the blade coming at him, and he gets cut badly,

escapes. The guy hit his wife, who never recovered, really. So he's seen what it means to be chased down and tried to kill by a tyrant. He—this guy believes that Iraq can and will be free.

See, step one is for there to be leadership. We need leadership in this world. We need people who believe in principles and are willing to stand on those principles and lead.

More and more Iraqis are now stepping up to defend their country against these killers, and that's what's going to happen. They got the choice to make: Do they want to be a free society, or do they want to be a society where mothers and dads cannot raise their children in a hopeful world. We believe—I believe—that moms and dads all over the world want to raise their children in peace and hope. That's what Americans believe. And therefore, it's important for us to stay side by side with these Iraqis as they assume more responsibility to bring freedom to their country.

And a free Iraq and a free Afghanistan is a big step toward making the world more peaceful. See, all this action that's taken is to do two things: One, to defend ourselves, is to deal with the realities of the 21st century, is not turn a blind eye to the lessons of September the 11th; and to bring peace. I want these little kids in this audience in this hall to be growing up and going to college in a peaceful world. We got hard work to do, but peace is possible.

A couple of points I want to share with you about my philosophy. We'll work with allies and friends. Remember, we got 60 nations involved in what they call the Proliferation Security Initiative. That's to help interdict weapons of mass destruction and technologies and equipment. We got nearly 40 in Afghanistan, nearly 30 in Iraq. But I'm not going to turn over national security decisions of this country to leaders of other countries.

One other thing I want to assure you is that when we put our troops into harm's way, they'll have the support of this Government. I want to thank our troops who are here. I want to thank the families of the troops who are here. Let me tell you something, I understand that these deployments are hard on the wives and husbands and moms and dads and sons and daughters. I know that. And the very least we can do is to make sure your loved ones have got the best pay, the best training, that you've got the best possible housing, the best equipment.

That's why I sent up to Congress a supplemental calling for $87 billion extra money last September to help our troops. And we got great response. This was for equipment and spare parts, fuel, all the elements necessary to make sure our people have got their missions. We got good support. Only 12 Senators voted against it. That's all. And two of them are the guy I'm running against and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of them were Kerry and Edwards. And you know, that's—my attitude is, is that when you put your troops in harm's way, they deserve the best. They said, you know—he said, "I voted for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." That's not a good enough explanation, I know, for the people of the Panhandle. And then he said it was a complicated matter. Listen, there is nothing complicated about making sure our troops have got the best. And that's what I'll continue to do as the Commander in Chief.

No, I'm running because I want to spread freedom and peace. We have an obligation in this country to lead toward a more peaceful world. And we believe that freedom is the pathway to peace. We also believe this, that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me talk real quick about how to make America stronger. That starts with making sure people can find work. And we want our people working. We want people to be able to do their duties as moms

and dads by putting food on the table. We've been through a lot in this economy, if you really think about it. In 3½ years we've been through a recession and then that terror attack; we had some corporate scandals; marching to war in order to liberate Iraq and to make this country more secure. All that was hard on our economy.

And yet, we're growing. And the economy is—the growth rate to the economy—they're good. They're as good as they've been in nearly 20 years. People are working here in Florida. I think your unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. Yes. Jeb said it's because of him. [*Laughter*] I'll give credit where credit is due—and those entrepreneurs and farmers and workers of America. That's why we're doing well.

The tax cuts helped. They helped people. The—people say, "Well, that's great, but don't rest on your laurels." That's what Mother always said. She obviously said it outside the Oval Office. [*Laughter*] She's right. What more are you going to do? I'll tell you what more we're going to do. We're going to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit stays strong by keeping taxes on small businesses low. Most people—most small businesses in America pay tax at the individual income-tax rate—that's a fact—by far the vast majority. If you're a small business, you're likely to be a sole proprietorship or a Subchapter S corporation, which means, when your taxes—your tax liability is due, you look at the individual tax tables. So when we reduce taxes on individuals, you're really providing extra capital for small businesses. And since by far the vast majority of new jobs are created by small businesses, it makes sense to stimulate the small-business sector of our economy. And that's what's happening in America today. People are growing.

Now, there's some things we've got to do to make sure the economy stays strong. You hear a lot of talk about jobs in America. All of us want jobs to stay here in America. The best way to keep jobs in America is for America to be the best place to do business in the world. Now, what does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. It means we need an energy policy to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. If we want to keep jobs here, we've got to conserve better, we've got to work on renewables, and we've got to explore for environmentally friendly ways, in particular, in places like ANWR in Alaska. You know, there's 17 million acres up there, and all they're asking to do is explore on 2,000 of the 17 million, which, had we done this nearly a decade ago, we'd have an additional million barrels of oil—of U.S. oil helping to fuel our economy.

In order to make sure this economy of ours is strong, we've got to reject this notion of economic isolationism. We can't isolate ourselves from the world. We've got to be confident about our abilities to produce. You know, what has happened in the past is most Presidents have said let's open up our markets for foreign goods. And that's good for you as consumers, by the way. If you've got more goods from which you can choose, you're going to get a better price at better quality. That's how the marketplace works.

But the problem is other countries haven't treated us like we've treated them. And so the best policy is to open up their markets, not close ours, open up their markets so Florida entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers can sell their products. Free and fair trade will help keep this economy growing.

You know what else we need? We need to worry about the high cost of health care. If you're a small-business owner, you're worried about health care costs. We're helping in health care. We've increased the number of community health centers. Those are for low-income Americans. We want people getting their primary care at community health centers, not at emergency rooms. We've opened up SCHIP. We've strengthened Medicare.

There's some other things we need to do. Small businesses need to be able to

pool risk just like big businesses do, so they can be able to afford health insurance for their employees. And we need to expand health savings accounts. Health savings accounts are a tax-free policy which enables people to buy better health insurance at a lower cost and maintains the patient-doctor relationship as the core decisionmaking entity of health care.

And finally, in order to keep jobs here, in order to make sure our businesses are competitive places, we need medical liability reform. These junk lawsuits are driving out doctors and running up the cost of health care. This is a big issue in this campaign. It's a big issue in the State of Florida. It's a big issue all over the country. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I am strongly in favor of medical liability reform—now.

We need tort reform. We need tort reform in this country if we expect people to be able to find jobs here. And we need an education system which works. And that's what we're going to talk a little bit about here. We've got some people who benefited from an interesting way they use our schools. By the way, good education first starts with starting early. And it did my heart good to drive down the highway and see, "This is an A-plus school." This is an A-plus school here. [*Applause*] Yes, that's good. But you know what, you wouldn't have known it if you didn't measure. Yes. Otherwise you would have been guessing, right? "We think it's an A-plus school." [*Laughter*] "It might be an A-plus school. We hope it's an A-plus school." That's not what the sign said. The sign said, "This is an A-plus school," because—[*applause*]. All right, keep it that way.

You know how we know and how you know in Florida? Because you got a Governor who said, "Let's measure." And that's the whole crux of the No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind Act says we're going to increase Federal spending for public schools—up 49 percent, by the way, since I took office. But in return for increased funding, we said, "Now why don't you show us whether or not the children can read." That didn't seem like that tough of a request. Some people call that a unfunded mandate. I call that an obligation of schools. To be able to teach a child to read is fundamental to learning. And so now we're measuring. And if we find out early a child can't get there, to grade-level by the third grade, that bill enables people to get extra help early, before it's too late.

So one way to make sure we got jobs here is to start this process of making sure every child can read—no child is left behind—and then as they head into high school, is to elevate our science and math, is to make sure the high school diploma means something; and then make sure when they get out of high school, there's an opportunity to go to college. I want you know that during my administration we've increased the number of children who received Pell grants by one million—one million additional children. So they have a chance to go to college. The loans are up. I mean, we're trying to help people go to college.

But also it's important—is to make sure our community college system is vibrant. And that's why we've had this assembly here, because I want to tell you how important I think community colleges are to a country which is hopeful and stronger and better. First, I want the community colleges to be relevant for our kids, and they are for a lot of kids. A lot of people use the community college system as a way to gain the skills necessary to fill a job. But we've got a lot of older Americans who need help too, going to the community colleges.

I'm going to tell you what's happening. This job base is changing, and that makes people nervous. And I can understand that. But my job isn't to be nervous; my job is to act. My job is to figure out how to

solve problems. And when the job base is changing, it says we've got a problem. And the best way to solve that problem is to make funds available for the community college system so people can be trained for the jobs which actually exist. In other words, the job base changes, there are jobs available, but sometimes the skill set doesn't meet the jobs, the skill set required by the jobs.

And that's what we're going to talk about. Jill White is with us today. She is a—where are you? Where is Jill? Stand up. Thank you, Jill. She is—[*applause*]—she brought all her second cousins over. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming, Jill. Tell us what you do.

Dr. Jill White. I'm the vice president for instructional services here at Okaloosa-Walton College.

The President. Which means?

Dr. White. Which means the academic programs and registration, faculty, all the student issues live in my office.

The President. Yes, good. Well, kind of the enforcer. [*Laughter*] And so one of the things I want you to describe to people is how a displaced worker can access your college. I mean, you see—I presume you see people that are, like, your age and my age—not that old, I'm sure—my case. [*Laughter*] Tell me—seriously, tell me kind of the nature of the student body here.

[*At this point, Dr. White made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good. So you take all comers.

Dr. White. You betcha.

The President. See, community colleges are accessible; they're available; they're affordable; and their curriculums don't get stuck. In other words, if there's a need for a certain kind of worker, I presume your curriculums evolved over time.

Dr. White. You betcha. If this community needs——

The President. See, I'm not even a lawyer, and here I am leading the witness. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Dr. White. You betcha. If this community needs it, we're there to do that. We've partnered with businesses. We do retraining. We welcome short-term projects, 2-year degrees. We're even opening some bachelor's degree programs that are workforce-oriented to respond to this military and defense-oriented community.

The President. Yes, see, there are jobs in this community, and sometimes the skill sets of the workers don't meet the skill sets required for the job. And so what she's saying is the community college is available to train people for the jobs which actually exist.

I appreciate that. Thank you, Jill. Very good job.

Dr. White. You're welcome.

The President. Okay, we've got Wayne Campbell with us. Let me tell you something interesting. He is the CEO—that's the chief executive officer—of Fort Walton Beach Medical Center. [*Applause*] Huge, thunderous ovation. Look—never mind, don't get carried away.

Are you looking for workers?

[*Wayne Campbell made brief remarks.*]

The President. And what kind of workers?

Mr. Campbell. I'd have to say all, but primarily nursing.

The President. Yes, so you've got a nursing shortage?

Mr. Campbell. Nationwide, there's a nursing shortage.

The President. Right. And obviously nurses require a certain skill set. What do you do to help people that you're trying to hire have the skill set necessary to fill the jobs?

[*Mr. Campbell made further remarks.*]

The President. That's good, yes, but they partnered with the school. See, here is what you're hearing. Here is a guy looking for

work; there's health care jobs. If you're out there and listening to whether or not there's a job available for you, they're looking for workers. They're looking for nurses. They're looking for people in the health care field. That's just one area where there's a job shortage here in America.

And what he just said was they came to this community college to partner with the community college. The community college was openminded enough to say to a local employer, how can we work together in a collaborative fashion to educate people for the jobs which actually exist? One way to keep jobs in America is to utilize the community college system of America to make sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are growing here in this country.

And I want to thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here.

Tammy Ford is with us. She used to work in a textile company—for how long?

Tammy Ford. Fourteen years.

The President. What happened?

Ms. Ford. They shut down, took it to Mexico.

The President. See, the textile company went to Mexico. Then what happened?

Ms. Ford. I didn't have a job anymore.

The President. I know that. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Ford made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, let me tell you what she just said. Good job. Thank you. Very good. I knew you were going to do great. She got laid off. Her life was—it was a traumatic moment in her life. Fortunately, the Government has got plans to help. It's called trade adjustment assistance, which means if you get laid off—in this case, because the job went elsewhere—there's money to help you retrain. It's important for everybody to know here. That's wise use of taxpayers' money, by the way, is to help people retrain for the jobs which exist.

Now, we can't—the Government can't pass a law that says, "Tammy, you've got to go back to school." She had to make up her mind to do that herself. But Government has got a role to help people who want to help themselves. And that's what you're hearing. You're hearing a story about somebody who chose to go back to school with Government help. But listen to what she said. She said with extra education, she makes more money. In other words, she became a more productive worker. And when you hear productivity increases, that means there's a chance you can make more money. Not everybody—unless their skills—unless they go back to school. And the Government's role is to help you. That's what I'm telling you.

This is a robust plan to help people like Tammy gain the skills necessary to fill the higher-paying jobs which are being created. And it's one of the real challenges of this economy. And we've got to be wise about how we use our resources. And I can't think of a wiser way than to help people go back to the community colleges to train for the jobs which exist.

Marina Hobson is with us. You ready, Marina? Tell us your story real quick.

[*Marina Hobson made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, let me just say that there are people out there probably listening, say, "Gosh, I wonder if I could do this?" And the answer is, of course you can. You just heard her. She said it's exciting to learn new things. Go ahead.

Ms. Hobson. And I graduated in 2001 with honors here, in our A-plus school.

The President. There you go.

Ms. Hobson. And after I graduated, I worked for the Chamber of Commerce in Crestview for 3 years, and now I just recently changed jobs. I now work for a small tree service company called Fritz Brothers Tree Service.

The President. Fantastic.

Ms. Hobson. The number one tree service in—[*laughter*].

The President. There you go; you just got a raise. Go ahead—making a little more money now than you did before?

Ms. Hobson. Oh, most definitely—most definitely.

The President. See, education pays off. It pays off when people take education seriously early in life. But the key is not to give up on anybody in America if we want this country to be a vibrant place, a chance where people can realize their dreams. Both these examples are examples of people that at one time their life was shattered because the jobs—just couldn't compete, yet new jobs are available. And we just got to help people get them.

Thanks for coming, Tammy—Marina. Thank you, appreciate you coming.

I'm running because I want this country to be a hopeful place. I'm running because I want to keep economic growth alive and well. I'm running so people can realize their dreams. One way to make sure this economy stays strong is to be wise about how we spend your money and keep taxes low, which is what I'm going to do.

And finally, I'm running again because I understand the strength of this country is the heart and soul of our people. That's the strength of America. I mean, think about it. This is a country that has got—people from all walks of life are willing to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. The ability to change our country one heart and one soul at a time is real because there are people who are willing to love a neighbor.

And my job as the President is to call upon that compassion, is to rally the great strength of the country. Government is limited in its ability to love. Government is not a very loving organization. Government is about law and justice. Love comes from the soul of people. Love comes from their hearts. And the job of a President—part of the job of a President is to rally that compassion and call upon people to serve.

And that's why this Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative is so important. It's an initiative that recognizes that sometimes only problems—problems can be solved when you help change a person's heart. If you're hooked on drugs or alcohol, sometimes a counselor can work it for you, but a lot of times it requires a change of your heart in order to change your behavior. And Government should not fear programs like that, programs based upon faith. They ought to welcome programs based upon faith to change this soul, one heart and one conscience at a time.

I'm running for a reason. There's more to do to make this country a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country. And I want thank you for giving me the chance to come and explain to you why I'm running again. And thank you for giving me a chance to ask for you help.

Now, before we get on the bus heading up to Panama City, I'll be glad to answer some questions if somebody has one or two.

Tax Reform

Q. Right here, Mr. President! [*Laughter*]

The President. Whew. I'm glad that turned out to be a question. [*Laughter*] Let her go. What do you got? Yell it.

Q. It's an honor to be here.

The President. Thank you.

Q. You're the man for the job in this time.

The President. Thank you.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—I want you to take up, and it's to make the world—[*inaudible*]—that's H.R. 25—[*inaudible*]—national sales tax..

The President. All right, thank you. He's talking about getting rid of the current tax system and replacing it with a national sales tax. It's in interesting idea. You know, I'm not exactly sure how big the national sales tax is going to have to be, but it's the kind of interesting idea that we ought to explore seriously. You know, we're working to try to simplify the code. It is, no question, complex. The more simple it is, the better it is for the American people. That's

certainly one idea. That's an interesting idea that we ought to explore. And the Senator and I—we'll grill old Miller here on the bus to see if he can explain it all to us. [*Laughter*]

Yes, you got a question?

Q. Why do kids my age have to pay taxes?

The President. Why do kids your age have to pay taxes? That's an interesting question. I guess because you're earning money, to begin with. [*Laughter*] I don't know what your circumstances are. I will tell you some principles I believe. I don't believe anybody ought to pay more than 35 percent to the Federal Government, for starters. I believe that if we set priorities in Washington, we don't need to be raising taxes on the people right now. I think we can keep taxes low in order to make sure this economy continues to grow.

I'll tell you what I'm worried about. I'm worried about if we don't make permanent the child credit—if we don't, the child credit goes down, which will hurt families with children. If we don't make this tax relief permanent we passed, the marriage penalty is going up. If we don't, the 10-percent bracket goes away. In other words, we're raising taxes on the working people right now, which is the wrong time to raising taxes on the working people.

Yes, sir.

2004 Campaign/Support for the President

Q. I have two things to say for you. One is, if you would use more testimonials in your campaign from military people, that would prove to the American people that the Army is behind you and they're being accepted where they are and they're doing the job that they do.

The President. Good idea. Thank you. And not only that, I got that advice for free. Here I'm paying thousands of dollars to these high-paid political consultants, and this guy comes up with a good idea for free.

Q. And the other thing is, is I'm 60 years old, and I've voted Republican from the very first time I could vote. And I also want to say this is the very first time that I have felt that God was in the White House.

The President. Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Thank you all.

Let me ask you a question. Do you like Jeb? [*Laughter*] Jeb plants him right here on the front row. [*Laughter*]

Yes, go ahead.

Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about the Republic standing strong in these current times on a constitutional amendment that has been burdening our Nation?

The President. Be a little more specific.

Q. Well, specifically, like one man and one woman getting married——

The President. Yes, okay. He's asking me about—I think you're asking me about why I proposed a constitutional amendment to support traditional marriage. Is that right?

Q. Well, how you feel about it.

The President. Well, I support it, and I'll tell you why.

Q. Yes, sir, constitutional cleansing for things that have burdened our Nation that should be under the cover of the Republic instead of the courts.

The President. Yes, that's a good question. See, yes, what he wants to know is—he's worried that the courts are defining the issue of marriage. That's what he's asking. And so am I. I believe that—first of all, I just want everybody to take a step back from this issue, and this is an issue where all of us need to treat people with different opinions with the utmost respect. This is a sensitive topic. The debate needs to be conducted in a civilized way. But it's a serious debate.

I'll tell you why it's a serious debate. I happen to believe traditional marriage, marriage between a woman and man, is necessary for a stable society. It's served civilization well throughout the years. Now,

people say, "Why the constitutional amendment?" And the reason why is, is because I am concerned that law on the books will be overturned by the courts. The courts have been very active in this area. As a matter of fact, in one State they redefined—four judges redefined marriage as we know it—four judges—and the people didn't have a decision in that process.

And I am concerned that that will continue to happen on Federal law as well. And someday we're going to wake up and realize that the courts have defined marriage, and not the people. And so one way to guarantee that the people are involved with this very important debate is through the constitutional process. After all, States must be involved in the ratification of a constitutional amendment.

And so I support a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman. I also believe the States have got the right, should they choose, to provide legal guarantees for other types of couples. To me, that is a different issue from the definition of marriage. And so that's why I take the position I took. And I appreciate your question.

Yes, sir.

Possibility of Military Draft/Support for Troops

Q. President Bush——

The President. Yes, ma'am.

Q. I understand that the Democratic leadership in Congress wants——

The President. I'm looking around for you.

Q. I'm here. I'm over here.

The President. No, not for you. [*Laughter*] Oh, okay. I got you, yes. Thank you.

Q. I understand that the Democratic leadership in Congress wants to reinstate the draft that will include women with no exception. What is your position——

The President. No, I don't think so. I haven't heard that, to be fair to the Democrat leadership. Maybe they have. I don't think I've heard it. John hasn't, either. No, we're not going—we don't need the draft. Look, the All-Volunteer Army is working. The All-Volunteer Army—I really don't think, in all fairness, I haven't heard that. Maybe you have. I have not heard any leader in the Congress of either party advocating a draft. I beg your pardon—John said a couple of the guys in the House have. They will—I know Senator McCain and I agree on this issue for certain: The All-Volunteer Army works.

And the way—I'll tell you one way how you make it work—I just signed a defense appropriations bill, which is the fourth year in a row in which we've raised the pay of those who wear our uniform. And the pay's getting better. And the housing is getting better. In other words, the quality of life issues are improving. And that's one way you make—that's how you make the All-Volunteer Army work, by making sure that when somebody signs up, they're treated well, that they're paid well, and that they're housed well and that—the best way to encourage reenlistment is to make sure that the families feel welcomed and well-treated.

I'm really proud of our military. You know, one of the hard things I've got to do—[*applause*]—let me finish here—one of the hard things that I've got to do, and I know John does it as well, and I'm sure the Congressman does, is to visit the wounded. We did so in Fort Lewis, Washington, together. And I can tell you that your Government provides fantastic medical service to those who have been wounded on the battlefield. I mean, we're taking these kids from Iraq to either a hospital in Germany or a field hospital and then to Walter Reed or Bethesda Naval Hospital in record time. And we're saving a lot of lives.

And the question I always ask their loved ones is, "Are you being treated well?" You've got a wife there that is worried about her husband who has been wounded, and I say, "Are they treating you well? Is your loved one getting the care needed?"

And, to a person—now, look, I, admittedly—sometimes it's hard to tell me a different thing than, "Yes, we're doing great." But it's—but the response from those whose lives we're trying to heal and save and their loved ones has been unbelievable.

I mean, your Government cares deeply about somebody who is in harm's way and who has been injured in harm's way. And that is—you've got to know something, as the Commander in Chief it means a lot to be able to tell a relative, "We're doing all we can to help your loved one." And we are. And we're a great country. We really are. What a fabulous nation we are.

Go ahead and yell it out.

Q. First of all—[*inaudible*].

The President. Thank you. Yes, I better give you a mike for that one.

U.S. Mission in Iraq

Q. [*Inaudible*]—I have a brother who served in Afghanistan and is going back to Iraq—[*inaudible*].

The President. Right.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—people from around the world, but my concern is how, in Iraq, they have so many hands in the pot. I want—[*inaudible*].

The President. Yes, thanks. That's a very interesting question. Really—your son's going back to Iraq?

Q. My brother.

The President. Brother. And what she's worried about is whether or not we've got the vision and a plan to complete the vision—to complete the mission. That's a very legitimate question. And the answer is, we do. We do.

I'll tell you, the—first, let me talk to you about my plans for your brother. When he gets over there, I'd like him to come back as soon as possible, but that's after the mission has been completed. All of us want our troops out, but what we don't want is to cut short the mission. We don't want politics to decide the mission. We want—I think the best solution is to put good commanders on the ground, say, "What do you need?"

And so, people—what is the mission? The mission is a free Iraq that can stand up and defend herself. That is going to change the world. I just want you to know that your brother is going on a mission that has got historic proportions to it. I mean, this is a—we're changing history. Just think about what a free Iraq will mean in the heart of the Middle East. It's not only going to make America more secure; it's going to help change a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. People long to be free.

Too often, our foreign policy has been, "Let's just don't worry about the freedom aspect of society." But look where it got us. Think about it. In that part of the world, there's such resentment and poverty, and we've got kids looking for work and they can't find anything, so they become recruited by these killers. And yet, there's an opportunity to change that, by working for a free society.

And so the mission of your brother is clear. And the mission will be better accomplished and more quickly accomplished when we train Iraqis to do the job that our coalition forces are doing now. And that's the task at hand. That's the task at hand. The task at hand is to train these folks and equip these folks as quickly as possible and as efficiently as possible.

I mean, the key is not to set artificial timelines. See, you set an artificial timeline, it says to the enemy, "Well, gosh, all we've got to do is wait them out." It says to the Iraqis, "We're going to quit on you." If the Iraqi people think that the United States is not true to its word, they will grow timid. They don't want to take a risk, in case somebody comes back that's going to cut off their hands.

And so your brother is going on a mission that is a vital mission. I know you're worried about him. I can see it in your eyes. And I don't blame you.

Q. He's ready.

The President. Well, he's ready, but sister, you're worried, and I don't blame you. You love him, is why you're worried. And that's wonderful.

Let me tell you an interesting story, though, and I hope you keep this story—I hope this helps you and helps everybody understand. So I'm having dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. And we're having Kobe beef—pretty good. [*Laughter*] It was in Tokyo. And guess what we were talking about? We were talking about peace. We were talking about how to deal with Kim Chong-il in North Korea. He's dangerous. I thought it didn't make any sense for us to have a bilateral relationship with him because he—the last time we tried to have one, he didn't tell the truth. So I learned a lesson and then started to rally other nations to be involved with us to convince this man to get rid of his nuclear weapons program. And one of our partners in convincing Kim Chong-il to disarm is Japan.

Now, the interesting part of the story, I think, as far as your brother is concerned, is that during the course of the conversation, I thought it was pretty neat to be talking to a Prime Minister of a country that we had been at war with, that my dad had actually, as a young Navy pilot, trained down the road here, went overseas—and I know many of your dads did as well—to fight against the Japanese, our enemy. They were our sworn enemy. And today—or that day, I was talking to the head of a former enemy, and we're talking about keeping the world more peaceful. [*Applause*]

Now, let me finish—let me finish. There were a lot of people after World War II who did not believe that Japan could be a self-governing, peaceful nation. There were a lot of people who said, "Well, the reconstruction effort isn't going to work. These people can't do this." But fortunately, our predecessors in the Presidency and the Senate and the Congress believed that liberty can change lives and never forgot that fantastic American belief that freedom has the capacity to transform lives, transform enemies to allies in peace. Some day an American President is going to be sitting down with an elected leader from Iraq, huddled and talking about how to keep the peace. That's what your brother—[*applause*].

Go ahead, yes.

Support for the President

Q. My dad is a retired vet—[*inaudible*].

The President. Thank you so much. Where is he? Where's the colonel?

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, you tell the colonel I saluted him. Thank you. I appreciate that. God bless you. Thank you. That's very sweet of you.

Okay, who was yelling up there? You? Okay, fine. Are you the spokesman for the rowdy bunch up there?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay, well, good.

Q. Okay, first of all, I want to say that I love you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And I would like to see you in office for 4 more years.

The President. Thank you. Are you registered to vote?

Q. No.

The President. See, you get to ask a question; I get to ask one. Are you registered?

Q. No, not yet. And——

The President. Are you 18?

Q. No, and I don't want to talk about it because it upsets me. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay, good. That's a teenager—I'm used to that. [*Laughter*] I've been there. [*Laughter*]

International Criminal Court

Q. My question is, why did you let the International Court try our troops?

The President. Yes, I haven't. I'm against the International Court. That's a pretty darn sophisticated question. I didn't join

the International Criminal Court because I don't want to put our troops in the hands of prosecutors from other nations. Look, if somebody has done some wrong in our military, we'll take care of it. We got plenty of capability of dealing with justice.

Very good question. Make sure you register.

Yes, ma'am. Anybody about ready to fall out? [*Laughter*] Getting a little hot? Okay, I get the message.

Q. Mr. President.

The President. Yes, ma'am.

Message to Children/Homeland Security

Q. I am the attorney for the Guardian Ad Litem Program here in our area. And we advocate for the best interest of children. And I know that you have a heart for our children.

The President. Right.

Q. And I would like to ask if you could address our children and even the young adults who are here and tell them something that you want—that you think is important about your past 4 years and your next 4 years——

The President. Thanks, yes.

Q. ——about their safety in this country.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. First, my message to the children is, make right choices in life. Understand that the decisions you make as a youngster can affect you. My second message is, love your parents. My third message is—seriously. My third message is, take advantage of your schooling opportunities. It's really important to learn early in life. They're—hold up a second. [*Laughter*]

You're growing up in a different time. It's probably hard for you to realize it because you don't realize what it was like, for example, to grow up in the fifties. [*Laughter*] McCain and I grew up in the fifties. It was a different time. It used to be when we were younger, oceans would protect us. And we were in a pretty unique position here in America where we could say, gosh, there could be a threat gathering over there, but we didn't have to worry about it.

And that's what happened on September the 11th. I hope you just understand this, that this is a demarcation point in history, the history of our country, because it changed the whole way that we've got to look at our own security. It meant that if there is a threat somewhere, we can no longer not expect it to come here. And that's what you've got to understand. This is a different time. That's why you hear a lot of talk from those of us in office about securing the homeland. There wasn't a lot of talk about securing the homeland prior to September the 11th. We saw some terrorists threats. Nothing was done about them, hardly. But very few people really dreamt that somebody would take our own airplane and fly it into our own building and kill 3,000 people. No one—you ask any adult that you might run into, could you envision that, and the answer was no.

And so your question is—for the past 4 years what the kids have been learning is, is that the history of our Nation changed in a way that can create difficult circumstances for people, because our job is to try to tell the truth and to remind people that there's still danger. Believe me, a President—it would be much easier for a President if he could say, "There is no danger. Gosh, the world is peaceful, and everybody is doing great." But that's just not the hand we got dealt during this period of our history. So you will—what happened the last 4 years—she asked me to talk about the last 4 and the next 4—the last 4 you really began to see this country understanding and coming to grips with the nature of the world we live in.

I think the next 4 years what you'll see is, because we're willing to do hard work and stick to our word and take action when necessary—and we've had a lot of successes—the next 4 years will be more peace. I think you're going to see the world

changing for peace. And you've got to understand one reason why, and that's because there are just some fundamental values in life that can change societies, starting with the thing that we take for granted in America, which is freedom. Freedom is a—when societies become free societies and the people's aspirations are listened to and the leaders are responsive to the people, not to their own whims, those societies become hopeful societies, and the world becomes a more peaceful place. That's what you'll see over the next 4 years.

Last question, right here. This guy has a question—okay, two more questions. The people's choice will go last.

Yes, ma'am. What have you got?

President's Faith/Religious Freedom

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering if you were a Christian.

The President. I—yes, I am. Now, let me talk about religion. I want you all to hear me on religion right quick. It is very important for this country to honor religion this way: You can be religious or you can choose not to be religious, and you're equally American. You have a right in this country to worship freely. It is a fundamental right that must never change. And if you choose to worship the Almighty, you are equally American if you're a Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Hindu. That's the precious nature of how we view religion in this country. That freedom to worship and not be condemned because of the choice you make, by man, is a—it must be jealously guarded by any of us, Republican or Democrat or independent, who are honored with a public office. I can't tell you what a valuable part of our past, present, and future the freedom to worship as you see fit is. It's just an important part of our country, and it's not going to change.

Great question. Final question, sir—the people's choice. [*Applause*] Can you please explain why you have got such a huge entourage?

Charter Schools

Q. Here we go. Mr. President, OWC has a charter high school.

The President. Oh, yes.

Q. And this is the charter high school.

The President. Good job.

Q. The charter high school is number one in the State of Florida of all high schools. We are the "A."

The President. Now, how do you know that?

Q. Your test.

The President. Yes, thank you very much. He didn't guess, did he?

Q. What I want to know is, what is the security that we have of sharing our great experience with the rest of the country and also of keeping our charter high school and making it flourish and continue to flourish like it is?

The President. Good question. First of all, let me ask you something. How many of you all are going to college? [*Applause*] That's good. Good job. Secondly, high schools are chartered not by the Federal Government, and they will not be chartered by the Federal Government so long as I'm the President. That's called—that's not local control of schools. Schools need to be locally controlled. High schools are chartered by the State, and that's where they should be, by the county, by somebody other than the Federal Government. You don't want your Federal Government running the schools. No, believe me. And they're not going to.

And the question is, how do you know—I mean, how do you spread charter schools? I'll tell you how. You hold schools to account. And you put the scores out for everybody to see. And if, in fact, you're number one in the State, and I believe you are—you wouldn't have said it in front of the national cameras if you weren't. People say, "Why—why is this charter school number one?" That's how you begin to spread educational excellence—not from dictates

from above but from excellence from below.

That's why the accountability systems that we're now developing at the State level, with kind of insistence from the Federal Government in return for extra money—that's why those accountability systems are so vital, so that a principal—I guess you're a principal—can stand up and say, "We're number one." The President says, "Well, how do I know?" And he says, "Because we measure." But as a result of an accountability system, it enables the best practices to emerge.

You're obviously doing something well. You've got great teachers, I'm confident, but you're using the right curriculum. You're using a great curriculum. And so somebody will say, "Gosh, my charter school or my high school isn't doing as good as my neighbor's. I better figure out why." That's what the accountability system does. It creates an atmosphere where we're raising that bar, we're challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know, when you lower the bar, guess what you get? You get lousy results. I suspect you've raised those standards, haven't you? We'll keep raising the bar.

Listen, I want to thank everybody for coming. We're on to victory. Thanks for your help. God bless. I appreciate you coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Speaker-designate Allan Bense of the Florida House of Representatives; Bev Kilmer, candidate for Florida's Second Congressional District; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in Panama City, Florida
August 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all very much. So Little Brother says, "Why don't you come to north Florida; maybe we can get some people to show up." We are so honored so many came out to say hello. Thanks a lot. We really appreciate you being here. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here traveling—I'm traveling this part of your State to let the people of north Florida know there is more to do to make this country safer, stronger, and better. And I want your help.

I'm keeping fine company. I'm proud to be traveling with Senator John McCain. What a fantastic American he is. I'm glad Brother is here. He's doing a great job for the people of Florida, and I'm proud to call him Brother. I know you're proud to call him Governor.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. No, I know it. She's a great wife and a wonderful mother, and she's doing a heck of a job as the First Lady of this country. Today I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

And I'm proud of my runningmate. I admit he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment. I picked him because he can do the job.

I'm proud my friend J.C. Watts is here, I appreciate you being here, J.C. I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Toni

Jennings and Attorney General Charlie Crist for joining us today. I'm proud to be on the stage with them. I want to thank the house speaker-designate, Allan Bense, for being on the bus and traveling with us today. We've been traveling with Bev Kilmer as well. Put her in the House. She'll be a great Member of the U.S. Congress.

I want to thank Aaron Tippin for being here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the people who put up the signs, make the phone calls. Make sure you go out and register your friends and neighbors. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation in a free society to show up at the polls. Don't be afraid of convincing discerning Democrats and wise independents to go to the polls as well. They know what good government is. They know strong leadership when they see it. They understand the world is going to be safer and stronger and better with 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In the past few years, we've been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal together. But there's only one reason to look backwards, and that is to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have so much more to do to move this Nation forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years. From creating jobs to improving our schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we made much progress, and there is more to do—and there is more to do.

We've got more to do to make our schools, our public schools, the centers of excellence we know they can be so no child is left behind in America. Listen, when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in challenging the status quo when children are trapped in schools which will not teach and will not change. And we're making real progress. We're making real progress.

We've got more to do. I understand the jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills, so we're going to work to reform our high schools so a high school diploma means something. We'll expand science and math education so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training in the classrooms. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will gain the skills and the competence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We've got more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans heard year after year after year the promise of prescription drugs for Medicare. We got the job done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that fits their needs, and Medicare will give them coverage for prescription drugs.

We've done more, though, than that in health care. We've expanded community centers to help low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. But there's more to do. See, most Americans get their health care coverage through their work, yet many small businesses, which create the most new jobs in America, cannot afford health coverage. So you know what we need to do? We need to let our small businesses pool together, join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts available to the big companies.

To improve health care, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of health care and run the doctors out of

business. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. And my opponent has made his choice: He put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I am for medical liability reform now.

Listen, we're going to use technology to reduce cost and prevent health care mistakes. We'll do more to expand research to seek new cures. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government bureaucrats.

We got more to do to make this economy stronger. We've been through a lot when it comes to our economy. We've been through a recession. We've been through scandals. We've been through the terror attack. And yet we've overcome these obstacles, because our workers are great, our small businesses are strong, our farmers are good at what they do. I also think we overcame these obstacles because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We said if you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief. And we're helping American families with that tax relief. If you have a family with children, you get tax relief. If you married, you get tax relief. We've got a Tax Code that has a marriage penalty.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We ought to be encouraging marriage in this country, not penalizing marriage.

And our tax relief helped small businesses. And this time, the check really was in the mail. [*Laughter*] Listen, because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added over 1.5—nearly 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Because we acted, Florida has added almost 300,000 new jobs since the end of 2001, and your unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. People in this State are working, and that's good for our country.

Listen, I'm not going to be satisfied until everybody who wants to work can find a job, and so there's more to do. To keep jobs in America, regulations must be reasonable and fair. To keep jobs in America, we must reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs in America, we need tort reform. To keep jobs in America, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low. To keep jobs in America, we will help our workers retrain, when necessary, at places like our community colleges. To keep jobs in America, we will level the playing field when it comes to trade. Listen, America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as we're treated fairly.

What I'm telling you is, if you give me 4 more years, we will still be the leading economy in the world, our farm economy will be strong, more small businesses will exist, and Americans will be able to have better and higher paying jobs.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as a home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, because we were resolute and firm, today Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally on terror. Many young girls now go to school for the first time in Afghanistan, thanks to the United States and our coalition. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Prior to September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Saudi Arabia was not paying attention to those who were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida. They're an ally in the war on terror. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. Remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He was a threat. He used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats in the world in a new light. One of the lessons of that fateful day, a lesson I will never forget as your President, is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. My administration saw a threat. We looked at intelligence; it further confirmed in our mind that Saddam Hussein was a threat. The United States Congress—Members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at that intelligence and came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

The United Nations Security Council then demanded a full accounting of his weapons and his weapons programs, or face serious consequences. As he had for over a decade, the tyrant refused to comply with the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that were in his country. And so I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the actions and words of a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

No, we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find. Yet, he had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have easily shared that capability with terrorist enemies. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam sits in a prison cell.

Almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and almost 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the anti-war candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, Senator Kerry now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up. But be careful, there's still 84 days left in this campaign for him to change his mind.

Listen, I'm running for 4 more years because there's more work to do. We'll work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot hope that they change. We will aggressively pursue them. We will engage them. We will defeat them so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition to help us. There's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. There are

nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan. There are some 30 nations involved in Iraq. We thank their leaders, we thank their people for sacrificing for freedom and peace. We'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends. I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women who wear our uniform. I am really proud of our military, and I know you are as well. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I have seen their decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we have a duty in Government to make sure those who wear our uniform are fully supported by the Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in our missions. The legislation provided body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, spare parts, fuel, health benefits, and ammunition. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about why he voted no to support our troops, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, I've spent some time here in north Florida; I understand that's not the way the people talk up here. They like people who say one thing and mean it. And then when pressed he said, well, he's proud of his vote, and then he said, well, the whole thing is a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a peaceful and free Iraq and a peaceful and free Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams and aspirations of their people. Afghanistan and Iraq have now got strong leaders who are committed to free societies. The people of those countries, having been brutalized by tyrants, are now beginning to step up and take responsibility. More Afghan citizens and more Iraqis are joining their militaries and police forces to secure their own country so it can be free.

See, by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our Nation. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Listen, we've got a lot of work to do, and I understand that. That's why I'm running for 4 more years. There are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting to harm us. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. His logic is upside-down. It shows a dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. See, during the nineties, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They hate us. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It was wrong to blame America for the anger and evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back. We defeat terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusions of the 9/11 Commission when they said our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. We've got more to do. We'll secure this homeland by staying on the offense. We're going to do—to secure this homeland as well, by continuing to push for meaningful reform.

Listen, we started the hard process. We transformed our defenses and created a Department of Homeland Security to better protect you. We passed the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is necessary to give law enforcement the tools necessary to track down terrorists.

We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a lot of the commission's recommendations. Today I name a good Floridian to head the Central Intelligence Agency. Congressman Porter Goss is my nominee before the United States Senate. We'll work together to strengthen that vital agency, so we have the intelligence necessary to better secure our homeland. I also will look forward to working with Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director, so one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence, both overseas and domestic.

These reforms aren't going to be easy. They're never easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests there, people willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you have to be able to get it done. When it comes to improving our public schools, we got the job done. When it comes to improving health care for our senior citizens, we got the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and spreading the peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, we live in exciting times—exciting times. But they're times of change. In order to help people through times of change, I think the Government ought to stand side by side with families and workers. One way to do that is promote an ownership society in America. See, we want people owning their own health care accounts, so if they change jobs their health care account goes with them. We want people to have more control over their lives. We want people being the decisionmakers when it comes to health care.

When it comes to our retirement accounts, listen, old guys like me and McCain are in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security. But if you're a younger worker, there is doubt as to whether or not Social Security is fiscally sound enough to—for you. That's why I think younger workers need personal savings accounts, so they can take them from job to job and pass them on to people they want to pass them on to.

In a changing world, I think it's a positive sign to know more people own their own home. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. I love the fact when a new homebuyer can open the door and say, "Welcome to my house. This is my home." We want more people owning their own business. There's nothing better, when you say you own something in America. If you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of this country.

In a world that changes, some things that are not going to change, our belief in liberty, in opportunity, in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by won't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; our belief in institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for institutions like marriage and families, which are the foundation of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, this culture of ours is beginning to change 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 are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved yourself.

I understand the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion so that we can help and heal and change America, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those time. It's a time we need firm resolve and clear vision. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I remember the guys in hardhats screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the ropeline and looking in the eyes of a man who had just come out of the rubble searching for a buddy. He said, "Do not let me down."

He took that day personally. All the people at that site took it personally. You took it personally, and I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. We're moving our country forward. During the next 4 years, we will spread opportunity and ownership through every corner of this country. During the next 4 years, we'll pass the enduring values of our Nation to another generation. During the next 4 years, we will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled this great State and this great country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans, if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, we will carry Florida, we will carry America, and I will continue—I will continue to honor my high office.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Panama City Marina. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings, and State Attorney General Charlie Crist of Florida; former Representative J.C. Watts, Jr., of Oklahoma; Speaker-designate Allan Bense of the Florida House of Representatives; Bev Kilmer, candidate for Florida's Second Congressional District; entertainer Aaron Tippin; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

Remarks in a Discussion at Eclipse Aviation in Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm glad you all are here. Thank you all for coming. It's good to be back. Please be seated. Yes, thanks for being here today. It's good to be back——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] It's good to be back in country where people wear cowboy hats.

Thanks for your hospitality. I'm traveling our country asking for the vote. I think you have to go out and ask people for their help and ask people for their support. I've got a reason for running again—I'm going to share some of that with you today. We're going to do it in a little different way. We're going to talk about small businesses. We'll talk about homeownership. We're going to talk about jobs and education, all aimed to let the people know that I have a desire to make sure this country is a stronger country and a better country for everybody—*por todos.*

I want to thank my friend Pete Domenici. You got a good one in Pete Domenici. He's a United States Senator—he's a strong leader for New Mexico. When you're with Pete, all he talks about is New Mexico—[*laughter*]—occasionally works in the United States. [*Laughter*] He loves this State, ever since he was a fire-balling right-hander. [*Laughter*] He's a wonderful man. I'm proud you're here, Pete. Thanks for taking on a leadership role in my campaign.

I'm also proud to be traveling with John McCain. Nothing better than waking up in the country and getting a cup of coffee and getting in the pickup truck and driving around and looking at the cows. That's what John and I did this morning. It's a good way to clear your mind and keep your perspective.

Yesterday, we were in the Panhandle of Florida. We ended our day in Panama City, Florida. There was 22,000 people that came out to say hello. It's—listen, I'm going to tell you what I'm seeing. I'm seeing big crowds; the enthusiasm is high. We're on our way to victory.

There's two people I wish who were here who aren't. One is Heather Wilson. I know she's out working. She's a fantastic lady. You need to put her back in Congress. People of this district are lucky that Heather is your Congresswoman. She's very competent, very smart, very able person who has got a lot of respect—who has earned a lot of respect in Washington.

And the other person who I regret is not here is Laura. [*Applause*] Yes, you do too. You know, she was born and raised right around the corner. I was raised right around the corner; she was born and raised right around the corner. We're right on the other side of the New Mexico border. We've spent a lot of time in this State. This is a State where we don't have to have a tour guide to figure out how to get around. And we don't need to have somebody explain to us how the people of New Mexico think. She's a great First Lady, a great mother, and a wonderful wife. And she sends her best to Pete and all our friends here in New Mexico.

I also want to thank the sheriff—the high sheriff is here, Darren White. It's good to see you, Sheriff. I appreciate you being here. He's sitting next to my friend John Sanchez. John, thanks for taking a leadership role. I want to thank Pat Lyons and Manny Lujan, friends of mine. I appreciate so very much Allen Weh, the chairman of this—the chairman of the party.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. [*Applause*] Yes, there you go. You're the people who are going to get people registered to vote. That's what we're really here to talk about in many ways, is to get people to show up to the polls. I'm confident if we can get a lot of people to vote, we'll carry New Mexico this time—wasn't but about 300 votes last time. [*Laughter*] Too many of our people got the head cold right before the election. This time, we're going to get them out to vote. And I want your help. And remember, there are a lot of Democrats here who like what's going on in Washington, DC—make sure you get those people to the polls. Make sure you get the independents. They understand that this administration is dedicated to keep this country safer and stronger and a better country for everybody.

I met Tom Hesch today. Where are you, Tom? There he is, right there. He's a doc; he's a dentist. Guess what he does? He provides free dental care for people who need help; that's what he does. One of the reasons—I call him a soldier in the army of compassion. You know why I mention Tom, is because the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of citizens like Tom who are willing to reach out to somebody who needs help and says, "Can I help you, brother or sister? What can I do to help your life?" I'm running for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally and encourage the soldiers in that vast army of compassion, so that America can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

I understand the limitations of Government. I understand that Government is not a loving organization. [*Laughter*] But Government can stand side by side with loving organizations to help improve the lives of people from all walks of life.

Tom, I want to thank you for being here. Thank you for the example you set.

I'm also running because I want this country of ours to be a stronger country, and by that I mean a country in which people can realize their dreams. And people can better realize their dreams when our economy is strong. Now, we've been through a lot. We've been through a lot in this country. If you really think about what we've been through, it's amazing to say that we're strong and getting stronger. We've been through a recession; that's when things are going backwards.

We've been through an attack. That's when things really shook up the country. It shook our conscience. The attacks of September the 11th affected our economy. Remember, airplanes weren't flying; Wall Street was shut down; banks were closed. I mean, it was a terrible time for our Nation.

We went through corporate scandals. Make no mistake about it, when you've got a system that relies upon trust—in other words, somebody opening up the books, and you trust in what you read—and that trust has been violated by a corporate officer, it affected our economy. It shook our confidence in the system. But we acted. We acted to overcome all these obstacles. We passed tough new corporate reforms. The message ought to be clear to everybody now that if you don't tell the truth, we're coming after you, to keep the trust.

We acted after the enemy attacked us. I'll talk about that a little later. We also acted to help cure the ills of a recession. I believe that when somebody has got more money in their pocket to save or spend or invest, it causes there to be an increase in demand for goods and services, and when there's an increase in demand for goods and services, somebody is going to produce the good or a service. If somebody produces that good or a service, somebody is more likely to find a job.

My whole focus on getting out of this recession was to help the economy grow so people can find work, and we're making progress. We've added 1.5—nearly 1.5 million new jobs since last August. We're a strong economy. If you look at all the major industrialized nations in the world, we're the strongest. That's where we should be.

There's more to do—there's more to do. We're going to talk about the entrepreneurial spirit. See, I don't think the role of Government is to create wealth. I believe the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can soar and is strong, where the strong businesses—you know what that means? You see, in order to keep jobs here at home, that means we better have the best environment for job creation in the world. We want jobs to be here in New Mexico and in Texas and all around the country, like we all do. That means this has got to be the best place to be an employer, which means good tax policy; it means we've got to do something about all these lawsuits, which are threatening the job creators.

We've got to do something on health care costs. I'll tell you what we can do on health care costs. We can take care of our seniors with good Medicare law, which we've done. We can have more community health centers in urban New Mexico and rural New Mexico and the tribal areas of New Mexico to help poor citizens get primary care and take the pressure off our emergency rooms. We can have associated health care—I mean associated health plans, which will allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can have the same purchasing power as large companies do and, therefore, better afford insurance for their employees.

We can continue to promote health savings accounts, which allow individuals and small businesses to put money aside for workers and/or yourself on a tax-free basis, which will help control costs. We can spread new technologies, electronic records for patients, to help wring out the inefficiencies which now exist in the medical system.

And you know what else we need to do in order to make sure health care is available and affordable? Medical liability reform. These lawsuits are making—I'm telling you, the frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and they're driving doctors out of business, and they're hurting our hospitals. And I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We're standing with the patients and the doctors and the small-business owners.

In order to make sure jobs stay here and the economy is strong, we need good trade policy. Let me tell you something about trade. Our economy has been open for goods from overseas. You know why? If you're a customer and you have more choices, you're going to get a better product at a better price. That's how the economy works. The more choices you have as a customer, the more likely it is you're going to get a product that you want at higher quality and better price.

And so Presidents before me from both parties have said let's help the customers of America—the consumers—you. In return, though, other countries have not opened their markets to our products like we have opened our markets to theirs. Good public policy and good trade policy says to places like China and elsewhere, "Open up your markets. Ours are open. You open up yours." We can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair.

I'm going to talk—I'm going to ask Rudy Gonzalez to stand up. Rudy is a small-business owner. One of the things that—one of the things I love to do is talk to small-business owners, people who have started their own business. Isn't that a fantastic thing to be able to say? Rudy owns his own business. And he started it himself, which is really good. It means that something is going right in the society where people are willing to risk capital to start their own business.

Part of our tax relief plan was aimed directly at the Rudys, the small businesses of the world, because 90 percent of the small businesses are Subchapter S or sole proprietorships. That's legalese for they pay tax at the individual income-tax rate, not corporate tax rate. And so when you hear us saying we're—reduce the income tax, the individual income taxes, think about Rudy. Think about his business.

Rudy, when did you start your company?

Rudy Gonzalez. Well, Mr. President, first of all, thank you for inviting me. I started my company back in 1997. And I'm a first-generation Hispanic. My parents were born in Mexico. They came over to this country because, just like you, Mr. President, they have three fundamental values: a belief in a higher power; a belief in the family as the best institution to secure our future; and a belief that if you work hard and

you apply yourself, in the United States you can get anywhere you want to be.

The President. That's great. *Fe, familia, y esperanza—fe, familia, y esperanza.* Exactly right. What does your business do? In case somebody might be listening. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. Gonzalez made brief remarks.*]

The President. Actually, let me stop you for a minute. I appreciate the credit. No, you did it, see. They wouldn't be giving you a contract if you couldn't do the job. You've got to be able to do the job. And if you can't do the job, then you shouldn't be given the contract. But you can do the job. You're good at what you do. Thanks for the credit. I don't deserve it, you do.

Let me ask you this question: How many people have you hired this year?

Mr. Gonzalez. Well, I'd like to go back a little bit. When I started off—you were right, I started by myself in 1997. Today, we have approximately 65 employees. This year—we've grown every single year since 2001. This year, we added 20 new employees.

The President. That's good. Let me stop you there. Let me stop you. A lot of the job growth is happening because companies like Rudy are expanding their job base. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. It's important for the American people to understand that. And so you're seeing Rudy hires 20 here, and somebody else hires 20 there, and it begins to add up. People are working in the small-business sector. That's why we've got to make sure small businesses have got affordable health care. And that's why we've got to make sure tax policy does not harm small businesses.

Are you making investments this year?

Mr. Gonzalez. Yes, sir, I sure am.

The President. What will you be buying? [*Laughter*] Just in case there's a seller here. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gonzalez. You can talk to my friend Ken over there because this year, he sold us four vehicles.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] The only reason I ask is that people have got to understand when you hear the tax relief encouraged investment, investment means you're purchasing something, and somebody has to make that which you purchase and sell that which you purchase. And that's how the economy works. There's a million decisionmakers, or more than that, like Rudy who are out saying the Tax Code encourages me to buy something, and as that purchasing takes place, it adds economic vitality and growth.

Rudy is an S corp. That means he pays tax at the individual income-tax rate. And so when you hear my opponent talking about taxing the rich—that means running up the rate, the high rates—he's really taxing small businesses. See, they put out $2.2 trillion of new spending promises. He hasn't even got to September yet, by the way. [*Laughter*] And he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That means that S corps that are doing okay are going to pay higher taxes. We don't need to be taking money out of the small-business coffers as this economy is beginning to grow. If most new jobs are created by small businesses, and most small businesses are Subchapter S or sole proprietorships, it makes no sense to run up the taxes on these people as this economy is beginning to grow.

You know what else I think? You know what else I think when they say "tax the rich"? Most rich people are able to avoid taxes, and if you can't raise enough money from taxing the rich, guess who pays the taxes?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, you do. But we're not going to let him. That's what this campaign is about, to make sure we've got good tax policy.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. All right, Rudy. Go ahead.

[*Mr. Gonzalez made further remarks.*]

The President. Fabulous. See, that's what he's talking about. The tax relief encouraged him to make this investment.

Good job, Rudy. Thanks for coming. Appreciate it. Thanks. Good job.

We've got another entrepreneur with us, Vern Raburn. He is the—so here's a guy who said, "I can build a better airplane." That's what you call a grand vision. [*Laughter*]

Why don't you tell the folks about your company.

[*Vern Raburn made brief remarks.*]

The President. McCain and I will fly the first one. [*Laughter*] So how's it going? I mean, this is—this is——

Mr. Raburn. Things are going great.

The President. You've hired since I saw you last, 4 years ago, how many?

Mr. Raburn. Well, 4 years ago, at this time, we had about 18 employees. We have 342 employees now.

The President. That's good. And like what skill level is required—skill level of the worker?

Mr. Raburn. Skill levels—we have very high skill level. Most of our workforce today are engineers, manufacturing folks, white-collar workers. In fact, our average salary of each of our employees is about twice that of the average family income in New Mexico.

The President. Yes, let me stop you there. One of the real challenges we have in our country to make sure jobs stay here is to educate people, is to make sure the education system works. You just heard what—it's a new business, new business. He says that we pay twice as much as the average income, but we require high-level skills. You know what that says to me? It says to me that we've got to make sure No Child Left Behind works. We've got to make sure we keep raising the bar, make sure the young kids can read and write and add and subtract early, before it's too late. We've got to make sure our community colleges are able to train workers for the jobs of the 21st century, so that Eclipse can find a workforce necessary to make this company fly.

So when are we going to see the first unit take off?

Mr. Raburn. Well, we'll be flying again late this year, and we expect to have the aircraft certified in early '06, March of '06. Today we've got orders for about 2,200 airplanes, about $2.5 billion in back—[*applause*].

The President. That's good.

Mr. Raburn. Good problem.

The President. Yes. Well, Vern's pulling to make sure this economy stays strong. Any of them overseas?

Mr. Raburn. A lot of those are overseas.

The President. Let me tell you something. See, if we get into a mode where we become economic isolationists, he won't be able to sell these airplanes overseas. We don't need trade wars. He wants to be able to sell this product overseas without having to compete with government bureaucracies and unnecessary tariffs and restrictions. That's why we believe in fair trade and open trade.

You got workers here who are going to be working because you've got planes being sold overseas. So when you hear them talk about trade, you need to be thinking about jobs. Jobs exist when you're able to trade overseas. You've got some farmers in this State, don't you? [*Laughter*] Yes, the farm economy is strong around the country. You know why? Because not only are we feeding our own people, we're feeding other people. Other people are eating our corn and our soybeans and our wheat, because we're opening up markets—still working to get that New Mexico cattle around the world. Open up markets for the Mexican cattlemen—and Texas cattlemen too, I want you to know. [*Laughter*]

So what else? What else is on your mind, Vern? You get the chance to tell the President something. [*Laughter*] By the way, I guarantee he's a big believer in tort reform.

[*Laughter*] A lot of airline companies, a lot of manufacturers in the past got shut down because of all kinds of lawsuits. And these lawsuits—we want good justice in America, but when the trial bar converts the law into a legal lottery, it begins to affect jobs. You just got to know that. It's one thing to have justice; it's another thing to go overboard with justice, because people start to lose work. I don't know what your opinion is——

Mr. Raburn. I agree. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. See, you'd think I was a lawyer. I'm not.

[*Mr. Raburn made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, that's strong. See, this is a vibrant company. And I'm excited to be here. I want to thank you for inviting us. He's got a newly-hired employee named Vernon Oliver. Where's Vern? There he is. Hi, Vern. Welcome. So what happens to you? So how do you end up here in the airplane manufacturing world?

[*Vernon Oliver made brief remarks.*]

The President. What Vernon is telling you is, is that since 9/11, things have changed. People are getting their confidence; jobs are coming back; and in his case, he had the skill levels necessary to fill the jobs.

Yesterday, we were in Florida, and we talked to some people that needed to go back to community colleges, but we were happy to help them go back to community colleges. There's all kinds of plans, trade adjustment assistance, and NAFTA-related job loss. People who then can get a scholarship or get direct grants to go back and retrain for the jobs which actually exist. This fellow didn't need to be retrained. He just showed up, and they wanted him. And he saved $3,000 in taxes last year. And he's going to save $3,000 this year.

Remember, we not only reduced income taxes on everybody who pays taxes, but we helped people with children by raising the child credit to $1,000; and we reduced the marriage penalty; we created a 10-percent bracket. In other words, we said we're going to help families. And this family right here has got $3,000 in relief—I think that's right—you probably can say, "Mind your own business, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Oliver. No, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. But if the tax relief is not made permanent, his taxes go up by $1,200. See, I believe Government can set priorities and fund our priorities and that after the priorities are funded the people can spend that money better than the Government can spend it. That's what I believe. And I like the fact that Vernon's got $3,000 additional of his own money in his pocket. It's his money to begin with, of course, and so he has it.

Well, thanks for coming, Vernon.

And Guy is with you as well, Guy Hoisington. All right. He's a newly hired guy. Tell us, Guy.

[*Guy Hoisington made brief remarks.*]

The President. Here's a guy who tried out the promised land for a while—that would be Texas—[*laughter*]—changed his mind, came home to the other—to the enchanted land, and is working because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. He's able to more realize his dream, which is to raise your family here. So the job of government is to help when needed. The tax relief helps his family. I suspect it helped him move. I think it—I know it helps him raise his family.

Mr. Oliver. Yes, Vern helped me move, too.

The President. He helped? That's good. [*Laughter*] You must be good at what you do.

Mr. Oliver. Yes, sir.

The President. That's good. That's real good. [*Laughter*] But the point is—that what I'm trying to tell you is, is that when the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, when people like Vern feel comfortable about taking a risk and expanding and growing, people can find work. That's what we want

in America. We want people to find work. We want people to be comfortable with their lives as best as they can.

You know, we can't make you decide to be somebody, but we can help you. We can help educate your children, to make sure they're educated. We can provide tax relief so that you're more comfortable and confident in tough times and also to help this economy grow. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about the proper role of Government. We're talking about how to make sure Government stands side by side with moms and dads and entrepreneurs and workers.

One of the—one of my goals is to continue to push an ownership society in America. First-generation American says, "I own my own business." I just think those are wonderful words. I like the idea of health accounts where people own them and manage them so that the principal decisionmakers for health care are doctors and patients, not bureaucrats.

I see some younger faces here, and Social Security—the solvency of Social Security is an issue for future generations. McCain, Domenici, and I are in good shape—[*laughter*]—at least our age group. But when you start looking at younger workers, down there in the thirties and twenties, there's a question of whether or not Social Security is going to be around. And therefore, we need to explore with Congress the idea of personal savings accounts for younger workers—their option—so Social Security exists.

And finally, one of the great promises of this country is homeownership. There's something—the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. More minorities are owning their homes than ever before. In other words, we got more people opening their door and saying, "Welcome to my home." Those are magical words, aren't they? I think a healthy society is one in which people own something. If you own something, you have a stake in the future of your country.

Today we've got Debra and Arnold Reano. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here. First of all, I want you to know Debra's birthday is today. Happy birthday. Arnold whispered in my ear when we were coming out. Secondly, see the beautiful jewelry she's wearing and he's wearing—they made it. They're artisans. That's a tradition of New Mexico, where people are really skilled at making beautiful jewelry. Thanks for mine. I told Debra that I'm going to play like I bought it for Laura. [*Laughter*] No, I'm not. No, I wouldn't do that. Because she's probably watching on C–SPAN. [*Laughter*]

You all just bought a home.

[*Mr. Reano made brief remarks.*]

The President. What he's talking about is the Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program, which is a way to encourage homeownership in tribal areas. And it's working. That's what we want, isn't it? Doesn't it make sense to have public policy aimed at helping people own their own home? I can't think of a better use of resources. It's working.

[*Mr. Reano made further remarks.*]

The President. By the way, this couple saved $3,200 in Federal income taxes last year. Tax relief helps all kinds of people.

Good. Listen, I appreciate you coming. I asked them to come—we asked them to come because homeownership is valid for everybody. We want people owning their own home all across the country—every corner of America, we want people to put out that welcome mat, "Welcome to my home." And it's happening. I think one of the most positive things that's happening in the country is there's more minority small-business owners in America and more people from all walks of life owning their own home.

Thank you all for coming. It's good to see your girls too—beautiful girls.

One way to make sure the economy continues to grow is to keep the country safe.

That's a charge we've been given. Nobody wants to be a war President, but an enemy which had been planning for a long time struck us. And we must never forget the lessons of that day. I'm going to give you three quick lessons. As fellow citizens, it's important to know—for you to know that I know the stakes and that I know the realities of the world in which we live.

Lesson one is there's an enemy out there which hates us because of what we believe. And you cannot negotiate with them. You cannot talk sense into them. It's hard for the American conscience to understand the nature of these people, but they behead people because they know we've got hearts and we know we weep. They know we value human life and human dignity. And they're trying to shake our will. And the only way to deal with these folks is to bring them to justice.

Second lesson, which we'll do this year and we'll do over the next 4 years—we must bring them to justice in places where they hide and plot so we do not have to face them here at home. That's the reality of the world, is that this is a different kind of enemy—a different kind of enemy. These are people that will hide in caves, and they will seek safe haven. Their ideal situation is where they can find a weak government that fears them or likes them and lets them hide and lets them burrow in the—in their countryside or in their cities.

And so, the second lesson is that we need to send clear messages, strong messages to countries around the world that say if you harbor a terrorist—in other words, if you provide safe haven for these people, if you allow them to arm up and plot and plan and train, you will be held to account just like the terrorists will be.

And that explains our Afghanistan policy. And that explains why we took action we did in Afghanistan. We said to the Taliban, "Get rid of these people. Turn them over, or face consequences." And by the way, if America says something, it must be easy to understand, and you must mean it. In order—if we're uncertain or if we doublespeak, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's the reality of the world in which we live. It's a lesson that we must remember.

By the way, on Afghanistan, it is—there's still hard work there. But think about what's happened in a very quick period of time. Think about this. There is going to be a Presidential election in a country that was ruled by this barbaric regime, so barbaric that many young girls never got to go to school and their mothers were publicly whipped. That's barbaric. And now they're going to have a Presidential election. Over 8 million people are registered to vote. And here I'm going around the country saying, "Please register to vote, and vote"—these people, when given a chance, are showing up in big numbers, in spite of the fact that some of these thugs are trying to stop them from going to the ballot box.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, kicking off the International Children's Game, and standing in front of me was the Afghan girls soccer team. I'm telling you, I wish—it was—there wasn't a dry eye in my house. It's unbelievable to think that in a very short period of time, people are liberated. Free countries are peaceful countries. The world is better off, and America is more safe. The third lesson of—because Afghanistan is free.

The third lesson is, when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That's a serious lesson of September the 11th. You see, it's a different kind of war—it's a different kind of war. We cannot hope for the best anymore. In the old days, we could, because we thought oceans would protect us. It wasn't all that long ago that we thought we were safe from harm's way. And all of a sudden, on that fateful day, the world changed. And these lessons are serious lessons, because we're talking about the most solemn duty

of a government, and it's to protect the people. We must take threats seriously.

And so, that begins to explain to you why I made the decision I made. Senators McCain and Domenici came to the same conclusion I did, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And I want you to remember, he was a threat because he behaved like a threat. He had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He had terrorist ties. There was terrorist organizations in and out of Iraq over time. He had defied the world, I think 17 resolutions. In other words, imagine a world saying, "Okay, we're only going to tell you one more time." [*Laughter*] "This is the 16th time we're going to tell you. Cough them up, get rid of your ability to make weapons, get rid of what you even have, or face serious consequences." And if you say it 17 times and nothing happens, pretty soon you embolden somebody whose instincts were dark and dim.

This is a person who tortured his own people. There were mass graves. He invaded his neighbors. We had been to war with him before. He was shooting at our pilots that were enforcing—he was a threat. And so I went to the Congress and said to the Congress, "Gosh, we've got a threat here, and the world has changed." By far the vast majority of Members of Congress—from both political parties—they took a good look at the intelligence. They looked at what I was looking at. We all came to the same conclusion, including my opponent. He looked at that intelligence—[*applause*].

And then the U.N. looked at it and said, again, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." And they said, but—the world said we work in diplomacy then, which is wise to do. And they said, "Gosh, let's let the inspectors work." So, okay. It seems to make sense, doesn't it, let the inspectors in. But guess what? They were being deceived, systematically deceived by Saddam Hussein. He wasn't—he was doing all kinds of things to prevent them from finding out the truth.

So I had a choice; Tony Blair had a choice; Silvio Berlusconi had a choice; Aleksander Kwasniewski had a choice; John Howard had a choice. And that is, hope for the best, forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman, or take action to defend our country. You've just got to know, folks, given that choice, I will defend us every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. A couple other points I want to make—let me make a couple of points, and I'll answer some questions if you have some.

First, when we put troops in harm's way, they will have our Government's support. A lot of folks in this town—you got relatives in the military; you've been in the military yourself. This is a—this is what I believe. This is what Pete believes. This is what John believes. We believe—and a lot of others in Washington do too. That's why I asked for an $87 billion supplemental last September to make sure our troops had what they needed: spare parts, body armor, fuel, support. A difference in this campaign is that my opponent voted against the supplemental funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He has said on the TV shows, before the vote came up, there's no excuse for not supporting the troops. And then when he was asked why he didn't ask for it, he said, well, he actually did vote for it, right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] It's—and then he said it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. They need—the troops need our support.

I want to make two other points, and then I'll answer questions. The other day, he was asked on a—by a TV reporter or a newspaper reporter, what about the troops? And he said he's going to substantially reduce the number of troops six

months after he's the President. Now, let me—listen, we all want the mission to be completed as quickly as possible. But we want the mission to be completed.

Secondly, the mission is not going to be completed as quickly as possible if the enemy thinks that we're going to be removing a substantial number of troops in six months. Thirdly, the person—the people that should be making the recommendations as to whether or not the mission is nearly completed so that we can relieve troops are the commanders on the ground. That's who ought to be making the recommendations. I know what I'm doing when it comes to winning this war. And I'm not going to be sending mixed signals.

Now, the other thing I want to tell you about is, when people say, "What is—what are you trying to accomplish, what is America trying to accomplish," what we're going to accomplish is a free society in the heart of a part of the world where people are desperate for freedom. See, this is a historic moment in world history, I think, because freedom has got the capacity to change people's lives in a positive way. America stands for peace, and we understand that the best way to achieve peace is to spread freedom, because free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. The best way to defeat resentment is to spread freedom and hope. You can't have a hopeful society if you've got tyranny looming over you. You can't have a hopeful society if you're not allowed to express your opinion or worship freely.

So that's what you're seeing. We're seeing the short-term actions of our Government are to protect us. That's why we're using force, to protect us. The long-term solution is to spread liberty.

I was having dinner with Koizumi, who is the Prime Minister of Japan, and we were talking about how to keep the peace in North Korea. Think about what—think about that for a second, the American President and the Prime Minister of Japan, former enemies—countries were former enemies. Maybe some of you here in the audience were fighting the Japanese in World War II. His dad was, and my dad was, and I bet a lot of other dads were as well. And here we are now, sitting down at the same table, talking about peace with a former—and you know why I was able to do so and other Presidents were able to do so, is because after World War II, we believed so strongly in liberty that we worked with the Japanese to develop a society that was self-governing, that believed that—based upon the principles of human dignity and human rights and human freedom.

Now, there were skeptics who said, "No, it's too hard to work. We've been at it for too long. This country can't self-govern." But fortunately, predecessors believed so strongly in the ability of liberty to change the habits of citizens for the good that they stuck to their guns, and now I'm talking to Koizumi about the peace. Someday, an American President is going to sit down with an elected Iraqi leader and they're going to say, "Thank God old Bush, McCain, and Domenici believed in freedom. Thank God the American people listen to the skeptics, rejected pessimistic thought, and said, 'Let's complete the mission.' "

Freedom is going to change the world. Freedom—and you know what else freedom does? It validates what we believe in our hearts. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me—[*applause*]—thank you all. Let me answer some questions while we've got time. Thanks for giving me a chance to talk. Now, I'll give you a chance to answer some questions. We're here for a little bit, and then John and I are heading west. We're going out to Phoenix, and then I'm off to Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Iowa. I want to win. I'm willing to work.

All right, who's got a question? You've got one?

Support for the President/Stem Cell Research

Q. First I want to make a prediction.

The President. Okay, thank you.

Q. President Bush is going to win by a landslide.

The President. Okay, we can leave it there if you like.

Q. Number two——

The President. How about we work as if it's going to be close. [*Laughter*]

Q. Number two, I respect your position on human life and your demand for abortion. I respect it.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And I thank you every moment. You're the top President when it comes to us speaking out for life. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Yes, sir—thank you, sir. I hope you're a good prognosticator. [*Laughter*]

Q. First, I agree with him. I hope we see you in a landslide.

The President. Let's just win the thing. [*Laughter*] Let's just win it. Thank you, though.

Q. First of all, let me say it's an honor to speak to you. It's an honor every day when I get to pray for you as President.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Q. I just—I wanted to say that. I wanted to agree with him—your stand for life, for stem cells. We do not need to be doing research with fetal stem cells. And I appreciate that. Could I ask you two more questions?

The President. Sure, go ahead. Ask them.

Q. Real short.

The President. Okay. You haven't asked one yet. But go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. Can I introduce my mother and mother-in-law who are new citizens to this country?

The President. That's a very interesting move by the guy. [*Laughter*] He's got the President standing here, and he wants me to meet the mother-in-law. [*Laughter*] Strong move. Absolutely. And the mother—yes. Fantastic. Is this the mom-in-law?

Q. This is my mother-in-law.

The President. Where are you from, mom-in-law?

Q. Okinawa.

The President. Fantastic. New citizen?

Q. Yes.

The President. This year?

Q. Two years.

The President. Two years ago. So this is your first Presidential election?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. Welcome—welcome. There's a long tradition in America that you only vote for the person who looks you in the eye and asks. Just kidding. And where's mom? Oh, hi, mom. Strong move. That's very good, yes. Are you listening to your mother?

Q. I do.

The President. I listen to mine too. In my case, I don't have much choice. In my case.

Let me talk about stem cells real quick. There had been no research on stem cells prior to my arrival. I said that stem cell lines which had already existed prior to a certain date ought to be allowed to receive Federal money to research, and from that point forward, that we ought to make sure we deal with science and ethics in a very balanced way. And so we're just beginning to understand embryonic stem cell research. We're also, by the way, spending research dollars on adult stem cell research, and we're also spending it on fetal tissue.

And so, what we're—what I'm saying to you is, is that I think my administration has struck a proper balance between science and ethics. I think we have done a very good job about exploring that which is possible without stepping over a line that we may come to regret later on. And so I assembled a panel of experts, ethicists,

to help me better understand this very vital issue.

Listen, we—I'm sure you've heard from folks with juvenile—got a child with juvenile diabetes. I certainly have. And I care deeply about the families who are wondering whether or not we can do more to help solve their child's problems. It's sad, and I know these Senators have heard from those with juvenile diabetes. And the policies I made were, on the one hand, trying to help as best as we can move science forward and, at the same time, keep an ethical balance so that we promote a culture of life. And the decision I made, in my judgment, is the right decision. And it's one that respects the value of life and, on the other hand, is one that says, hopefully science can use these existing stem cell lines, of which I think there's going to be 23 which are viable and vibrant, and they're just beginning to look at them to help come up with cures that we all want to have happen—we all want—we want human—we want these young kids with—that have been affected by juvenile diabetes to better survive. That's what we want. But thank you for bringing up the subject.

Any—yes, sir, here's a man right here. First of all, he's one of my—he's cheering really loud. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Opportunities for the Disabled

Q. Thank you, President Bush, and I just want to say it's a honor to speak to you today. And you probably already touched on this question, but seeing as I'm a disabled person myself—I'm 20 years old and going to college in the great State of—well, I live in the great State of New Mexico, but I also go to college in the great State of Texas. [*Laughter*] And I'm——

The President. Where you going, by the way? Excuse me for interrupting, but where are you going?

Q. McMurray University in Abilene.

The President. Oh, yes. Abilene, Texas.

Q. Yes, sir. And my current major is political science, and I'm just curious——

The President. I better give you some counseling before it's too late. No, go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. How can we, as a team—and I understand people ask you for help, but how can we, as a team, be ensured that other people that are disabled can be a part of the big business or small business, to help bring jobs for the people of this country?

The President. Yes, absolutely. I appreciate that very much. One of the great advances of our era is technology. There's fantastic technological opportunities for the visually-impaired to be able to have a computer that speaks to them. I don't know if you've been involved with that or not. You have?

Q. Yes, sir, I have a—it's called a braille note, and it has a braille display. And I also have a thing on my computer—it's called Jaws for Windows—that gets on and reads the screen to me whenever I get on the Internet.

The President. See, that's coming. So one thing we can do is help members of our community who need this kind of program. We can help them with financial aid to buy them. I mean, this is equally as important as going to college, is to have the opportunity—listen, the role of Government is to help people help themselves. And we're talking about helping this guy with—we're helping him realize his dreams. There are touch computers where, if you're disabled without the ability—and you can't use your hands, there are new computers and new ability to be able to turn a computer on and log on and surf the Net, and that technology is now more available.

What I'm telling you is, to answer your question, is to make sure technologies are more readily available and we help people afford them as they come on the market. And it's going to change people's lives for the better. Again, we want everybody to be able to participate in this experience called America. And we want people to be able to realize their dreams, no matter their condition, or no matter whether they're

first generation or 800th generation—18th or how ever many generations there have been, and that's what we want.

So I appreciate your question, sir. Thank you.

Q. And I just want to say thank you so much, and I'm really proud of what you're doing and what America's doing, because—and I want to thank my mom and my parents, because I'm the only blind people—or blind person in my family, and I'm excited to graduate and go to college and be part of that small business.

The President. Congratulations.

Let's see, all right, man in a cowboy hat. Yes, we've got to try the cowboy hat. You're next.

Support for the President/Veterans Benefits

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. I'm a retired Navy, 20 years. I flew the S–3, the same that you came aboard in the *Lincoln*.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. Four tours in Vietnam, and all I can say is thank God we finally have a Commander in Chief.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Let me say something. You've got a lot of veterans in this State. People have served their country in this State, and I want to thank you for your service. And I thank you for setting such a good example for the——

Audience member. Hooah!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] For the hooahs of the world. But thank—[*laughter*]—thank you for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniform. I'm going to the VFW Convention on Monday. I'm looking forward to going. I've got something to say. I've got something to say about how we've worked together to make sure we've honored our vets with good, strong health care. I made some promises to the VFW in 2000. I'm going to go back and remind them of the promises I made and remind them of the promises we have kept. And that's what we owe our veterans.

Yes, ma'am. There you go. No, I said—yes, ma'am. Sorry. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You bet. Crank that thing up.

Domestic Violence

Q. Mr. President, I would like to know what your administration has done to help women and children in domestic violence situations.

The President. Well, we've said to the Justice Department, work with States to make sure that the States have got the resources necessary to bring people to justice. That's what States are supposed to do, supposed to—States are supposed to pass laws that make it easier for law enforcement to be able to do its job when it comes to domestic violence.

And when I was the Governor of Texas, we made it easier for an abused spouse to be able to call her spouse into account without facing retribution. We had notification laws when a spouse was released from jail. In other words, we stood on the side of the abused person. We had the law stand side by side with the person, as opposed to making the environment such that many people were afraid to turn in an abusive spouse and, two, if the abusive spouse had been punished, they were afraid of the consequences after the spouse had been out.

This is—the truth of the matter is most good policy—or policy is made at the State level under State laws. And what the Federal Government can do, the Federal Government can help on grantmaking to help States with those type of laws.

Q. And what about the Family Justice Center Initiative? Didn't you announce that last year?

The President. The family——

Q. The pilot program—$21 million?

The President. Oh, I did, so thanks for reminding me. [*Laughter*] How quickly we forget. It was a loaded question, wasn't it?

Let me ask you something. U.S. Marine Corps mom—is that what that means? You have a son in the Marine Corps? I know you didn't want to ask a question, but——

Support for Troops/All-Volunteer Military

Q. I want to thank you for all the support you have given the military.

The President. Where is he? Hold on for a minute. Where is your son?

Q. He's in Yuma, and he's on his way to be deployed.

The President. Is he?

Q. Yes.

The President. Let me say something to the mom here. First of all, you're going to be nervous, and I know you are, and you should be. But I just want you to know that your son is making an historic contribution to the peace and security of our country.

Q. Thank you.

The President. And you know what—you know the great thing about this country? I'll tell you the great thing about the country. There's a lot of people praying for him. Yes. I appreciate you wearing "USMC mom." That's great. He's going to be just fine, by the way.

Q. He said that he was anxious to go over there and do his job and defend our country.

The President. Yes, that's what he's doing, and it's important for everybody to understand that—it's important for everybody to understand that. It's important to understand the consequences of her son's decision, first, to join an All-Volunteer Army, and secondly, to be in a position to go over and help freedom take hold in Iraq. That's really what we're talking about.

On the one hand, we're defeating people that could come here to hurt us, but we're also spreading freedom. And you know what's going to make it work? It's when the Iraqis and the Afghan step up and say, "I'm now ready to defend my country." And that's what's happening—that's what's happening. And the enemy sees it happening. And that's why they're taking action. See, that's why they're blowing up innocent life. They see what's happening. And that's why we cannot send mixed signals, and that's why we've got to be firm in our resolve. And while we are, that's why we've got to be thankful to the moms who raised a son who says, "I want to serve my country."

I was asked the other day whether or not we ought to—some think we ought to get rid of the All-Volunteer Army. The answer is absolutely not. We need to keep the All-Volunteer Army. And what we need to do is to make sure that people—there's incentive to stay in the All-Volunteer Army, by making sure people are better paid, which we have done over the course of four appropriations bills. Since I've been the President, military pay is up 21 percent. We've got to make sure the housing on the bases are better than adequate. And we've got—in other words, we've got to win the hearts and souls not only of the soldiers but of their families. And we're making good progress toward that. But this All-Volunteer Army is, one, an important concept, and two, it's working.

Let's see. Yes, sir.

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much. I just returned from a 13-month tour, Lieutenant Colonel Jackson.

The President. Thanks. Where were you?

Q. I was the deputy commander of our forces in Kosovo.

The President. Oh, fantastic. Thanks for doing that. Bondsteel?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. I went there.

Q. I know you were there, and in fact, the education center is named after your wife.

The President. Is it? Well, smart move.

Q. Yes, sir. Mr. President, all the forces overseas are thankful that you are such a strong Commander in Chief, and even when I was medevac'd out—I was injured and medevac'd out to Germany, along with

forces from Iraq and Afghanistan—the morale was very high, because we knew that you were in charge and going to take care of us.

The President. Well, thank you. Thank you, sir. Let me say something. Let me say something about medevac'ing troops. It's really important for our citizens to know that if somebody gets hurt, they're going to get really good treatment quickly—I mean quickly. And I know that a lot of us have been to Bethesda—I know John has and Pete has—or Walter Reed. These are the big hospitals in Washington, DC, that take care of those who have been injured. These kids are coming off the battlefield in one or two days' time. I mean, we're taking kids who have been hurt, and we're getting them into incredibly good care quickly.

That's a—what a compassionate Government, when you think about it. You know, there's other governments that might let their troops kind of languish around, you know, maybe get them out of the tent somewhere, sometime. Not America—not America. We value every life. We appreciate the service of our troops. When I see these families in these hospitals, I'm quick to ask them, "Are you getting everything you need?" I need to know. And admittedly, sometimes the President gets the Cook's tour, but the answer is, "Yes, Mr. President, they're taking care of my kid." And that's what families or citizens need to know about our country, is that we are grateful for the service of those who wear our uniform, because the world is going to be better off for it.

A couple of more questions. McCain is getting anxious. He wants to get to Phoenix—[*laughter*]—and so do I.

Who have we got here? Where's the little boy? This little guy? You got all kinds of little boys. Go ahead.

Photo With the President

Q. I was wondering if I could take a picture with you.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] All right, let him through. Crawl on underneath there. Scoot on through. Come on. Got it? Hello, Mom. [*Laughter*] Got it?

Yes, go ahead.

Prayers for the President

Q. First of which, first part of comment, just know that my wife and I are praying for you. We appreciate what you've done the 4 years you've been in office.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for that. A question I have——

The President. I appreciate your prayers. Think about—I mean, work on your question while I say something here. [*Laughter*] It's an amazing country where people from all walks of life pray for the President. It really is. I'm grateful. I am really grateful. Any President would be grateful. It's one of the most sustaining aspects of my life now, to know that people pray for me and Laura and the kids.

Go ahead.

Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

Q. The question I have—one of our concerns is, is the continued erosion of the moral fabric of this country with the—obviously the removal of prayer in schools, the removal of the Ten Commandments, abortion, and now we're faced with the issue of gay marriage. And obviously, there was an attempt to at least get it in the Constitution among the parties in Congress, with no success. What do you plan to do when you're reelected——

The President. Thank you.

Q. ——to abolish that attempt by the left? And my second question is, would you mind if I got your autograph? [*Laughter*]

The President. We've started a bad trend here. Let me talk about marriage, traditional marriage. First of all, I believe our society is better off when marriage is defined as between a man and a woman. It's my belief.

Secondly—hold on a second. Secondly—secondly, this is an issue that ought to be decided by the people, not by a few judges. And that's what's caused the issue. That's what has brought this issue to a head, is because in a particular State, the four judges redefined the definition of marriage. That's what happened. And my worry is, is that that definition will be spread to other States, even though the people of those States do not accept that definition.

And now, there's laws on the books. And what happened was, a lot of the Senators accurately noted there's a current law on the book called the DOMA, Defense of Marriage Act, which specifically defines marriage as between a man or a woman and says that the actions of one State cannot affect the behavior in another State. And I readily concede that law is on the books, signed by my predecessor, by the way.

My worry has been that the courts will overturn that law and that we will end up with a series of activist judges defining marriage. And so the easiest way—not the easiest way, probably the toughest way—but the clearest way to define marriage is to put it in the Constitution like I suggested.

Now, let me also tell you, the constitutional process takes a long time. It—many amendments have taken years to be passed by the Senate and then ratified by the States. I will also explain to the American people that the ratification process of the constitutional amendment is an essential part of including people's opinions as to this very delicate issue.

And finally, let me encourage everybody, as we debate this issue, to do so with the utmost of respect. I mean, this is a issue that requires thoughtful dialog. It's a serious issue. And it's one that—I hope we can have a debate in a way that is uplifting and not tearing people down on either side of the issue. And I will pledge to you, I will do my very best to bring a thoughtful dialog on this vital issue.

And so what I'll do the next 4 years is continue to state what I believe. I'm not going to change my beliefs just because there's been an election. Quite the contrary. I will be telling people what I believe.

Okay, last question. You have been very patient. This is the last one. I hope everybody understands I've got to work. [*Laughter*]

Support for the President/Duty To Vote

Q. President Bush, we want you to know something. This group of ladies right here, we represent an international company—an international AGLOW fellowship. This is women all over the world. There is a woman over there by the name of Bernadette Martinez who is the prayer coordinator for New Mexico. And we want you to know, we are praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We are praying for righteous leaders in Washington and throughout our country, because we know that it's time for America to get back to its moral roots that our Founders put in place for us when this country was founded. And it is time for the people in this country to realize and to call out for righteous leaders. That is our right as God's children. And we are doing that.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And you will be in the White House.

The President. I appreciate that. One more? Okay, hold on. Let me tell you what else you can do. Let me tell you what else you can do. Register people to vote. And then, right around election time, start saying to people, we have a duty; we have a duty in a free society, no matter what you believe; we have a duty to vote. So I appreciate your enthusiasm and your drive. Convert it to getting people to the polls too, which I know you will.

Okay, final question. One more, this is it. Then we got to go to Arizona.

Support for the Troops

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes, ma'am. No more hands going up; I'm a man of my word.

Q. And I am a persistent woman. My name is Cassandra Dennis. My husband is Captain Dominic Dennis. He sends his hellos all the ways from Log Base Seitz, Iraq.

The President. Good. Thank you. He's a captain—in the Army?

Q. Army National Guard.

The President. Very good.

Q. I want your prayers for him.

The President. You got it. Thank you very much. Yes. And tell you—I'll tell you what do. You know, one of the interesting possibilities now, because of high-tech, because of the high-tech world, is that you can e-mail your husband, correct?

Q. We e-mail. We do instant-messaging. We've got web cams. We have telephones.

The President. All right, why don't you do this, then? Would you do me a favor?

Q. Yes.

The President. Would you rather e-mail him or instant-message him?

Q. I'm going to instant-message him.

The President. Instant-message him. Instant-message him this: The Commander in Chief is grateful and incredibly proud of his service.

Thank you all. God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at the Eclipse Aviation hangar. In his remarks, he referred to Darren White, sheriff, Bernalillo County, NM; John Sanchez, southwest regional chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Patrick H. Lyons, New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands; former Representative Manuel Lujan, Jr., executive committee member, and Allen Weh, chairman, New Mexico Republican Party; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. He also referred to Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

Remarks in Phoenix, Arizona
August 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. So yesterday, there we were in a bus in northern Florida, and old John McCain said, "Wait until you get to Phoenix." He's right.

I'm working hard to ask for your vote. I'm here to let you know there is more to do to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place. I'm here to ask for your help. We won Arizona last time; we're going to win it this time. And we're going to win a great national victory.

Thank you all for coming. I only wish that Laura were here to see this crowd. She is a remarkable woman. She is a great wife, a fantastic mother. I'm going to give you some reasons tonight to put me back in, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura has 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Now look, I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for that reason. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can do the job.

I'm proud to be traveling with a great American and a fine citizen of this State, a person who served his Nation with distinction and honor—John McCain. I want to thank his wife, Cindy, for joining us as well. She's a class act, good lady.

I also want to thank my friend Jon Kyl, the other Senator from this State. You got two fine United States Senators from Arizona.

I want to thank my friends from the congressional delegation, Renzi, Franks, Shadegg, J.D. Hayworth, Jeff Flake, for their leadership.

I'm proud that Secretary of State Jan Brewer is here. I want to thank Jan for coming, and State Treasurer David Petersen. Listen, thank you all for coming.

I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank my friend Luis Gonzalez and his great wife, Christine. I know my friends the Lehmans are here. I'm glad they're here. Old Tom Lehman, I could use a putting lesson. [*Laughter*] I don't have much time to practice these days; I'm out working.

See, I'm asking for your help to register voters. You've got a lot of new people moving in this State, and they, like you, have a duty in a democracy to vote and to participate. We're asking for people to do a little extra work to register our fellow citizens and urge them to go to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, you might just tell them America will be better off with Bush-Cheney in the White House.

The past few years—in the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together, a whole lot, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm running—I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have much more to do, much more to do to move this country forward and make it a better place.

We've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of our children were being just shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the sights of everybody. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in challenging schools that refuse to change and refuse to teach.

And we're making progress. We're closing that achievement gap here in America. More of our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract, and there's more to do. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. We need to make sure our children are educated for the jobs of the 21st century, so we need to concentrate on science and math. We need to bring technology into classrooms in America. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the hope and the skills necessary to succeed in this world.

We have got more work to do to make sure health care is available and affordable. We addressed the issue of our seniors square on. You might remember that political campaign after political campaign, our seniors were promised a stronger Medicare system. We got the job done. Our seniors now have the ability to choose a plan that meets their needs, and there will be coverage for prescription drugs for our seniors. We're doing more to make sure health care is available and affordable. We're expanding community health centers for low-income Americans. We're providing health savings accounts so American families can save tax-free to meet their own health care needs.

In order to make sure American families have got health care, we must allow small employers to join together to be able to purchase insurance at discounts that big companies are able to do. We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research and seek new cures. And to make sure you've got affordable health care, we need to end the frivolous lawsuits that are harming our docs and harming our patients.

You cannot be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You

have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care here in this country, we will make sure the health care decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We got more to do to make sure this economy is stronger. We've been through a lot. We've been through a recession; we've been through corporate scandals; we've been through the terror attacks. Yet we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great workers in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector of our economy is flourishing. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great ranchers and farmers. And we've overcome these obstacles because we delivered well-timed tax relief to the American people. Because we acted, our economy has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, we've added nearly 1.5 million jobs over the past year. Because we acted, Arizona's unemployment rate is at 4.7 percent.

We're making progress. We're not turning back. So long as anybody is looking for work, we're going to keep working to make sure there's a job available for them. There is more work to do to keep jobs here in America and to keep this job base growing; we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. We need to reduce the regulations on our employers in America. We need real, meaningful tort reform in America to keep jobs here.

In order to keep jobs here at home, we need to be opening up markets for Arizona products. We must not become economic isolationists in America. We must be confident—you see, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. In order to be keeping jobs here in America, we've got to make sure our workers are trained for the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong backer of the community college system, not only here in Arizona but all across our country. In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low.

We're working together to protect our residents and forests across the West from catastrophic wildfires. Listen, I understand you're in a severe drought. Water is a precious commodity. And as a result of the drought you're in, our national treasures are—forest fires—are vulnerable. That's why I worked with John McCain and Jon Kyl to pass a bipartisan bill called Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

I understand the West. I understand the issues of the West. Some people took a different view of that Healthy Forests legislation. Back in October, my opponent told us Healthy Forests would let people chop down mountainsides of old-growth trees. When I signed the bill, he said we're taking a chainsaw to public forests. I understand the West. I understand the issues you face out here. Yet, when he came out West to campaign, he turned that position around. Now he says he likes a lot of the parts of the law. I guess it's not only the wildfires that shift with the wind. [*Laughter*]

I'm running for 4 more years to keep our Nation's economy the strongest in the industrialized world. I'm running so our small businesses are vibrant. I'm running so our farmers and ranchers are healthy, and I'm running so people can find good-paying jobs.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The world changed on that terrible September morning, and since that day, we've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers and set up cells in nations around the world, including our own. Because we acted, because we acted with our friends, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Young girls now go to school for the first time in Afghanistan, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia weren't joining us in the war on terror. Today they are. Today, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are allies in the war on terror. They're after Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Because of our leadership, we're changing the world. Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a clear message and a strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region.

We saw a threat. We looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. And as we did so, we remembered a vital lesson of September the 11th, and that lesson is we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

I knew it was important on this vital matter to work with the United States Congress. So I went to the Congress and said Saddam Hussein's a threat. The Congress looked at the same intelligence, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, agreed that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And then we went to the United Nations——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——and the United Nations looked at the intelligence and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they passed a resolution that said "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the free world. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors in—or the world sent inspectors in, he systematically deceived the inspectors. And so I had a choice to make. My choice was do I forget the lessons of September the 11th——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——and hope for the best——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——and trust the word and deeds of a madman, or do I take action to defend America. I will defend America every time.

Even though we have not found the stockpiles we expected to find, we do know that Saddam had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. That was a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. And America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and almost 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, Senator Kerry now agrees with me that even though we have not found

the stockpiles of weapons that we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank my opponent for clearing that up. But just remember, there are 83 days left in the campaign—time enough to change his mind again.

I'm running for 4 more years because I know we must continue to work with our friends and allies to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with these people. We must engage the enemy around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

During the next 4 years, America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. Listen, we've got nearly 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I'll continue to build our alliances and work with our friends for the sake of peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

America and the world are safer. We're heading to peace because our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a great example to the men and women of our military. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom and peace is in really good hands. And anytime—and our troops deserve the full support of the United States Government.

Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This money was going to—this money did provide body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against that funding. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My opponent tried to explain his vote this way: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." End quote. And then he went on to say that he was proud he and his runningmate voted against it, and then he went on to say, at another time, the funding issue is a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. I see a lady holding a sign there that says, "My son is in Iraq." I want you to know, ma'am, that your son is performing a duty that is changing the world. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. These parts—people in these parts of the world are desperate for freedom. In Iraq and Afghanistan, there are now strong leaders who understand the power of free societies. And we understand the power of freedom in America. We know that free societies do not export terror. We know that in free societies, leaders listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're making the world more peaceful. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running for 4 more years because I know we've got a lot of work to do to protect us. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. His logic is upside-down, and it shows a dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. During the 1990s, terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before America went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for the anger and the evil of those killers. You don't create terrorists by defending yourself and fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

Listen, the September—the 9/11 Commission wrote a good report, and it said that because of the actions we've taken since September the 11th, our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. I agree with that conclusion. There's more work to do. Beginning immediately after September the 11th, we started the hard process of reform. We created the new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which is vital; it is necessary to give our law enforcement the tools necessary to disrupt terrorist activity. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before.

We're taking up a lot of those recommendations. We've got to do a better job of securing our ports and borders and training our first-responders and dramatically improving our intelligence gathering capabilities. I called on Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating our intelligence efforts overseas and here at home. There's a lot of really good people working hard to defend the American people, and I'm proud of their efforts.

Now, reforms are never easy in Washington. It takes on—it requires taking on the entrenched interests, those who are happy with the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done. When it came to reforming our public schools, we're getting the job done. When it comes to giving our health care reforms to our families, with more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to creating jobs in America, we're getting the job done. When it comes to defending America and spreading the peace, we're getting the job done. And when it comes to choosing a President, you better have a President who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We live in a time of rapid change. These are exciting times. One way to help American citizens during this time of change is to encourage an ownership society. We want people owning and controlling their own health care accounts. We want our Social Security system to work. Listen, for old people like me and McCain—[*laughter*]—the Social Security is sound enough for us. I'm worried about the younger workers. I'm worried about the solvency of Social Security. Therefore, I think younger workers ought to be allowed to have personal savings accounts that they can call their own.

We want more people owning their business. I love the fact when somebody says to me, you know, "I just started my own business." We want more people owning their own home. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. What a fantastic thought, to know that more and more Americans are opening up their front doors saying, "Welcome to my home." You see, this administration understands that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In this time of change, there's some things won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose,

our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundation of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench. We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of ours is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you 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 are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm seeking the vote because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion for the next 4 years. I understand the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people, and I know—and I know that by rallying the great strength of America, we can change our society one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, strong belief in the values that have made our country great.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. As John mentioned, on September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember—I remember working the ropeline, thanking people, and a fellow grabbed me. He had bloodshot eyes. He had been searching the rubble for somebody that he had worked with, and he said, "Do not let me down."

He took that day personally. All the workers took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so do I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to best protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work. There's more work to be done over the next 4 years. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. During the next 4 years, we'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. During the next 4 years, we will continue to lead the world to spread freedom and peace.

Four years ago, I traveled this great country asking for the vote. I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I have been elected, so help me God. And with your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. at Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Arizona Secretary of State Janice K. Brewer; Arizona State Treasurer David A. Petersen; professional baseball player Luis Gonzalez and his wife, Christine; professional golfer Tom Lehman; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in Las Vegas, Nevada
August 12, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thank you all very much for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be back here in Nevada.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Thank you. I want to thank Doug and the good folks here in this training facility for welcoming us. I appreciate your smart work and your hard work and your dedication to helping our fellow citizens gain the skills necessary to be able to find work.

And I just want to talk a little bit about the importance of education, but the reason I'm so grateful that the Carpenters have been so hospitable here is that this is an example of what works. That's what we're interested in in life; we're interested in finding things that work and heralding them. And I want to thank Doug for your leadership.

I'm not the only Bush who's recently been in Las Vegas. You might remember my wife was back here recently. She went on the Leno show the next night. [*Laughter*] She said something along the lines, what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. [*Laughter*] I was interested in hearing her say that. [*Laughter*]

She's doing great, by the way. I was a lucky fellow when she said yes. And she's a wonderful First Lady and great mom. I'm going to meet up with her here in a little bit to continue our journey throughout the West.

Really what I'm doing is traveling around, letting the people know that I'm interested in earning your vote. I really believe that a person running for office—I'm also interested in letting people know I've got more to do to make this country a better place, a stronger place, and a safer place. And I appreciate the chance to come and talk about my vision for the future of this country here.

I want to thank Doug, and I also want to thank his brother Mike. I'm not sure which one of them is prettier. [*Laughter*] But they're both smart, and they're both good Americans.

I want to thank Dale Shoemaker for his leadership here. I want to thank Doug Banes and Andy Silins, Bill Irwin. These are all folks who make this facility work well—appreciate your hospitality. It's great to meet the workers from all around our country.

I went to the facility next door where Doug and his folks are training people how to work on these big GE engines, and there's people from Fort Smith, Arkansas, and southern Indiana, and a fellow from McAllen, Texas. People from all around the country are here to gain the skills necessary to be able to work and put food on the table. And again, that's why I'm here. This is a program that works.

I want to thank my friend the Governor, Kenny Guinn, for coming out to say hello. I appreciate him being here. Congressman Jon Porter—he's a good fellow, a really good fellow, and I appreciate him coming out. Congressman Jim Gibbons—he's from northern Nevada.

I know we got members of the Nevada National Guard, First Squadron, 221st Calvary. I appreciate you being here. Thanks for your service.

I told you one of the things I'm working on is to make the country a better country. See, I know the strength of the country is the hearts and souls of the citizens. Right here in Nevada, you've got a lot of loving citizens who are willing to help neighbors in need.

When I landed today, I met a fellow named Mike Peschl. Where are you, Mike?

There he is. Thank you for coming, Mike. Here's what Mike does. Mike has now worked on his 34th home for Habitat for Humanity. It is a—he spends every Saturday at a Habitat building site. What he is doing is helping to transform America one heart and one soul at a time. He knows what I know, that there's nothing better at a Habitat site to work with the eventual homeowner. And that accomplishes two things. One, it shows somebody, somebody cares about them. That's what Mike works—Mike is loving a neighbor like he'd like to be loved himself. You know what else it does? It encourages an ownership society in America. We want more people owning things. We want more people owning their own home in this country.

We'll continue rallying the armies of compassion all across the country. See, I understand Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or sense of purpose in a person's life. That's done when people have heard a call and are willing to put an arm around somebody who is lonely or hurts or is addicted and says, "I love you, brother or sister. What can I do to help you?" America will change. America will change one soul at a time.

The stronger America is an America where people can find work. And I was obviously concerned about our country after a recession. That means people weren't working. It means we were going backwards.

Of course, we started to recover from that recession, and then we got attacked, and that hurt our economy. Make no mistake about it, the attacks of September the 11th hurt. We had some corporate scandals. That hurt. And we've got people who don't tell the truth, it begins to shake the confidence of our economy. We dealt with these situations. I'm going to talk a little bit about the war later on, but we passed laws that say to our corporate citizens, "You will be held to account if you do not tell the truth to your shareholders and your employees."

We've overcome the obstacles. You know why? We've got great workers. We've got productive, hard-working people in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, the small-business sector of our economy is alive and well. We have overcome these obstacles because our farmers and ranchers are good. We've overcome these obstacles because we refuse to be intimidated. The spirit of America is strong, and our economy is strong as well.

I also believe one of the reasons that we have overcome these obstacles is because we provided well-timed tax relief to the small businesses and the workers of America. If a construction worker has got more money in his pocket, he's going to demand an additional good or a service. And when they demand that additional good or a service, somebody has to produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces a good or a service, somebody is more likely to keep a job or find work. That's how the economy works. That's why the tax relief was important.

We also helped people with families. If you're working and you've got a child, we helped you raise that child by raising the child credit. If you're married, we helped you with the marriage penalty. Let me—it's a backward Tax Code, isn't it, when you penalize marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in our country.

We helped our small businesses—listen, this economy is strong, it's getting stronger, there's still work to be done. I mean, think about it, the unemployment rate in this State is at 4.2 percent. People are working in Nevada. People can make a living in this State. National unemployment rate is at 5.5 percent. We're the strongest economy in the world amongst industrialized nations.

But there's more to do. In order to keep jobs here at home, we need an energy policy in America to make us less dependent

on foreign sources of energy. In order to keep jobs at home, we ought to be confident about our ability to compete in the world.

There's some economic isolationists that want to wall us off. I think that's a mistake. Listen, we've opened up our markets. It's good for American consumers when there's more products coming in for people to choose from. That's how you get better quality at better price. What I'm asking is for other countries to treat us the way we treat them, because we can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere in the world.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we got to have health care policies that make it more affordable for people to have health insurance. Most small businesses have trouble affording health insurance. Large businesses are fine. It's the small-business sector that is having trouble providing health insurance for our fellow citizens. And therefore, I think small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can get the same discounts for health insurance that big companies get.

Listen, we're going to use technology to help change health care to make it more efficient, to cut down on mistakes, and to help control costs. I mean, the health care industry needs to become modernized. It needs to welcome technology so that it can be a more efficient deliverer of services. We've got to make sure that the patient and doctor are central to the decision-making processes in health care, not Federal bureaucrats. That's why I'm for health savings accounts, which are important.

We'll make sure the Medicare modernization bill I signed works, gives seniors choices and prescription drug coverage. We'll continue to provide community health centers for the poorest of our citizens. And to make sure that health care is available and affordable, we need medical liability reform. You know what I'm talking about in Nevada when it comes to medical liability reform. [*Laughter*] You've seen the costs of frivolous lawsuits. Ask your small-business neighbor what it's like to try to provide health care when the costs are going up because of these frivolous lawsuits. Ask your neighbors what it's like when there's a threat of lawsuit. That's why we need tort reform as well. These are practical ways to make sure this economy grows.

And finally, to make sure this economy grows and continues to grow, we need to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington and keep your taxes low. Just be careful—all I ask you is be careful about all this talk about taxing the rich. You know how that goes. The so-called rich hire accountants and lawyers to maybe not pay as much and, therefore, in order to meet all these promises, guess who gets to end up stuck with the bill?

Audience member. We do.

The President. The working people. Be careful of this language. We've heard it before in American politics.

Now, one of the reasons I'm here is because I understand the importance of education when it comes to making sure our workers are able to find jobs. Doug's outfit has been really innovative. In other words, what he says is, is that, "We got the skilled workers. We got hard-working people, and now we want to match their desire to work and their skills with the jobs which actually exist." That's why we went and saw the—these big turbine-driven engines. People are looking for workers, people who know these engines. And so that's what the apprenticeship program was all about and the skill training programs are all about. It's the practical use of people's time so that people can do what they want to do, which is work. And my attitude is, is that we ought to listen carefully to the strategy employed by this union and implement it at places like our community colleges as well.

See, there are a lot of people who want to work but the jobs, the nature of the jobs are changing. These jobs are changing. And therefore, they need help. They need

a little extra education to be able to fill the new jobs. I think, for example, of meeting with textile workers. Their jobs left, but there's enough Government money to pay for the reeducation. And now they're in the health care field, and they're making more money in the new job after getting some additional education.

That's what Doug understands, a little added value. If you help somebody with some extra training, they become more productive. And more productive workers makes more money. And so the Federal Government ought to be wise about how we use taxpayers' money, and that includes providing training at community colleges for people who want to work and need new skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

So I've laid out a plan to double the number of workers that get reeducated, find additional skills so they can make more money. They've got to have innovative training accounts. They need less bureaucracy. If you look at the workforce training programs in the Government, if you put an objective look on them, you'll find that a lot of money goes to bureaucracy and not enough goes to the workers. And that's what we want to focus on. We want to focus on the people who we're trying to help. We want to make sure that—I believe we ought to increase our budgets for these training programs, and we'll continue to call upon Congress to do so, because it's money well-spent. See, I think the role of Government is to help people help themselves. And one way to do so is through good valid education programs, just like they do here at this site.

Doug was telling me he went over to the Labor Department to tell them whatfor, I guess, or at least to give them a little nudge in the right direction. But I appreciate that. The reason I bring that up is I do think it's very important to work with people like Doug and the union here, to help people understand that we need a million new jobs to fill the construction jobs over the next decade. And that's a challenge all of us have got to work on together.

We've got to make it clear there are jobs available. That's why these job fair hosts need to be notified about the opportunities available for our citizens. That's why we need guidance counselors to understand. That's why the Governors, like Kenny, must understand that there are great career opportunities available for people in the construction field, and that there's also an opportunity for these good people to be able to be trained and get the skills necessary, like right here at this union hall.

The other thing we've got to do is make sure our kids learn early, before it's too late. Listen, when I got up there, there was—too many of the kids were being shuffled from grade to grade without the skills necessary to succeed. It's time somebody said, "Let's stop this practice. For the sake of our future, let's make sure we raise the standards and hold people accountable in our public schools." We did. We've increased funding at the Federal level for public schools by some 49 percent since 2001. But now we're asking some questions like, "Is the money being well-spent? Can you read? Can you write? Can you add and subtract?" Seems like legitimate questions to ask. And if not, here is extra help to make sure our children can read, write, add and subtract—early, before it is too late.

There is more work to do to make sure a high school diploma means something. There is more work to do for intervention programs in junior high, for example. And there is more work to do to spend money to encourage our children in math and science, because the truth of the matter is, for example, those 1 million construction jobs are going to require a higher level skill than ever before. And our schools must lay the foundation to help these folks with the jobs of the 21st century. That's what we're talking about, and that's the kind of education program that makes

sense. That's why I'm at this facility. Education is the best way to make sure we keep jobs right here in America.

I want to talk about a couple more issues before I want to spend a little time on how to secure the country and make the world a more peaceful place. But I do want to talk about two issues related here to Nevada. One, water. I was raised in Midland, Texas. [*Applause*] There you go. [*Laughter*] Remember what it was like out there? No water. I understand how precious water is. People in Nevada understand how precious water is. And there is a role for the Federal Government. For example, there is a role for the Federal Government to resolve disputes like the Colorado River water dispute.

I instructed Gale Norton, my Secretary of the Interior, to work with all parties to develop innovative strategies, to develop conservation plans to help meet Nevada's water needs. And there is an agreement in place. After years of discussion and adherence to the status quo, we've got an agreement. What I'm telling you is, is that we see problems, and this administration works to solve them. We see problems—[*applause*].

Last summer we launched what's called Water 2025 initiative. Gale is a Westerner, by the way; she understands water needs. She understands the problems in the West. She understands there's competing interests for scarce water. This program promotes conservation, as I mentioned. It expands the use of voluntary water markets. It provides advanced technology, like automated pumping and canal controls. It funds research into new technologies to better deliver water and conserve resources. In other words, it is a comprehensive strategy to deal with a problem that needs to be dealt with.

And we look forward to working with the States and the local authorities to better safeguard this precious resource. I know the mayor of Henderson is with us today. Mr. Mayor, we will listen to you. And I know Kenny will listen to you. This is an effort where we've all got to work together to bring the stakeholders in place, so the people of this part of the world will have water not only today but in future years.

And we're spending money. My budget for Water 2025 more than doubles the $8.4 million that had been spent to date to $21 million. I mean, we're beginning an effort to make sure that the people of this part of the world understand how precious your resource is and how best to not only conserve it and use it but to develop it in a way that will enable your quality of life to continue on.

The other issue, of course, I want to talk about is Yucca Mountain. This is a vital question, and we need to keep facts, not politics, at the center of the debate. It's an issue that's been developing for a while. Since the 1987 congressional vote to focus exclusively on Yucca Mountain, Presidents have considered this issue, as did I. And when I campaigned here in this State, I said I would make a decision based upon science, not politics. I said I would listen to the scientists, those involved with determining whether or not this project could move forward in a safe manner. And that's exactly what I did. I listened to the people who know the facts and know the science, and made a decision.

Now, I've listened also, as well, to your Governor and Senator Ensign and to the Congressmen and to your fine Attorney General. They didn't agree with my decision. I understand that. They made themselves very clear. And I said, "Well, I appreciate your opinion, but I will—I'll tell you what I will do. I will allow this process to be appealed to the courts and to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and I will stand by the decision of the courts and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission."

Now, my opponent is trying to turn Yucca Mountain into a political poker chip. [*Laughter*] He says he's strongly against Yucca here in Nevada, but he voted for it several times. And so did his

runningmate. My point to you is that, if they're going to change, one day they may change again. [*Laughter*] I think we need—I think you need straight talk on this issue. I think you need somebody who is going to do what he says he's going to do.

Let me talk about one other subject. I know it's on your mind—it's clearly on my mind—and that's how best to secure our country. We—they're—first of all, no President wants to be a war President. That was my last choice. And the enemy attacked us, and we got to respond.

I'm going to share some lessons about September the 11th: first, the nature of the people that attacked us. I tell people that you cannot negotiate with these folks. You cannot reason with them. Their hearts are so filled with hatred, they're willing to take innocent life like that. These are people that—they only understand one thing, and that is force and justice. And that's what they will get. We will pursue them wherever they exist. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

See, I understand we must pursue them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. I understand. The second lesson is that this is a different kind of war than we were used to, and this is a shadowy network of coldblooded killers that can hide in cities around the world where they can find safe haven. And therefore, in order to better secure America, we not only needed to say to them that we will bring you to justice, but we needed to say to their allies and people willing to harbor them, or feed them, or hide them that you're just as guilty as those who came and killed the people in America.

And when America speaks, it better mean what it says. And so when I said to the Taliban, "Give them up, or face serious consequences," I meant exactly what I said. And today the world is safer and America is safer because Afghanistan has been liberated from the Taliban. I want you—just think about this—in less than 4 years' time, Afghanistan has gone from a brutal dictatorship that denied many young girls the right to go to school, that was more than willing to drag their moms or women into the public square and whip them and, in some cases, kill them, to a society in which over 8 million people have registered to vote. They're going to have Presidential elections in October. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That is a vital lesson. It's a change, obviously, of doctrine because prior to 9/11, we used to think, "Well, gosh, if we saw a threat, we're safe anyway. It may affect somebody somewhere else, but it surely can't affect America." That's what changed on that fateful day. And it's really important for our country to understand it. I want you to know I clearly understand that.

And so, therefore, when we looked at—when we looked around the world and saw threats, we began to act in a different fashion. Now, look, I want—I would like to deal with all threats diplomatically. That's the first choice. The use of our military is the last option. And so we saw a threat with Saddam Hussein. You say, "Why did you see a threat?" Of course, we looked at intelligence and saw a threat, but we also remembered the nature of the regime of Saddam Hussein. He used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorist organizations—Abu Nidal's organization. This is the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He's a known terrorist, killed an American. He's in and out of Iraq. Actually, he received safe harbor in Iraq.

Now, Zarqawi's network—he's the people—he's the guy now—he just beheads people like that to try to shake our will and our conscience. Saddam Hussein paid the families of suiciders. You know, paying people whose loved one goes and kills somebody is a part of a terrorist act. He is a dangerous man. He was shooting at our pilots.

We had been to war with Saddam Hussein before. And he was a source of instability. And so I looked at the intelligence. Now remember, the United States Congress—I thought it was important to bring the Congress—get Congress involved with this very important matter. They understood the stakes. They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the nature of Saddam Hussein. Members of both political parties stood up and said, "We support the President, if he has to use force, in using force"—including my opponent.

It looked like for a while he was trying to squirm out of that vote. [*Laughter*] The other day, he said that knowing what we know today, he still—he agreed that the use of force in Iraq was necessary. I welcome that clarification. [*Laughter*] He's still got 82 days left in the campaign, though. [*Laughter*]

I went to the United Nations. See, I—as I told you, I think diplomacy should be tried first. And I went to the United Nations, and the U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing that said to the tyrant, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." And so the world was once again saying to Saddam, "You're a threat." Everybody recognized that in the post-9/11 world that a threat needed to be dealt with. He defied the world, as he had done for over a decade. He systematically deceived the inspectors. Remember, we sent inspectors in to try to find the truth, and they were systematically deceived. That's the reality. And so, after a period of time, I had a choice to make. Tony Blair had a choice to make. Other leaders had choices to make. And that is, do we forget the lessons of the modern world and hope for the best and hope that Saddam Hussein all of a sudden miraculously changes his attitude about America and terrorism and weapons, or do we take action necessary to defend ourselves and to spread freedom and peace? And given that choice, I will take action every time.

Knowing what we know today—no, I thought we were going to find stockpiles; everybody did. But he had the capability of making weapons. And if the world had turned away from watching Saddam, that capability could have been passed on to terrorist enemies. It's a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision, and the world is better off for it. The world is better off for it. Because America has led, the world is safer.

We put together a great coalition. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our friends and allies. If you think about Afghanistan, there's nearly 40 nations there. If you think about Iraq, with allies and friends—Japan, South Korea, Great Britain, the Dutch, the Danes, Poles—countries all around the world understand what we know, that free societies are peaceful societies. They understand the stakes. They know what's really important. But I'll assure you, I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I also want to say to the loved ones who are here, those whose loved one wear a uniform, the Government has an obligation to your husbands, wives, sons, or daughters to make sure you've got all—your loved one has all he or she needs to fulfill the mission. That's an important part of this debate. And I would ask you to ask your fellow citizens to remember what happened when I submitted a supplemental funding request to the United States Congress in September of last year. It was an $87 billion request for more body armor and fuel and spare parts and ammunition, money necessary so that we could complete our missions. And it was overwhelmingly approved by the Congress. Members of both parties supported it; my opponent didn't. And he gave this explanation, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I think you need somebody who speaks plainly and

honors our commitment—honors the commitment of our Government to those who wear our uniform. And that $87 billion was necessary.

I believe these are historic times. I believe history—historians will look back and say this was a really important period. This is a time where we need firm resolve and clear vision about the stakes. But not only must we stay on the offense to protect our country and not only make sure our homeland defenses are wise and the strategies are good and the people are well-compensated—and you've just got to know a lot of people are working hard to protect us—but we've got to also take on another mission, and that is to deal with the conditions that give rise to terrorism.

So there's a long-term strategy, and it's spreading freedom. We, in America, understand that liberty can be a transforming power for societies. If you've got a loved one in Iraq—does anybody here have a loved one in Iraq? You do? Thank you. [*Applause*] Let me—I appreciate that. I want you to know that your loved one is serving the country and the world in a powerful way. Not only—as I said, we'll defeat people there so we don't have to face them here, but a free Iraq in the midst of the Middle East is going to be a transforming event. This is a part of the world where people—the people are desperate for freedom. This is a part of the world where people—they're frustrated, the deep resentments because they're not free. We in America believe everybody deserves to be free; we believe it's the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman on Earth—freedom.

And therefore, I want you all to know that the long-term consequences of a free Iraq will make our children safer; it will make the children in other parts of the world safer as well. It's going to—this is—these are transforming times.

I'll tell you an interesting story—at least I think it is. I was having lunch with the Prime Minister of Japan—a dinner with him, and he's a friend of mine. And there I was sitting down with the head of a country that my dad fought against, and I'm sure some of your dads fought against him too. He was an enemy, and he represented a country which was an enemy of our country. We lost a lot of lives in World War II because we fought each other. And after World War II, my predecessor and others understood, however, that a country could be transformed by liberty, by the habits of liberty. And they stuck to their guns. They didn't listen to the critics and the pessimists. And eventually, Japan became a self-governing nation where the people were free.

And therefore, the discussion had changed over a period of time, hadn't it, from one where there was war, and Prime Minister Koizumi and I were now discussing peace. We were discussing how best we could deal together with Kim Chong-iland his nuclear weapons ambitions. We were talking about the peace. This country loves peace. I want there to be a peaceful world. But I was able to have that conversation in large part because after World War II, there was a strategy to help our enemies become free countries. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with an elected leader from Iraq, talking about the peace, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

That's what's at stake. And that's why it's really important for us to complete the mission. There's a lot of people watching America right now. They're wondering whether or not we've got what it takes to complete the mission. They hear things like, "Well, I'm going to substantially reduce our troops in 6 months." That's a bad signal, as far as I'm concerned. It's a signal that says all the enemy has to do is wait us out. It means that the Iraqis who are worried about their future—after all, what they don't want to do is go back to the day where a tyrant could come and summarily execute them if he felt like it; therefore, they're afraid to take risks for

peace. So they kind of say, "Well, I wonder whether or not this country really means what it says." It's essential that when America speaks, it means what it says, and that we should not be sending mixed signals to allies and enemy alike.

We will succeed—we will succeed. You know why we're going to succeed? One, we do have what it takes.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. We do have what it takes. We've got the vision and the courage and the willingness to serve a great cause. The other reason we'll succeed is because people want to be free. People from all walks of life want to be free. Mothers and dads in Iraq want to raise their children in a peaceful environment, just like moms and dads here in America do. People long for peace. They want peace. They've got peace in their hearts. They long for a world where—that is a decent world. And that stands in stark contrast to the enemy. And we've been called——

Audience member. You rock, Mr. President! [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you, sir. Let me finish by one story that is a compelling story. I've told it several times here on this trip and out on the road. It's the story about the time seven Iraqi citizens came to see me in the Oval Office. The Oval Office is a powerful place. It's—you know, people walk in and just get overwhelmed by the majesty of this shrine to democracy. I do, on a daily basis. And the only person I know that didn't was my mother, who walked in and continued to tell me what to do. Anyway—[*laughter*]—that's a cheap shot, I know.

Anyway, the seven men come in. They—they're Iraqi citizens. All seven had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein because the currency—his currency had devalued and he needed to blame somebody. And one fellow explained to me why him, and it was because he had sold dinars to buy, I think he said euros or dollars to buy gold so he could then manufacture jewelry. He was a small merchant. And so he picks these seven guys out and cuts their right hands off. And then burns an X in their foreheads and charges them for the operation.

Fortunately, a documentary was made of the plights of these people. And a guy in Houston, Texas, saw it. He was a successful person who believed that you have a duty in life to help others, and flew these seven men over to Houston where they were fitted with new hands. And it was shortly thereafter that they came to see me. And it was—I'm telling you, it was a powerful moment to see the stark contrast between a society that—where somebody could just summarily say, "I don't like you; I'm going to chop your hand off," and a society full of compassionate people that were willing to heal the hurt by helping these people with a new hand. And that's what we're really working on.

I told these men there, I said, "Come in the Oval Office. I want you to be in a place where the office is bigger than the person." That's what free societies that are stable societies do. They have institutions that are bigger than the people. "And some day," I said to them, "you will have institutions bigger than your people, so that never again can somebody summarily disfigure you."

And that's what we're talking about, really, when you think about it. We're talking about the difference between good and evil. We're talking about the difference between compassion and tyranny. And we're talking about a world in which people are able to realize their hopes and dreams and aspirations without fear of brutal tyranny. America will be safer and the world will be better because of the actions we are taking today.

May God bless you all, and may God bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m at the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and

Joiners of America International Training Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas J. McCarron, general president, Douglas J. Banes, general vice president, and Andris J. Siling, general secretary-treasurer, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; Mike McCarron, executive secretary-treasurer, Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters; Dale Shoemaker, senior technical coordinator, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America International Training Facility; William K. Irwin, Jr., executive director, Carpenters International Training Fund; television talk show host Jay Leno; Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; Mayor James B. Gibson of Henderson, NV; Nevada State Attorney General Brian Sandoval; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks With Nancy Reagan in Bel Air, California
August 12, 2004

The President. Laura and I are honored to come by and pay our respects to Mrs. Reagan. We really admire Mrs. Reagan's strength and her love of a great President and her friendship. We really thank you for the tour of your beautiful backyard. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Reagan. I'm so glad you came—so glad you came. Thanks so much.

The President. Thank you.

The First Lady. Thanks so much.

Mrs. Reagan. I'm always happy to see you.

The First Lady. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Reagan. And you met Duchess.

The President. And I met Duchess.

Mrs. Reagan. You met Duchess.

The First Lady. That's right.

The President. Thank you all.

The First Lady. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. at the Reagan home. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Victory 2004 Dinner in Santa Monica, California
August 12, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. And thanks for having us. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm, warm welcome.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you. Thank you all. Mine is the only line of work where you get introduced by your wife—[*laughter*]—and I'm really glad I did. I can't tell you how proud I am of Laura. She is a fabulous First Lady. I like to tell these folks I've been campaigning with recently, I said I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. And by the way, it's a joy to campaign with her, and it's a great joy for both of us to campaign with our daughters. It's really been a fun experience for us to have Barbara and Jenna on the campaign trail with us. And it's kind

of like the camping trip I never took them on. [*Laughter*]

I'm also proud to be here with the Governor of California. He's a—because he and I share a lot in common. We both married above ourselves—[*laughter*]—we both have trouble with the English language—[*laughter*]—we both have big biceps—[*laughter*]—well, two out of three aren't bad. If I had to put a motto or slogan on Governor Schwarzenegger, I would say he's a guy who got the job done. He came to this important State, and he got the job done. That's how I hope people view me as well—as the President, came to the Capital and got the job done.

This is a part of a western swing that actually started in Florida. [*Laughter*] John McCain and I were campaigning in Panama City the other day. We had 23,000 people show up, a big crowd for August. Last night in Phoenix, there was about 15,000, 16,000, loud, energetic, enthusiastic people. I'm telling you what I'm seeing. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm is high. We're going to win in November. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

And I want to thank you for your help tonight. This is not the first time we've been out here, by the way, nor is it going to be the last time. I intend to compete in California. I know that Parsky, my man Parsky says, "Don't worry, you're going to win it this time." And I said, "You know what? I think I am." I'm looking forward to coming to this great State. Nobody should take this State for granted in 2004.

I'm running with a good man. And Dick Cheney, you know, I like to tell people he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can do the job. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his sound advice.

I want to thank my friend Brad Freeman. I'm thankful for the fact he didn't introduce me. [*Laughter*] But I love him like a brother. And I thank you all for coming too.

Rabbi Hier, I want to thank you for your outstanding prayer. I got up after he offered that prayer and said I want a copy of it. It was really strong. What a fine man Rabbi Hier is. What a sweet, fine man. Roland said, "That's my rabbi." I said I can understand why.

I want to thank all the Congressmen who are here, Ed Royce and Ken Calvert and Chris Cox and Dana Rohrabacher. These are fine Members of the United States Congress, good, hard-working, decent people. I see Riordan is here—Mr. Secretary, I'm glad you're here, glad you finally found work. [*Laughter*] Remember the last job I tried to give you, but—Ambassador to Chad. But he didn't want it. [*Laughter*]

I'm glad the next Senator from California, Bill Jones, is with us. I appreciate you, Senator.

I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who has helped raise money all across the country. He's from Cincinnati, Ohio. He's an entrepreneur, a business guy, former partner of the Texas Rangers who said, "How can I help?" I said, "Why don't you lead the efforts to make sure we're well-funded." And he has done a fabulous job. I appreciate you being here, friend. Finally, I want to thank my friend Gerry Parsky and Robin for being here as well and being such great friends.

Listen, I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling the country letting the people know that I've got a reason to be your President for 4 more years. I've got a reason to run for office. I want this country to be a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country for every one of our citizens.

And we've done a lot. You know, this country has come through a lot, and we've accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that's to determine who best can lead us forward. I'm traveling the country talking about what more we can do to make this country the

best country it can possibly be. I have more work to do on behalf of the American people. We've got more work to do to make sure our public schools work well.

You might remember, when I came to office, the system was such that it just shuffled the kids through grade after grade, year after year, without teaching them the basics. And I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. And so we changed the attitude toward our public schools, at least in the Nation's Capital. We've now raised the bar. We've said we expect results, show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract. If they can't, we'll fix the problems early. The whole goal is to make sure that not one single child is left behind in America. And we're making progress—we're making progress.

We've laid the foundation for excellence. You know, there's a lot of talk in these campaigns about funding. We've increased funding by—for elementary and secondary education by 49 percent. We've increased funding since 2001 by 52 percent for Title I. But that's part of the issue. The other issue is, are we actually getting the job done? Are the schools functioning the way they're supposed to function? And if not, we're demanding change. When we find kids trapped in schools that will not teach and will not change, this administration is calling for change.

There's more to do. We've got intervention programs in junior high and high school to make sure, at the very minimum, our kids can read. A high school diploma must mean something, so we've got a plan to restructure our high schools in a more effective way. We want to make sure the Internet is in our classrooms to bring the latest technology for our kids. What I'm telling you is, over the next 4 years, our children will gain the skills and confidence ready to succeed in the 21st century.

There's more to do. There's more to do for health care. You might remember the Medicare debate. President after President, Congress after Congress said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll strengthen Medicare," and yet, Medicare was not meeting the needs of our seniors. We pay $100,000 for heart surgery, but not the medicines necessary to prevent the heart surgery from the first place. We got a job done. We worked with the Congress to strengthen Medicare. Seniors will now have a choice. Seniors will have prescription drug coverage. Poor seniors will be helped. There's a lot of talk in Washington, but this administration, like Arnold Schwarzenegger in California, is getting the job done.

We've expanded low-income—we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've established what's called health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their health needs. We need more to do. We've got to make sure we bring technology into the health care industry to save money and to cut down on medical errors. I'll tell you what else we need to do. We need medical liability reform in the Nation's Capital now. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm going to continue the Congress to get medical liability reform.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that the health decisions are made between the doctor and the patient, not made by Government officials in Washington, DC.

There's more to do on our economy. Just remember what we've been through in this country. We've been through a recession and stock market decline. We've been through a corporate scandal. We've been through terrorist attacks. And yet our economy is strong and getting stronger. I believe the reasons why is because the American people refuse to fold. I also know the reason why is because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The role of Government

is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish.

And part of making sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, we cut taxes. We needed tax relief in order to get out of the recession we're in. When people have more money of their own in their pocket, they're going to demand an additional good or a service, and when they demand that additional good or a service, somebody in our system is going to produce it. The tax relief we passed is working; the economy is growing. More jobs are being added, and there is more work to do.

I'm running because I understand, in order to keep jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the business—in the world to do business. Now, what does that mean? That means tort reform. It means letting small businesses pool risk when it comes to health care so they can buy more affordable insurance just like big businesses do. It means an energy policy that is less dependent on foreign sources of energy to keep jobs here. It means having a trade policy that is confident in our capacity to compete. We ought to be opening markets around the world. My view is American entrepreneurs and manufacturers and small-business people and farmers and ranchers can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace so long as the rules are fair.

You know what else it means? It means we better have an education system that encourages workers to gain the skills necessary for the jobs of the 21st century. I have been traveling our country a lot. I remember going to North Carolina where textile mills had moved overseas. And, of course, there was despondency there. But our Government provided help for those workers so they could go back to community colleges to train for the jobs which actually now exist in North Carolina. And when a worker becomes more productive as a result of more education, they make more money. People are finding new jobs in this changing economy of ours, and a proper role for Government is to provide job training which works.

I'm running for a reason. I want people finding work in this country. I want more small businesses flourishing. I want to continue this fantastic story of homeownership in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate in our country is at the highest rate ever? I love the fact that more and more people from all walks of life are opening their front door and saying, "Welcome to my home."

After 4 years, America's economy will still lead the industrialized world. After 4 years, people will get better paying jobs. And after 4 years, more people will be able to realize their dream and say, "This is my business, and I'm expanding it."

The next 4 years also require diligence when it comes to foreign policy. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this world, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

You know, our world changed on September the 11th. And since that day, we have led and the world has changed. Just think about this. Prior to September the 11th, Afghanistan was a home base of Al Qaida. Al Qaida was training there. They trained thousands of killers and sent them around the world in secret cells, including our own country. Because we acted, because we were firm—and with resolve, Afghanistan is now free. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. In Afghanistan, young girls now go to school for the first time.

The other day I was in Cleveland, Ohio, for the International Children's Game, and I had kicked off the games. They had all these kids out in front from all around the world. Right there in my vision was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was a fantastic feeling. I can't tell you how proud I was of our country. We believe in freedom and liberty.

Remember, before September the 11th, Pakistan was a transit point for Al Qaida.

Today, Pakistan is a strong ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer for it.

Prior to September the 11th, Libya was a country that had designs on weapons of mass destruction. Because we acted, because we were clear in our resolve, Muammar Qadhafi got the message, dismantled his weapons programs. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Saddam Hussein was the sworn enemy of America. Remember, Saddam Hussein's history. He defied the world, resolution after resolution after resolution. He was firing weapons at our pilots when our pilots were trying to enforce the world's sanctions. Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein harbored terrorists. Remember Abu Nidal? He killed Leon Klinghoffer. His organization was given safe harbor in Iraq. Zarqawi, the person who'd just behead somebody because he feels like it, trying to intimidate the free world, had been given safe haven in Iraq. Saddam Hussein killed thousands of his own citizens. He was a threat in a volatile part of the world.

We saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. After September the 11th, America must deal with threats before they fully materialize. I made a decision to go to the United States Congress to seek a resolution of support in case we needed to use force in Iraq. I say "in case we needed to use force in Iraq"; the use of force should be the last option of the President of the United States. It certainly is in my case. And so I went to the Congress, and they looked at the facts as we saw them and looked at the intelligence as I saw it. And they agreed with me that Saddam Hussein was a threat—"they" being members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence—including my opponent, who looked at the very same intelligence.

I went to the United Nations. I think it's very important for our country to try to solve problems and deal with threat diplomatically as a first resort. So I went to the U.N. I asked them to take a serious look at Saddam Hussein as a threat to the world. I described how threats in the post-September-the-11th era must be looked at in a new light. They agreed. You might remember, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke with one voice, and yet, once again, he defied the world. Remember, we thought weapons inspectors were a good idea. And yet, he systematically deceived the weapons inspectors. He wasn't about to disclose. And as he had for year after year after year, he basically said there's no consequences. So I had a choice to make at this point in time: to forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

You know, even though we didn't find the stockpiles that everybody thought we would find, Saddam had the capability to make weapons. And in a post-September-the-11th era, the thought of him having that capacity and that capability and the thought of him being able to pass that capability on to our enemies, our sworn enemies who had the willingness to kill thousands in one attack, was a threat we had to deal with. Knowing what I know today, I would have still made the same decision.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and almost 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent found a—what I call a new nuance. [*Laughter*] He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, Senator Kerry agrees with me that even though we did not find the stockpiles of weapons that we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq to remove Saddam

Hussein from power. I'm glad he cleared that up. [*Laughter*] The only problem is there's 80 more days for him to change his mind. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because there's more to do to defend our country. We're—we will work with our friends and allies to pursue these terrorists around the world. Listen, it's better to defeat them there than to face them here in our own country. I know you cannot talk sense to these people. There's the—you can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. It is essential that we be firm and resolved and steady and stay on the offense against people who would do us harm.

And the way—we will, of course, continue to work with our friends and allies. We've got a vast coalition in support of our goals. Sixty nations are involved with Proliferation Security Initiative. There's 40 nations involved in Afghanistan. Nearly 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I thank their leaders all the time. I appreciate so very much the families of those soldiers who are working side by side with our soldiers to bring peace and freedom to the world with their great contributions. I have an obligation to continue building and strengthening alliances, which I will do. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

I'm really proud of our military. Our military has helped us to keep our commitments. We must keep our commitments to our military. That's why, last September, I proposed supplemental funding to support our troops who are in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This money was for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important piece of legislation. We received great bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. As a matter of fact, only 12 Senators voted against that vital funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

When questioned about that vote, I found it interesting that he said this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] He got pressured more, and he went on to say he was proud to vote, then he said the whole thing was a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We've got to work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, and that's poverty and hopelessness and resentment. The best way to do that is to spread freedom. We believe that liberty can change people for the better.

I oftentimes tell the story about visiting with Prime Minister Koizumi, a good friend of mine. Laura and I were having dinner with him one night in Tokyo. And it dawned on me that it was amazing that here is the leader of America and the leader of Japan sitting around the table talking about peace. What's amazing is that we were enemies not all that long ago. As a matter of fact, my dad, and I'm sure many of your dads, fought against the Japanese people, bitter enemies. Fortunately, after World War II, my predecessor and others in positions of responsibility in Washington believed that liberty could change Japan for the better. They defied the critics and the pessimists and said, "Let's help build a self-governing society based upon the principles of liberty." And as a result of being—having such a heartfelt belief in the fact that liberty can change the habits of people, I'm now at the table with a former enemy talking about peace.

And this is what—this is the historic moment we're in in the world today, as far as I'm concerned. I truly believe that someday, an elected Iraqi President will be sitting down—or Prime Minister—will be sitting down with the President of the United States talking about peace, talking about how to make sure our world is a better place.

See, what's happening is, is that freedom is beginning to rise up in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom, a part of the world where people are resentful because they are not free human beings. And we believe that freedom is the Almighty's gift to every person in this world. It is the basic belief of the American system.

And so—I say this to the families of the soldiers I meet. I tell them their sons and daughters or husbands and wives are on an incredibly important mission for history. See, when Iraq is free, it will begin to change the vision of those in Iran who want to be free. When Iraq is free, it will say to the Palestinians, who have been subjected to leadership that has not led in their interest, that it's possible to live at peace with our close friend Israel. Freedom will change the habits of people so that peace prevails in this world.

There are still—you know, there are still enemies who hate us, and they are plotting to harm us—that's the world we live in—and we've got a lot to do here at home to protect us. I'll just give you some thoughts about some statements that have been made about our staying on the offense in the war on terror. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. I think that shows a misunderstanding of the enemy. See, remember, during the nineties, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before—long before—we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame our country for the anger and evil of those killers. See, we don't create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're starting the hard work of reform, I want to—inside Washington on homeland security. I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. We put together a new Department of Homeland Security, and they're doing good work. There's a lot of good people working hard on your behalf. The PATRIOT Act is a very important piece of legislation. The PATRIOT Act gives our law enforcement officers the tools necessary to crack terror networks. It is necessary. Congress needs to renew the PATRIOT Act.

We're sharing intelligence better than before. As you recently read, I picked a really good man out of the United States Congress from Florida, Porter Goss, to head the Central Intelligence Agency. I'm looking forward to working with Congress on the creation of the National Intelligence Director. What I'm telling you is our Government understands what we need to do to secure ourselves. I understand, you know, the—we've got to be right 100 percent of the time, the enemy only right once. We should take great comfort that there's people at all levels of government—really decent, honorable people—who are working hard as they possibly can to do their duty and protect our country.

I talked about reforming in Washington. It's never easy to do that. Entrenched interests there are pretty strong. The status quo has got a lot of defenders. But if you think about it, we've gotten good results for the people by pushing hard for reform. See, when it comes to raising standards in schools and insisting on excellence for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to reforming Medicare so our seniors have got prescription drugs and insisting that the doctors and the patients are the center of health care decisionmaking, we're getting the job done. When it comes to growing this economy and creating jobs and enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit, we're getting the job done. When it comes to defending America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. What I'm telling you is, when it comes to electing a President, put somebody in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Listen, the world we're in is a changing world, but there's some things that aren't going to change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. They won't change. In a changing world, the values we try to live by will not change: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, there are some just very vital institutions: our families and our schools, our religious congregations. These institutions are really important for our country. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and each person counts. We stand for judges who strictly interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. The culture is changing; slowly but surely it's changing 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. If you're worried about the quality of the education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And I believe a central tenet of a responsibility society is, each of us should love our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

You know, for all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of this Nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time we need firm resolve and clear vision. This is a time we must stick to those ideals which make this country such a fabulous country.

You know, I'll never forget the day I went into the ruins of the Twin Towers, September the 14th, 2001. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I can remember walking—working the ropeline there and shaking hands with people, guys with bloodshot eyes, and they'd been in the rubble looking for a buddy. He said, you know, "Mr. President, do not let me down." He took that day personally. Everybody searching through the rubble took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. Every day I wake up thinking about how to better secure our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have done a lot together—we have done a lot together, and we have done the hard work. And there is more hard work to do, and I'm ready for the task. I've got the energy to continue leading this country, and I know where I want to take us. Over the next 4 years, we'll be dedicated to spreading opportunity and ownership to every corner of America. For the next 4 years, we will pass the enduring values of our great land on to another generation. And for the next 4 years, we'll be relentless in our pursuit of freedom and peace.

You know, when I traveled your State 4 years ago and our country, I said if you gave me the high honor of holding this office, the Presidency of the United States, I would uphold the dignity and honor of that office—the pledge I made. With your help over the next 4 years, I will continue to honor that pledge.

Thanks for coming, and may God bless you all. Thank you for your support. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 6:54 p.m. at the Santa Monica Municipal Airport. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; Gerald L. Parsky, California State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc., and his wife, Robin; Brad Freeman, California State

finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder, Simon Wiesenthal Center; former Mayor Richard J. Riordan of Los Angeles, CA; Mercer Reynolds, Victory national finance chairman, Republican National Committee; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on the Columbia River Channel Deepening Project in Portland, Oregon

August 13, 2004

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. You know, Steve, when you and I spent all that time in the library in college—[*laughter*]—never did you think you'd be introducing a President. Never did you think it would be me. [*Laughter*] I'm proud to be with my old classmate, and I'm proud to be here to talk about a really important project for this part of the world. I want to thank you for your stewardship, Steve, and thanks for introducing me.

Today we're going to take an important new step to enhance the vitality of this river and thereby expand opportunities for the people of the Pacific Northwest. Today I'm announcing that we'll soon begin deepening 104 miles of the Columbia River Channel from the mouth of the river on the Pacific to Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington.

By deepening the channel of this river from 40 to 43 feet, we will create new export opportunities at Columbia River ports; we'll help our farmers and ranchers; we'll help our manufacturers remain competitive; we'll protect and restore jobs—really good paying jobs—and we'll help conserve and restore the river ecosystem. This is a vital project. I'm submitting a $15 million budget amendment to fund the beginning stages of the Columbia River Deepening Project. What I'm telling you is we're committed to keeping the Columbia River open for navigation and trade, and we're committed to keeping America's great ports open for business.

I thank my friend Gordon Smith for his leadership on this important project. I want to thank Senator Patty Murray from the State of Washington for joining us and for working on this project as well. This project needs bipartisan cooperation, and I want to thank the Senators from both parties for joining us. I appreciate Congressman Greg Walden being here as well. And I want to thank my friend George Nethercutt, Congressman from the State of Washington, for joining us as well.

I appreciate the speaker being here. And somebody told me that former Senator Mark Hatfield is with us today. Senator, how are you? It's great to see you. You're looking great. Mrs. Hatfield, how are you? I'll tell Mother, Antoinette, you're looking good. [*Laughter*] So is she. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate J.P. Woodley. He's the Assistant Secretary of Army, the commander and division engineer for this project. I want to thank Brigadier General Don Riley. He's the director of the civil works of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

I appreciate Bob Lohn. It's good to see Bob again. Last time I saw Bob, we were talking about salmon restoration. I appreciate you being here. Dave Wesley is the

Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—David Wesley is the Deputy Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Listen, this is a project that requires all aspects of government working together to make sure this happens. I'm not the kind of guy that likes to stand up and say, "This is going to happen," and it doesn't happen. I'm the kind of person who says, "When it's going to happen, it is going to happen." And that's why these Government officials are here, to hear it clearly from the President, we expect this to go forward.

I appreciate the representatives from organized labor who are here. Thank you for coming. Thank you for lending your voice in this important project. I want to thank the Port of Portland. I want to thank the farmers and ranchers who are here. I appreciate what you're doing to feed our country and to help the hungry around the world as well.

Ever since President Thomas Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on their expedition to the West, the Federal Government has recognized the importance of the Columbia River. This is one of America's vital waterways. It is a key artery of commerce for the Pacific Northwest. I say "key" artery of commerce—that means it's a key for jobs. We want people working. When we say "artery of commerce," that means it's a key for job creation, a chance for people to make a living when this river functions to its maximum potential.

Growers and manufacturers from Oregon and Washington to the Midwest count on the Columbia's deep-draft shipping channel to get their products to the Pacific and then to overseas markets. Last year, more than $15 billion worth of cargo traveled through the Columbia River ports, including more wheat than America shipped on any other river. If you're a wheat farmer, that's good news. If you're somebody who relies upon wheat to sustain your life, that's also good news.

In all, more than 1,000 businesses, some 40,000 good-paying Pacific Northwest jobs depend on Columbia River shipping. That's why this project is so vital.

Columbia River ports have become some of the busiest on the west coast, but in recent years, a problem has started to emerge. It seems like to me those of us in government ought to see problems and figure out how to solve them early, before it becomes too late. That's really what we're here talking about, isn't it. The cargo ships that carry crops and other Pacific Northwest products across the Pacific are larger than they used to be, and they depend on deeper navigation waters.

In 1970, the average cargo ship's draft was 25 to 30 feet. Today, it's from 41 to 45 feet. Yet the depth of this river behind me has stayed the same, at 40 feet. That's the problem: It's not deep enough to handle the new ships. And so some shippers are now diverting ocean traffic away from Portland and toward other ports. Because this river is too shallow, the Port of Portland is at a competitive disadvantage. Ultimately, that will hurt the ability for people to find work.

With fewer ships coming into the Columbia River ports, farmers and growers are forced to pay higher transportation costs. That will affect our farm economy. And the solution is clear: If you want more vibrant trade, if you want more navigable rivers, if you want busier ports, we need to deepen this channel. We need to make it deeper. And so that's what we're going to do. The engineering work is already underway, and they'll start moving mud next year.

Deepening the channel by three feet might not sound like a big change to some folks, but the people here know what it means. The people who are the experts understand what that extra three feet means for this mighty river. See, cargo ships will be able to load 300 more containers than they can now. If they're shipping grain, they'll be able to carry an extra

6,000 tons. And that's good news for farmers.

By working together to deepen the Columbia River Channel, we're helping to save manufacturers and growers an estimated $68 million a year on the cost of shipping containerized cargo. That helps a lot when you're competing in a global market, especially if you're an individual rancher, small-business owner, owner of your own farm.

The steps I'm announcing today also fulfill our responsibility to be good stewards of the land and water. The environmental review of this project included active participation by interested parties and the public. Through the collaborative process, they come up with the solution. It included a thorough analysis by environmental agencies, and they ruled the dredging safe for the river's ecosystem.

The Army Corps of Engineers will carry out their work under strict environmental guidelines and monitoring. In fact, this project includes restoration and conservation measures that go beyond the requirements of the law. We're installing new technology in the lower Columbia River to help salmon and steelhead pass through the tide gates. We'll restore and protect wildlife habitats in tidal marshes, swamps, and other wetlands. We're seeking out good uses for the sand dredged from the bottom of the river. All of these efforts will help us meet a great goal, to leave the Columbia River ecosystem in better shape than we found it. I'm confident we can achieve that goal.

The Columbia River Channel Deepening Project is a wise use of taxpayers' money. It fosters an ethic of cooperation between Washington, DC, and State and local governments. It brings together business leaders and labor representatives, farmers, ranchers, and conservationists and politicians on both sides of the aisle. The project fulfills the Government's charge to create the conditions for economic expansion and job growth by respecting our duties to the environment.

I'm proud that we're able to move forward with this project after years of review. I urge the United States Congress to act quickly on my budget request.

On many other issues, from reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire to keeping hydropower energy rates as low as possible to conserving our precious salmon, my administration is working with Pacific Northwest leaders to meet our shared priorities. I look forward to working with you in the future to sustain the physical and economic vitality of this beautiful part of America.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. at Rivergate Industrial Park. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Corey, commissioner, Port of Portland; Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives Karen Minnis; and Bob Lohn, Regional Administrator, Northwest Regional Office, National Marine Fisheries Service.

Remarks in a Discussion at Southridge High School in Beaverton, Oregon
August 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for being here. Go ahead and be seated, please. Thanks for coming. Laura and I are here—we're here in your State asking for the vote. That's why we're here in the great State of Oregon. Today I've got a unique way to explain why I'm running for office again and

what I intend to do, and that's to talk to some of our fellow citizens about job creation, job growth, the entrepreneurial spirit. It's one way to help make the point to the people of Oregon that there's more work to be done. Then I'd like to answer some of the questions you have.

But before I do so, I want to tell you how proud I am of Laura. You're going to hear reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is to have Laura as the First Lady for 4 years.

These campaigns, when you campaign for President, it's a long ordeal, and that's the way it should be, really. You should have to go out and ask for the vote and let people know your heart and your vision. It also means you get to spend some quality time with your family. [*Laughter*] So it's great to be traveling with Laura. And one of the really—joys for our family is that Barbara and Jenna are now campaigning with us. It's like going on the camping trip I never took them on, you know.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I like to tell everybody—I admit it—he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] However, that's not why I picked him. I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he can do the job and his judgment.

I appreciate your friend and mine, your Senator, the great Gordon Smith, for traveling with us today. He's a joy to work with. He's a decent, gentle soul who cares deeply about the people of Oregon. He understands this State well. He's a great patriot. I'm proud to call him friend. I want to thank you for being here, Gordon. We just have come from announcing a project to deepen the Columbia River so that the port of Portland and Vancouver, Washington, can remain vibrant hubs of commerce. I like to remind people, in the Nation's Capital, a lot of them can talk a good game. I like to be the person known as somebody getting the job done, and this project we announced today is getting the job done. And I'm proud you're here, Sharon. Thanks for coming. It's great to see you again.

And old Greg Walden showed up. Thanks for coming, Greg. He's a good man, fun to work with. We worked on a lot of important projects for Oregon, including the Healthy Forest Initiative. You might remember, they've been talking about doing something about these catastrophic wildfires. We actually got the job done through the Healthy Forest Initiative.

It wasn't easy to get done, because some of the big talkers in Washington blocked it. One in particular finally came out west and he said, well, even though he had blocked it in the past, some of the parts looked like they're all right now, you know. It's kind of like those wildfires. He shifts in the wind. [*Laughter*]

As well, we've got a man running for the United States Senate from the State of Washington. I strongly support his candidacy, George Nethercutt. Thank you for coming, George.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. Again, I appreciate the small-business owners who are on stage and with us today. We're going to talk a lot about small business creation.

It's good to see my buddy Molly. Thanks for coming, Molly. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Not only am I asking for the vote, I'm asking for your help. You see, we have a duty—we have a duty in this country to vote. And one of the things I'm asking our supporters is to register people to vote, encourage our fellow citizens to do their duty.

You know, it wasn't all that long ago—I'm going to talk about Afghanistan a little later on—but one of the interesting statistics that came to my desk was the fact that over 8 million people in liberated Afghanistan have registered to vote. This, in spite of the fact—it's an amazing statistic when you think about the fact that it wasn't all that long ago that a bus was stopped—the thugs from the Taliban pulled over four

women registrars of voters and killed them. And yet, the people, because they long for freedom, said, "You're not going to intimidate us. We want to participate in a free society." They're registering to vote, and we herald that.

We ought to be—we ought to have that same spirit in our own country. And so, therefore, I ask you to register people to vote, and when you get them headed into the polls, or in your case, by ballot, head them our way, because we've got a plan to keep the country safer, stronger, and better.

Thank you all for coming. There's all kinds of ways to make America better. I'll talk about two, right quick. We're at a school. One way to make America better is to make sure every child learns to read and write and add and subtract. You might remember, when we went to Washington, when my administration went to Washington, there was this practice around the country in certain school districts where they would move children from grade to grade, year after year, and the children didn't learn the basics. So we changed that attitude. I went to Washington for a reason, and that is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what that means. It means, in certain places, the standards were so low that what they got were lousy results. And that's not good enough for this great country.

So I worked with Members of the Congress to pass new law that says: We'll increase funding for public schools; we'll increase funding for elementary and secondary schools by some 49 percent since I got there; we'll increase funding for Title I students by over 50 percent since I got there. But we also recognized that the issue is more than funding. The issue is results, and so we raised the standards. We said, "We expect accountability in our schools, to tell us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract."

We believe in local control of schools. When we find children in schools that won't change and won't teach, we demand something other than the status quo, and we're seeing great results. The achievement gap among students in America is beginning to close because we believe every child can learn.

I'm running because there's more to do to make sure we continue to raise the bar, to continue to insist on curricula that works. See, that's why you measure, because you want to know. You can't solve a problem unless you're willing to diagnose the problem in the first place. So we say to schools, "Show us early whether or not a child can read and write. And if not, there's extra help."

So that no child gets left behind, we've got to make sure our Head Start programs start children off early with the fundamentals of reading. We want to make sure our high school diplomas mean something. We need intervention programs for children who cannot read in junior high. We've got to be emphasizing math and science. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, the children of this country are going to be more hopeful, more confident, and have more of the skills necessary to succeed. And America will be better off for it.

Let me tell you what else we'll be better off to do. We'll be better off as we continue to rally the armies of compassion. You'll hear me talk about our military later on and our economy, but the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America. If you really think about it, you don't find it in the halls of Government; you find it in the hearts of people. And the President must understand that. And one of my most important jobs is to rally the armies of compassion, to call upon people to love their neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself.

And so, today Chris Dudley has joined us. You might remember him because of his exploits on the basketball court. A lot

of kids are going to remember him because of the basketball camp he set up. It's the kind of compassion I'm talking about. We couldn't pass a law to say to old Dudley, give back to the community where you're living. He had to feel that in his heart. He had to say, "This is a call that I hear." Laws don't do this—from Government. People hear a higher calling. And those of us in positions of responsibility must not only thank people like Chris but say that we're willing to open up Government funding to grants to organizations that exist because of their faith—all faith—so that we can help save our society.

I appreciate you coming. Chris is one of the tallest soldiers in the army of compassion. [*Laughter*] Proud you're here. I want to thank you and Christine for coming. It's great to see you again.

A stronger America is one in which people can find work and our economy is vibrant. Listen, we've been through a lot together when you think about it. Over the past 3½ years, we have been through an awful lot. We've been through a recession. That means things are going backwards. [*Laughter*] We've been through a corporate scandal. By the way, we passed tough laws. It ought to be abundantly clear to CEOs in corporate America that we expect there to be honesty in the boardrooms of our country. We got attacked, and all of this affected our economy, affected our psychology as well.

But we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got a great workforce. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and we're going to talk to some entrepreneurs here in a minute. We've overcome it because we got great farmers and ranchers in this country. You know, we've overcome a lot because the soul of this country is strong. I think—I will argue strongly that we overcame these economic problems as well because of well-timed tax cuts.

Nationally, the economy is strong. It's getting strong. We've added about 1.5 million jobs. Nationwide, the unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Here in the State of Oregon, you've been struggling. After all, your resource industry got hit hard. High-tech got hit hard. The recession hurt. Your unemployment rate, however, has gone from 8.7 percent to 6.8 percent. It's getting better, but there's more work to do. There's more work to do. And I want to share with you some of the things that I think we ought to be doing to make sure this economy continues to grow so people can find a job and to make sure jobs stay here in America.

First, we've got to make sure we got reasonable energy policy. We've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I've come to your State several times, and I said one thing we must not do is to destroy the hydroelectric power of the State of Oregon and the State of Washington in order to have a reasonable energy policy. Turns out we're capable of preserving the dams and protecting the fish, and we're showing people we're able to do so.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to have health care, reasonable health care policies that make health care available and affordable. I'm going to talk to these small-business owners, and you're going to hear from—maybe not from these, but I can assure you you'll hear from other small-business owners that they're having trouble meeting the health care demands. Health care costs are going up. I think one way to handle that is to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so that they can afford insurance at the same rates as big companies are able to do.

We will continue to expand community health centers; those are places where low-income Americans can get primary care. We'd rather help people who need help in clinics rather than emergency rooms of hospitals, in order to help the cost of health care.

We've changed Medicare. You remember all the talk about Medicare. Campaign after campaign after campaign, they'd come and tell you, "We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done in Medicare. Seniors can now sign up for drug discount cards. If you're a senior and eligible, I urge you to do so. You'll save money.

In '05, for the first time, Medicare is going to provide preventative screenings. It makes sense, doesn't it? If we're spending your money, we ought to be able to look at a problem early and solve it before it becomes acute. And in '06, seniors will have choices in the Medicare policy, including prescription drugs. It makes no sense, folks, to have a system that pays $100,000 for heart surgery and not one dime of pharmaceuticals to prevent the heart disease from occurring in the first place.

We'll use technology to help modernize health care. I mean, health care is like in the old ages. I mean, when you think about it, you carry your file from room to room, and it's handwritten, and most doctors can't write. [*Laughter*] We need to modernize the system to reduce costs and to reduce medical errors, and we will continue to do so.

I'll tell you what else we need in this country. To make sure these good folks can afford health care for their people, to make sure you can afford health care, we need medical liability reform. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I stand with the docs, the patients, the small-business owners. We need medical liability reform now.

Finally, in order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about trade policy. There's economic isolationists in our country that would like to wall us off from the rest of the world. That would be wrong. Presidents before me have decided to open up our markets for goods from overseas. You know why? If you're a consumer and you have more goods to choose from, you're likely to get a better quality good at a better price. That's the way the market works. And what we ought to be doing in trade is saying, "We treat you this way; you treat us equally as well. Open up your markets to U.S. products."

I've told the people of this State, if I got to be the President, I would work hard to open up markets for Oregon farm products, and we delivered. The agricultural sector of America is strong because people are eating Oregon wheat—that's why. And they're eating it from all over the world. Good trade policy will keep jobs here. We've got to be confident about our ability to compete. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the playing field is level.

What I'm telling you is, I've got a reason for running, to keep the country stronger. I've got an idea—I've got ideas to make sure that people can find work. I've got ideas to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, in which people feel confident about starting their own business and growing their small business to a larger business. And we've got some people on stage who represent the entrepreneurial spirit of America.

Our first guest is George Puentes. George is a—from Salem, Oregon. He is an entrepreneur. What do you make, George?

George Puentes. We make tortillas. Good ones. [*Laughter*]

The President. Me gusto mucho.

Mr. Puentes. Esta bien.

The President. So, like, when did you start?

[*At this point, Mr. Puentes made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you. Let me talk about that. Thank you, George. Let me

explain that. Let me explain what he means. Part of the tax relief, when you hear us talking about tax relief, part of the tax relief was to allow small businesses to accelerate depreciation on investment, which really means that there is tax relief when they decide to spend extra money. That's what we're talking about, right? In other words, we're saying to the small-business sector, "We want you to invest."

What did you invest in?

Mr. Puentes. What did we invest in?

The President. Tortilla-making machines?

Mr. Puentes. Tortilla-making machines. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. So the Tax Code said to George, "We would like you to make decisions, investment decisions, more investment." That's what the tax relief said. He said "Okay, it made sense." He took a look, and his business was strong enough that he could make an investment.

The interesting thing about investment, and you must understand this, is that when somebody says, "I'm investing," what they're really saying is, "I'm buying"—in his case, a machine. And guess what? Somebody has to make the machine. So there's a worker who's benefiting from his decision. He says, "I want to purchase something extra. The tax relief has encouraged me to purchase something extra," and so somebody has got to make it. But not only does it help the worker making the machine, it helps the workers in George's factory that he's buying better machines. When he buys and upgrades his equipment, a tortilla worker for George is more likely to find his work—keep his work. In other words, they become more productive. Is that an accurate assessment?

Mr. Puentes. That is extremely accurate.

The President. Whew. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Mr. Puentes. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Just out of curiosity, did you hire anybody this year, or are you going to?

Mr. Puentes. We've hired over 30 employees this year already——

The President. Yes, there you go. See, that's what's happening in the country: Small business after small business after small business, they're hiring people. They're adding 34 employees here, 34 there, and it's adding up. And you know what's interesting? Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And a lot of this tax relief that was opposed by some in Washington, DC, was aimed at our small-business sector.

We had a problem. The problem was the recession caused people to lose work. So I decided, why don't we put policy in place that will encourage the job creators to expand. That's what the tax relief was all about, when you think about it. In other words, what people don't know is that most small businesses pay individual income taxes. George's company doesn't. He's what I call a C corp. But our next speaker's company does. She is—her company is called an S corp or a sole proprietorship——not in her case—but sole proprietorships as well pay individual income taxes. So when you reduce individual income taxes for S corps and sole proprietorships, you're really saying, "We're going to stimulate the small-business sector of America." And it's paying off. I'm telling you, it's paying off.

Ready to go? Jana, you ready to talk? She is an S corp. What do you do?

Jana Taylor. We manufacture cookies and cookie dough.

The President. Yes. That's why I ride my mountain bike, so I can eat your cookie and cookie dough.

Ms. Taylor. And we buy Oregon wheat.

The President. Yes, that's good. See, so she's what they call an S corp. She's a person that, when they pay tax in their business, they pay at the individual income-tax rate. So I said when we cut taxes, everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief. We ought not to play favorites with the tax relief plan.

And you received relief. Did it help? I'm not a lawyer, but it sounds like I am. I'm leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Taylor. No, it definitely helped. And when you get to go to work every day because it's your own passion and what you do and love best, you get to put back into the company which, again, fosters more employment, more efficiencies, better productivity, capacity, and technology. We basically put that money back into advancing the company forward.

The President. Yes. You know something about Jana? She started her company in her own kitchen. See, that is—what a fantastic story, isn't it? That's a great story of America, when you think about it. You start—you say, "I want my own business. I want to own my own business." Jana says, "I think I've got what it takes to own my own business." We need to promote ownership in America. We want more people owning things in this country. If you own your own business—you heard her, I didn't write what she said. She said, "I wake up every day enthused about what I'm doing."

Anyway, are people eating cookie dough these days?

Ms. Taylor. And a lot of it.

The President. They are? Good.

So give us employees and all that, how many you've got?

[*Ms. Taylor made brief remarks.*]

The President. One of the things Jana and I talked about before was it's very important for Government to help people with something they don't have enough time of, and that is time. They just don't have enough of it, time. And we were talking about flex-time and comp-time rules. It turns out the Federal Government, in case you don't know this, needs to pass a law that will allow many businesses—enable their workers to have flex-time rules, which means you can figure out—gear your own schedule to meet your own needs, or comp-time rules, which will allow you to take some overtime for your own personal use. You can change overtime pay for extra time to be with your family or to be with a loved one or to go back to school, whatever you may think you want to do. And Jana and I were talking about it. You've done some of that in your own company?

Ms. Taylor. Within the boundaries of the legal and opportunity——

The President. Of course within the boundaries of law. [*Laughter*] We're not diming you out here. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Taylor made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, it's called flex-time. Congress—we'll work with Congress. One reason I'm running again is to put rules in place to not only help the entrepreneur but, more importantly, help the workers be able to balance their own time so they can do—[*applause*].

Thanks, Jana. Good luck. I'm really proud of your story.

See, when you hear people say, "I started my company at the kitchen table," that spirit must exist in this country for a long time coming. It's called the entrepreneurial spirit. That's what that means.

We're with Kathy LaCompte. Kathy is a tree grower. Yes, there's a lot of trees. So what kind of trees?

Kathy LaCompte. We grow trees from seed, and we support the Christmas tree farms, the timber industry, and the wholesale nursery industry here in Oregon.

The President. Very good. You're the seedling provider.

Ms. LaCompte. I'm the seedling provider. You're the seedling grower. We could work together.

The President. See, I told her we have a tree farm on our ranch in Crawford. [*Laughter*] It turns out the trees—seedlings she raises won't survive where we live. [*Laughter*] Let me ask you—employees—give us a sense for your business.

Ms. LaCompte. We have 17 employees year-round. And we bump up to around 65 employees during our harvest season, which is the first quarter of every year.

The President. Right, and how so—how is your outlook? Upbeat, not so upbeat?

Ms. LaCompte. We've had a good outlook. Your Healthy Forests Restoration Initiative was a good help for us.

The President. Yes, good.

Ms. LaCompte. When we can manage those forests wisely, they can be replanted. Oregon has very strict replanting laws, and so we can provide the seedlings for that replanting. That helps our nursery.

The President. That's good, yes. It turns out trees are a renewable resource that can and must be looked after. It's interesting, if you just let them sit there and rot, they turn into kindling. [*Laughter*] And some of the most dramatic memories of my Presidency were flying over the fires in Oregon last summer. I mean, it was—it's unbelievable. It was—it's an imagery that a lot of people out East need to see before they make policy, so they understand the consequences of bad policy. [*Applause*] All right.

Kathy and I were also talking about health care. She—there's an interesting new product available for our citizens, and they're called health savings accounts. Basically what it means is, is that you buy a catastrophic plan with a high deductible and that you then contribute tax-free from zero to the limits of your deductible, and you can earn that money tax-free. It's your money. If you don't spend that money in the year in which you contribute it, you roll it over tax-free. So you, in essence, have a savings account for health. And yet if things get rough, there's a catastrophic plan to take care of your health care. That's what we want.

And these plans really do a couple of things. One, they make sure that the patient and the doctor are central to the health care decisionmaking process in the country. But they're also an innovative way to hold down costs. And the other thing is, is that since it's your money, you see how much money you have in your health account; you're probably going to make wiser decisions with your body. In other words, it's part of making sure that you make good choices so that you end up saving money from that which you contributed.

Interestingly enough, Kathy has one of these accounts. Has it worked?

Ms. LaCompte. It has worked. We had a MSA, a medical savings account, when they were first introduced probably 12 or 15 years ago, and it's worked really well for us. And so we were really anxious to have one of those available for employees. So we've been investigating that, and I think we'll go ahead and invest in that for our employees.

The President. Yes, you ought to look at it. I urge small-business owners to look at health savings accounts. It's a way to hold down costs. You can contribute, along with your employee—it depends upon your choice. You can contribute into the account itself, but the employee—this is a portable account, obviously. The person owns the account. We have a different—we have a changing world, when you think about it. People are going from job to job, and it makes sense for them to be able to carry a health care policy with them from job to job—part of an ownership society.

You investing in anything this year?

Ms. LaCompte. We did invest this year. We were able to build a new packing facility and office complex. And it's just lovely, and we're really happy.

The President. She showed me a picture of it. It is spectacular.

Ms. LaCompte. It is. It's wonderful.

The President. Did you build it yourself? Or did you actually hire somebody?

Ms. LaCompte. We had some people help——

The President. That's how the economy works. She has a—the picture I hope we're beginning to paint is, is that there are millions of decisions that take place throughout our economy because the Tax Code has encouraged these decisions, which, in turn, stimulates growth. Somebody had to come

and build the place. You just heard her. She didn't do it herself. She actually paid somebody. Somebody had to buy the nails. In other words, that's how the economy works. Government's role is to provide economic stimulus to encourage people's decisionmaking, which then leads to jobs, and that's precisely what we've done.

And in this campaign, I urge people to be careful about falling prey to the rhetoric, "I am going to spend this money and pay for it by taxing the rich." That's what you're hearing again, isn't it? That's political rhetoric. So, I'm running against a fellow, he's made about $2.2 trillion of new promises. [*Laughter*] And we've still got September and October to go. [*Laughter*] And so they said to him, "So how are you going to pay for it?" they said. They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, we're going to tax the rich." Remember, when you tax the rich, you're taxing S corps and sole proprietorships. When you start running up those tax rates on individuals, the people who start paying are the small-business owners. I told you, by far, the vast majority of small businesses in America are sole proprietorships or S corps. And if they are halfway successful, he's running the taxes up on them. And why would you want to be taxing the job creators of America? It's bad economic policy to run up the taxes.

I'll give you one other thought. Let me just leave you with one other thought about taxing the rich. You know how that works. A lot of the rich are able to get accountants, so they don't—they're able to dodge. You've seen it before. We're going to tax the rich, and then they figure out how not to get taxed. And so guess who ends up paying? You do. And we're not going to let him do it to us. We're not going to let him wreck that economy by running up our taxes.

Okay, hold on. We've got more work to do here. We've got more work to do. Right, Vail?

Vail Horton. Yes, sir.

The President. Vail Horton. I want you to hear this story. This is a fabulous story of an entrepreneur. Tell us your story, Vail.

[*Mr. Horton made brief remarks.*]

The President. One thing you do have is a heart and a soul and the desire to improve yourself. And I hope your business does well.

Listen, what a fantastic country, isn't it, where somebody has got a dream and says, "I'm going to overcome obstacles and work to realize my dream." He's expanding. He's growing. The tax relief has helped on the investment side. I'll tell you why: Because people can take a tax deduction on the investment they make when they buy a piece of his equipment. In other words, it's stimulated demand for his products. And this guy is going to make it. There's no doubt in my mind. Thanks for coming.

Listen, I appreciate you all coming. I want to talk about one other thing right quick, and that is—it's important to talk about our economy, but one way to make sure we continue to grow is to keep us safe. That's my most solemn duty, is to work to keep the country safe. First of all, you've got to know, nobody wants to be a war President. It's—I just can't imagine anybody saying, "Gosh, I wish war would happen on my watch." It's tough on the country to be at war, and this is a war that came to us not because of our asking, by the way. It came because of an enemy which cannot stand what we stand for, and that's freedom—freedom to worship the way you want, freedom to realize your dreams.

I want to share some lessons that are critical to our security and to peace. First, the nature of this enemy is—it's hard for us to understand in America. These are coldblooded killers. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot reason. You cannot hope for the best. We must bring them to justice before they hurt us again. [*Applause*] Thank you. You can't show

weakness to these people. You cannot show weakness. That's the nature of these folks.

Second lesson is, is that this is a different kind of war. This is the kind of war where these people will hide in dark corners of the world or find a cave and plot and plan. They're patient. They'll wait until they find a moment, and they'll strike. And therefore, in order to secure our country, we must not only bring them to justice; we must say to those who provide them safe harbor, "You're equally as guilty as the terrorists who have conducted the raids." And when you say something, you better mean it, in order to make the world a more peaceful place.

So I said to the Taliban, "You're harboring these folks. Give it up." And they defied us, and we took action. We gave them a chance. The use of our military is the last option for a President—the last option. And they had their choice, and they refused to listen to America and our allies and friends, and we removed them from power. And as a result, Afghanistan is no longer a training base for Al Qaida. Remember, they had trained thousands of people there. They're an ally in the war on terror. It's hard to envision that after 4 short years, they're now heading to Presidential elections. That's an amazing thought, isn't it? The world is better off. America is safer because of the actions we took in Afghanistan. And equally as important, the people in that country are better off.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, the other evening for the International Children's Games. And I was welcoming children from all around the world, and right in my vision—I'm talking front row—was the Afghan girls soccer team. And I can assure you their life has improved so dramatically from the days in which their mothers would be summarily whipped in public because they held a belief in stark contrast to the dim vision of those barbarians who were running Afghanistan.

The third lesson is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That's a lesson of September the 11th. And that is a vital lesson of September the 11th, and that is a lesson this country must never forget. See, you cannot hope for the best with these people. If we see a threat, we must deal with it, always first through diplomacy. And that helps explain some of the rationale for the decision I made on Saddam Hussein.

See, we saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. Now, remember his history. He had used weapons of mass destruction. That meant he was a threat, because one of the most dangerous parts of this new war is that there is an enemy who will chop somebody's head off, just like that, who would love to get ahold of weapons of mass destruction to inflict even greater damage than the deeds they did on September the 11th. That's the nature of these people.

And so we saw a threat. He was the guy who had used them. He was a sworn enemy of America. He had actually paid families of suicide bombers. That's the ultimate terrorist act, isn't it, to go kill innocent people as a suicider, and he was willing to subsidize their families. He had terrorist organizations inside his country. Make no mistake about it. A guy named Abu Nidal, a fierce terrorist who killed a guy named Leon Klinghoffer because he happened to be Jewish—his organization did—they were in and out of Baghdad. Zarqawi—he's the person who has ordered the beheading of innocent people in order to shake our will—he was in and out of Baghdad. These are terrorist organizations. So we saw a threat.

But I recognized that it was important to bring the country together as best as possible on this issue. So I went to the United States Congress, and I said, "Look, we see a threat, and we see the lessons of September the 11th. What do you think?" And so the Congress looked at the intelligence, and they remembered the facts. Members of both political parties

looked at the intelligence. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I had come to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

I also knew we ought to work the diplomatic front, so I went to the United Nations. And I stood in front of the United Nations and said, "Listen, we think Saddam Hussein is a threat, and you've said he had been a threat year after year, resolution after resolution. And the world has changed after September the 11th, so why don't we collectively deal with him?" And they passed a resolution, on a 15-to-nothing basis, that said Saddam's a threat; he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. That's exactly what the resolution said.

And so we had a diplomatic front, sent the message to Saddam Hussein. He defied the world. He said—I can't put words in the fellow's mouth, but it seemed like he said, "Who cares what you say?" And we said, "Well, let's—why don't we send inspectors. Let's go send inspectors in to find out the truth." And he systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I'm left with a choice. We've tried diplomacy. We've tried inspections. This guy doesn't really care what the free world has told him. Do I trust a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America.

Knowing what I know today—see, I thought we were going to find stockpiles. So did everybody else, you know. They might be. We haven't found them yet, I recognize that. But we do know he had the capability of making weapons. And after September the 11th, how could we take a risk that he wouldn't pass that capability on to an enemy. I do know that the minute the world, once again, had passed a resolution and nothing happened, he would be emboldened and strengthened with that capability. Knowing what I know today, I would make the same decision. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And the world is better off because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell. We're a safer country.

You know, it's an interesting—we've had an interesting dialog in this campaign thus far. My opponent voted for the resolution. Then the Democrat primary came about, and he declared himself the antiwar candidate. [*Laughter*] And then he finally said, "Knowing what we know today, I would have continued to vote for the Iraq resolution." So he's been there, not been there, been there. We've got 80 days left. There's no telling what his position will be. [*Laughter*] But I think it's important that everybody understand clearly where people stand when you're running for President of the United States.

A couple of other points. I want to thank our troops. It's—we've got a great military. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And thank our veterans who are here too.

Okay. Got a little more to go here. [*Laughter*] I'm just getting wound up. So anytime we put our troops into harm's way, they deserve the full support of our Government. During—I just want to remind everybody about the facts. I submitted a supplemental funding request to the Congress in September of last year to make sure our troops had body armor and spare parts, fuel, ammunition, the things necessary to be able to do their mission. It passed the Congress—overwhelmingly passed the Congress. Members of both political parties supported the request. In the United States Senate, as Gordon might recall, only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate—voted against funding for our troops in combat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So when asked, his explanation was, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. He went on to say, "Well"—when pressed, he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and then said, well, it was a complicated matter. [*Laughter*]

There's nothing complicated about giving our troops that which they need to do their mission.

A couple of other points—let me make a couple of other points, and I'll answer some questions. There's a lot of talk about coalitions, and we need to work with our friends and allies in this different kind of war because you've got to share intelligence, and you've got to work with your friends and allies to cut off money and deny people sanctuary and access. And it requires close collaboration, and that's what we're doing. That's what we're doing. I talk to Tony Blair all the time. He and I are from, I would say, different parts of the political spectrum, but we share a same understanding of the world in which we live, that we've got to be firm and diligent in running down these enemies, and we've got to deny them safe harbor, and we've got to spread freedom.

And I think it's wrong to denigrate the contributions of our allies in Iraq by saying that there is no coalition, we're going it alone. There's over 30—about 30 nations involved. These strong leaders, from Italy to Japan to South Korea—all around the world—have joined with the United States. We ought not to be denigrating their contribution. We ought to be thanking the moms and dads of those countries whose sons and daughters are in harm way.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, hold on. We're running out of time here. I've still got more to say—[*laughter*]—much to Laura's chagrin. [*Laughter*]

People say, "How long are they going to be there?" They will be there until we complete the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq. The mission is a country that can defend itself, and a free country. That's the mission. I talk to parents all the time. I say, "Listen, I want your child home as quickly as possible." But we must not send mixed signals. We must stay the course until the job is done.

The other day, my opponent said in the heat of political—in the heat of the political arena, said, "Well, they'll—if I'm elected, they'll be substantially—the troops will be substantially reduced in 6 months." That's a bad signal to send. You know, you've got an enemy out there listening to every word that's being said in America, so they say, "All we've got to do is sit around, and we'll wait for 6 months and one day." So when you say we'll substantially reduce our troops by 6 months, it not only affects the thinking of the enemy, it also affects the thinking of allies.

Think about those Iraqis. Think about the Iraqi citizens who are wondering whether or not America will keep its word. You got to remember, this country is a country which has gone from tyranny to freedom, and that's a hard transition to make in a quick period of time. And they're wondering whether or not we're really willing to stand with them as they make the hard choices necessary to get to a free society.

Let me talk about a free society. The other day I was campaigning in Phoenix, and I saw a sign—a woman held up a sign that said, "My son is in Iraq." And it was a proud sign to hold up. And I looked at her in the midst of this rally, and I said, "I just want you to know, tell your son, your son is a part of an historic moment because the world is changing." And the world is changing because liberty is beginning to spread its wings in parts of the world that is desperate for freedom.

The short-term strategy is to find this enemy and defeat them so we don't have to face them here at home. The long-term strategy is to spread freedom, because free societies don't export terror. Free societies are hopeful societies. Free societies are societies that are less likely to breed the resentment and anger necessary for killers to recruit youngsters. That's what we're talking about, really, when you think about it. And

it has worked throughout our history. Liberty has worked, and that's what is important for our fellow citizens to remember.

A couple of images I want to share with you, and then I'll answer some questions. One, the image of the Iraqi soccer team playing in this Olympics. It's fantastic, isn't it? What a fantastic thought. Remember—I don't know if you read the Sports Illustrated article about—I think it was Uday, one of Saddam's thug sons who would torture Olympians because they weren't able to succeed. Here's a country now, battling for a country that is now free. It wouldn't have been free if the United States had not acted.

Secondly, I want to tell you the story, which I share a lot with people, about having dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. Laura and I like him a lot. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. He's a good guy. And you know, we're eating Kobe beef there in Tokyo and—[*laughter*]—pretty fancy. You get good food when you're the President. [*Laughter*] And I was really impressed during the moment to think that, you know, my dad had fought against Japan in World War II. Many of your dads had fought against the Japanese in World War II. They were our enemy. And here I am talking to the leader of a former enemy, and we were talking about peace. See, we were talking about North Korea, how best we can work together to keep the peace. Isn't that a fantastic thought, that former enemies are now working together for the sake of peace, for our own security, and for world peace.

It would not have happened had my predecessors not believed in the ability of liberty to transform societies. You might remember, after World War II, there were a lot of people who doubted whether or not the Japanese could self-govern, could possibly shirk their militaristic ways, that they could possibly be a friend of the United States. But fortunately, predecessors of mine and Gordon's and the Congressman believed in the power of liberty to transform the attitudes and ways of people. And because we stuck to that belief, that firm belief that is ingrained in this Nation's soul, Japan is now an ally. Someday, an elected leader of Iraq, whether it be Prime Minister or President, will be sitting down with an American President talking about how to keep the peace.

These are historic times. We're living in historic times. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we not only serve the security of our Nation and spread peace, but by securing the ideal of liberty, we listen to the deepest beliefs in our soul, and that is, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Let me—I can keep telling stories, or I'll answer questions. Want another story? All right, one more story, and I'll answer questions.

I'm sitting in the Oval Office; the door opens up. First of all, the Oval Office is a powerful place. It is an unbelievably beautiful room. It is a shrine to democracy. And it's—it quiets the most active tongues, except for Mother. [*Laughter*] Anyway, so the door opens up, and in walks seven Iraqi men. They had come to see me. A fellow called and said, "This is an interesting story. I think you ought to meet them." They came in. All of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued, and he was looking for scapegoats.

I asked one fellow, I said, "Why you?" Well, he was a jeweler, and he needed gold, and he sold dinars to buy dollars or euros. In other words, he was in the currency exchange during which the dinar had devalued. And he got plucked out of the population, sent into the prison, had his hand cut off, a X branded in his forehead as well. I think they told me, if I'm not mistaken, the Government also charged him for his time in prison.

This is a brutal thing. These seven guys have had their lives, obviously, scarred by Saddam Hussein and his thugs. There's a

documentary made of them. And a guy in Houston, a newsman named Marvin Zindler, who had set aside a foundation to help people who were hurting, whether they be in America or elsewhere, saw the story, flew these guys over to Houston, Texas, where they were outfitted with new hands, and now they've come to see me.

And you know, what a stark contrast that is, isn't it? It's just so vivid and such a powerful imagery to think about the difference between a brutal tyrant who can pluck somebody out of obscurity and maim them for life and a country that is so compassionate and decent that an individual citizen calls them over and fits them with a new hand. And when the guy took the Sharpie and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic, it was a powerful moment to remind me about what a wonderful land we have. That's why I love America so much.

Let me answer some questions. Let me answer some questions, and then I've got to head north. [*Laughter*] I've got a little more work to do in Washington.

Yes, sir. Go ahead, yell her out.

Support for the President

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you very much. You can leave it at that if you like.

Q. I'm wondering if I can get some inauguration tickets. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, that's good. [*Laughter*] I like an optimist.

Tax Cuts/Homeownership

Q. I started my business last October, and it was a dream. But it's been going—[*inaudible*]—everybody I talk to, all my customers, they say the same thing. If it wasn't for your tax cuts and your stimulus and your steady hand since 9/11, my job would never happen—[*inaudible*]—because of your stimulus package.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Let me say something about homeownership. Do you realize that the homeownership rate in America is at an all-time high? Isn't that a fantastic thought? Don't you love the fact that some—more and more people are opening up their door, saying, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property."

One thing about this administration is, we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the country. We will continue to spread an ownership society throughout America.

What you got? Yes, ma'am. We've got to turn on the mike there. No, you don't have to. Somebody else is supposed to. [*Laughter*]

Texas Air National Guard

Q. Can you hear me now?

The President. Yes, ma'am. I like the cowboy boots, strong look.

Q. I thought you might like that.

The President. Yes. Yes, it's strong.

Q. Actually, 33 years ago I was working with the Texas Air National Guard.

The President. Oh, fantastic.

Q. From October of '71 to May of '72, you and I knew each other. So you were there.

The President. Oh, thank you. Thank you. Good to see you again. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir. Thanks for your service, Sergeant.

2004 Campaign Events

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Do what?

Q. Any fundraising dinners before the election?

The President. Fundraising dinners, no—sure, there will be some. But I'd rather do these kinds of events. I want people to know what I stand for, what I believe, where I want to lead the country. There's more to do. I hope you leave here and walk out and say, "What did he say? He said there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better place."

Yes, sir.

Judicial Nominations

Q. Mr. President, God bless you and your wife, Laura, first of all.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. And I would like to know in your second term what you are going to do to move more commonsense judges into our courts and get rid of these—[*applause*].

The President. Thank you, sir. Thanks. I have a responsibility to pick people who will represent this country admirably and strongly on the bench. It's one of my most important duties. I picked people who will strictly interpret the law, not use the bench from which to legislate. That's the judicial philosophy of the people I have picked. And I named a lot of good people from all walks of life. I named a fellow named Miguel Estrada to the DC Circuit Court. It's an important bench. It's a fantastic story. He came up from Honduras. He's a self-made guy, struggled with learning a new language. He comes to this great country. He's such a brilliant lawyer that he's nominated by the President, and he's blocked by a handful of United States Senators. That's the problem we have. We've got people playing politics with American justice, and it's not right.

And so to answer your question, I'll continue—they're not going to intimidate me. I'll continue nominating the people—I will continue nominating people that I know will represent my philosophy and make the courts a better place. And the way to answer your question about what else to do, put people like George Nethercutt in the United States Senate.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Military Service

Q. Mr. President, you were a fighter pilot, and you were with the 147th Fighter Wing——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——and flew a very dangerous aircraft, the Delta F–102.

The President. Right. And I'm still standing.

Q. And I thank you for serving our country. [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for serving.

The President. I appreciate you saying that.

Yes, sir.

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Kerry seems to have a lot of trouble remembering dates: when and if he was in Cambodia; who was President, Nixon or Johnson, when he was assigned to Vietnam; what bills in Congress he worked for and when; cannot remember if he campaigned in Oregon or California for George McGovern. Your last opponent you exposed with fuzzy math. It's time to expose John Kerry with fuzzy memory.

The President. You got a question?

Education

Q. I, too, want to say God bless you, Mr. Bush. My husband and my twins and I pray for you daily, as do many homeschoolers. Thank you for recognizing homeschoolers.

The President. You bet. Thanks. Yes, I appreciate you saying that. Listen, the best education always starts in the home. That's where it always starts.

I tell people a lot that it's very important that we work to usher in a culture of personal responsibility. Let me tell you what that means. It means that if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. And if Laura were up here, she would say that part of that responsibility is, start reading to your child early, is give your child the basics of reading. And I appreciate you saying that.

And thank you for your prayers. The fact that a lot of people in this country pray for me and Laura is heartwarming, strengthening, and a great aspect of the American experience.

Anybody up there? Anybody in the end zone have a question?

Presidential Debates

Q. Mr. President?

The President. All right, let her rip. Yes, ma'am. Oh, you want him to do it? You were the question gatherer-upper.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Presidential debates——

The President. Presidential debates. You bet.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—How about having Dick Cheney do more than one this time.

The President. Okay, well—he's going to be great. I'm looking forward to the debates. It's going to be—a really a good chance to show people what I believe. And it's—that's what it is. It's a chance to stand up with Senator Kerry by my side, and he and I will talk about what we intend to do. And it's a great opportunity for the people to sort through the issues and to get a sense for our respective visions. And I'm looking forward to them. It's—you know, I've done them in the past, and I'll do them this time around. And I can't say they're a lot of fun, but they're necessary, and they're an important part of the process. And I appreciate the debate sponsors for putting them on.

Yes, ma'am.

Military Service/Iraq/Palestinian State

Q. Hi. My brother-in-law served under your father at Desert Storm, Sergeant Scott Aclair. He is serving at Fort Richardson in Alaska right now and is scheduled to go to Iraq and is just hoping that you are going to be his President that he can serve under again when he goes back there. And when he found out that I would be here, he just asked one thing, if I could shake your hand for him.

The President. Yes, you can. You want to shake it right now? All right.

I want you to remind your brother-in-law what I just said about his mission. Again, I repeat, these are historic times. We're going to look back and say, "Thank goodness we stuck to our beliefs. Thank goodness we had great faith and value in freedom," because a free Iraq right there in the heart of the Middle East is going to speak to the hopes and aspirations of a lot of people. There's a lot of people watching, I'm telling you—a lot of people watching. The Iraqis are watching. They're watching us. A lot of people are watching in the neighborhood.

You know, one of my dreams is that there be a Palestinian state, a peaceful Palestinian state, a state that's willing to live with our friends the Israelis, where violence isn't the norm, where violence is not the policy, where the leaders of the Palestinians listen to the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people so we can have peace in that vital part of the world.

This is what we are talking about. These are historic times that are going to make an enormous difference in the lives of a lot of people, including ourselves.

Yes, sir.

John Kerry's Military Service

Q. Yes, Mr President——

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. On behalf of Vietnam veterans—and I served six tours over there—we do support the President. I only have one concern, and that's on the Purple Heart, and that is, is that there are over 200,000 Vietnam vets that died from Agent Orange and were never—no Purple Heart has ever been awarded to a Vietnam veteran because of Agent Orange because it's never been changed in the regulations. Yet, we've got a candidate for President out here with two self-inflicted scratches, and I take that as an insult.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you for your service. Six tours? Whew. That's a lot of tours.

Let's see, who've we got here? You got a question?

Freedom of Religion

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President, for visiting Oregon. I've heard through the grapevine that Oregon is one of the most unchurched States in the Union, and I really feel like it shows up in every walk of our society. Could you take a moment to pray for Oregon, for us, right now?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I'd—look, I think this. I think the thing about our country that you must understand is that one of the most valuable aspects of America is that people can choose church or not church, and they're equally American. That is a vital part of our society.

It's really important. It's very important that we jealously guard that tradition of America. See, it's the ability to say, "I believe or don't believe," which, in itself, is a valuable freedom that we must never surrender. That's what causes us to stand in stark contrast to nations all around the world. And if you choose to believe, you're equally American if you're Christian, Jew, Muslim, or Hindi. That's the great thing about our country. It's this great freedom. It's the fact that we're free to worship the way we see fit, in itself, is a vibrant part of the soul of America. Remember, that's what—when I was talking about the Taliban, they would drag people out in the public squares for whippings because they did not ascribe to their dim view of religion. And that's the opposite of what we believe in in America.

And so I appreciate what you say, but people in this country need to honor everybody's decision they make about religion. As you know, I've made my choice, and I—I'm—as I told you, I appreciate the prayers of the people. And it's—the prayers are a sustaining aspect of my life. But so long as I'm the President, and I suspect every President after me, hopefully, will jealously guard the great freedom of religion which is a part of our country's heritage.

You're next. No, you're not next. [*Laughter*] I mean, you're not up. You're next. [*Laughter*]

Q. Excuse me.

The President. Sorry.

September 11, 2001

Q. Mr. President, I want to——

The President. ——Jack in the Box. Go ahead.

Q. ——I want to thank you for everything you did after September 11th. I was in Israel then, and it was hard getting back. And it was very devastating. And you—no one could have done what you did any better.

The President. Thank you so much.

Q. And I want to thank you for your policies and your support and partnership with Israel.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. So, on September the 11th, I'm worried about my family. After we got airborne and moving around, I called Laura. She was safe. And at some point during the day, I tried to find my mother and father. I didn't know where they were, and I wanted to let them know I was safe. And I finally got them on the phone. I said, "Where are you?" They said, well—I think they said, "Milwaukee, Wisconsin." I said, "Oh, yeah? What are you doing there?" She said, "You grounded my plane." [*Laughter*]

Yes, little fellow. What do you got? What grade are you in? Excuse me.

Education

Q. Sixth.

The President. That-a-boy.

Q. Our superintendent makes over 200,000 a year, and he fired my librarian. Why is that? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, let me answer this by telling you—hold on for a minute. Hold on for a minute. I believe in local control of schools. [*Laughter*] The great thing is, you can find your superintendent because he lives in the neighborhood. You couldn't find him if you were in Washington.

[*Laughter*] And I can't answer your question why, but Laura was a librarian, so maybe the superintendent ought to talk to the librarian, Laura. But no, I don't know. [*Laughter*]

Let's see here. Yes, you got one.

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Okay, you're last—you'll be next.

Audience member. What about me, George? [*Laughter*]

Advice for Entrepreneurs

Q. I'm another young entrepreneur. I work with Vail there and——

The President. You work with this guy?

Q. I work with that guy right there.

The President. Fabulous partner, I bet.

Q. He's a good guy to work with. Also, I'm a new homeowner, I thought I'd add, one of those guys you talked about. Anyways, I was wondering if you had specific advice for us to make sure we succeed.

The President. That's an interesting question. Let's see, make sure your sales are bigger than your expenses. [*Laughter*] Don't borrow more money than you can afford to pay back. [*Laughter*] Listen to your customers. Work your customer accounts really hard. Make products or come up with products that people actually want. Dream big, and work hard.

You're last. You're next, I promise you. After all that exercise, you ought to be able to ask a question. [*Laughter*]

2004 Election

Q. Mr. President, as a child, how can I help you get votes?

The President. Thank you. That is the kind of question I like to hear. [*Laughter*] Thank you. Okay, here are some things you can do. First, you can find—you can put signs up in people's yards who want the signs in their yards. [*Laughter*] Second——

Audience member. Come and work in my county.

The President. Yes, come and work in her county. Secondly, here's another suggestion, like, if you've got a friend who may have a older brother or sister who is 18 years old, say to them, "Register to vote, and then please do me a favor, vote on my behalf for George W. Bush." [*Laughter*]

Okay, this is going to be my last question. I'm sorry. We could stay here all day, but I've got another assignment. I've got to head up to Washington State. I'm on the move. I'm campaigning hard. I'm working as hard as I possibly can.

Last question.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. No, I can't do it. If I did you, then they wouldn't believe me. I said "last question," and if it's the next-to-last question, then somebody will say, "Wait a minute, you said last question and you didn't do it." Go ahead.

Education

Q. And she should come see us because we have the Chuck-E-Cheese restaurant, and we could make her happy.

The President. There you go. Very good. That's called selling. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's right. And tagged on to that, most of our employees are 16 and 18 years old, young, hard-working kids. And the problem is they can't afford to go to college——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——because of the funding has been cut back. How can we change that?

The President. No, I appreciate that. It's a great question. Actually, at the Federal level, the funding has not been cut back. Now, maybe at the State level. But Pell grants, for example, are up. Pell grants are grants for people to go to college. We've—since I've been the President, a million more people have gone to college on Pell grants. Student loans are up—student loans are up.

One of the most important initiatives that I have put forth and will continue to push is a community college initiative. And I'll tell you why: Because we live in a world

where the jobs—the nature of the jobs change. And these jobs require a different skill set, and there needs to be a place where people can go back and get a different skill set to fill these jobs. And the best place to do so is community colleges.

And we've got a lot of money in Washington, trade adjustment assistance and displaced workers money. I happen to think it's very well spent money to enable—whether they be younger workers or older workers—to go back and get the skills necessary to fill new jobs. And I think about—I've been traveling our country a lot, and I've been to community colleges all over America. Mesa Community College in the Phoenix area, for example, is a place I went. And a lady stood up, and she said, "I worked as a graphic artist for 12 years and was making X. And I got a little help and went back to my community college and got an associate's degree. And then I went to work," she said, "for a computer company"—and made more in her first year in her new job than she had made in her 12th year in her old job.

In other words, what I'm telling you is, education will enhance somebody's productivity, which enhances their pay.

So to answer your question, for 4-year colleges, help at the Federal level is up. But for 2-year colleges, we've got specific programs aimed at helping, whether they be these youngsters or displaced workers or older workers, to gain skills to fill new jobs in areas such as high tech or health care. There are jobs available in America. The thing we've got to do is to be able to match the worker with the job. And a great place to do so is the community college.

Listen, thanks for being here. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:35 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to former professional basketball player Chris Dudley and his wife, Christine; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Seattle, Washington
August 13, 2004

It's my honor to come to this vital and important United States manufacturing company. Boeing is a great name in American industry. Not only does Boeing make a great product; the Boeing Company has got great workers. It's been my honor to spend some time with the people who work here, talking about our world, talking about the need for our country to be confident when it comes to world trade.

I assured the folks with whom I was talking that my administration is dedicated to free and fair trade. See, I believe if our country is treated fairly, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

The Boeing Company competes against Airbus, which is a European company. Airbus was founded about 30 years ago and has received, in those 30 years, large Government subsidies from European nations and continues to receive them. And I think those subsidies are unfair. I think it makes it—it's unfair to this American company that these European Governments continue to subsidize Airbus. And so I informed these good folks who work here that I've

instructed U.S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick to inform European officials in his September meeting that we think these subsidies are unfair and that he should pursue all options to end these subsidies—including bringing a WTO case, if need be. We believe in free trade; we want that free trade to be fair as well. And getting rid of the subsidies of Airbus will make the trade fair, will make the playing field level.

I also want to say something about those residents in Florida. I have been in touch with the Governor and FEMA Director Mike Brown about the—Hurricane Charley that is hitting the coast, the western coast of Florida. Our prayers are with you and your families tonight. We have deployed resources to help. I have declared an emergency, and the process is now in place to aid, provide Federal aid to those who may be affected by this hurricane. And as I repeat, we ask God's blessing on those who were in the path of that hurricane.

I thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:28 p.m. in the Boeing Delivery Center at Boeing Field/King County International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Statement on the Death of Julia Child
August 13, 2004

Julia Child enriched America with her optimism and enthusiasm for life. She worked with the Office of Strategic Services to protect freedom during World War II. She taught millions to enjoy cooking, and her legacy will continue through her books and videos. She was a pioneer in the early television age who made great strides for women. For her many contributions, she was honored in 2003 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civil honor. Laura and I send our prayers and condolences to her family and friends.

The President's Radio Address
August 14, 2004

Good morning. This past week, the Games of the 28th Olympiad began in Athens. Athletes from more than 200 nations gathered at the opening ceremony to watch the lighting of the Olympic torch and to begin 2 weeks of world-class competition.

America is proud of our Olympians. The talented men and women of Team USA represent almost every State and every background and range from 15 to 52 years of age. They are carrying on our Nation's proud Olympic tradition, which extends back to the first modern games, held in Athens in 1896.

In the coming days, more than 500 American athletes will compete in some 28 sports. In stadiums around Athens and in living rooms here at home, millions of fans will cheer for Team USA. We will watch as our athletes set new records and create lasting memories, from the track to the pool to the gymnastics floor. And we will all be proud to see the Stars and Stripes rise when our fellow Americans win medals.

Success in the Olympics is not defined on the medal stand alone. For our athletes, a place on America's team is the culmination of years spent training and competing. They are proving that persistence and teamwork can help meet high goals. They are performing with honor, conducting themselves with humility, and serving as ambassadors of peace and good will to the entire world. By showing respect for every competitor, they are showing America's respect for the world, and they are inspiring us all.

In Greece, the Olympics are returning to their ancient birthplace and also to the birthplace of democracy. These games arrive at a challenging hour for the world, yet we have cause for great hope. At the opening ceremony, Team USA marched alongside men and women from Afghanistan and Iraq, nations that 4 years ago knew only tyranny and repression. Today, because the world acted with courage and moral clarity, those nations are free, and their athletes are competing in the Olympic Games.

The rise of freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq is transforming life in those nations, and its effect will spread far beyond their borders. For the first time in history, people everywhere will see women competitors wearing the uniform of Afghanistan. For the first time in decades, the world will see Iraqi Olympians free from the brutal punishment of the dictator's son. Twenty-nine athletes from Iraq are competing in Athens including the Iraqi soccer team, which thrilled the world by winning its first game. One woman on the Iraqi track team described her outlook this way: "Someone who represents only herself has accomplished nothing. I want to represent my country."

That same spirit motivates athletes from nations around the world. By coming together in friendly competition, all Olympians are sending the message that freedom and hope are more powerful than terror and despair. As we watch our athletes compete in Athens, we also think about the many Americans deployed overseas to defend our Nation. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, our men and women in uniform are serving with great skill and compassion. They are making America more secure, and America is grateful to all of them and to their families.

I look forward to following the Olympics over the next 2 weeks. I congratulate the coaches and athletes and families of Team USA and also the brave Paralympic athletes preparing to compete in Athens next month. I wish them all good luck in the games.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:40 p.m. on August 13 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Sioux City, Iowa
August 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I've got an interesting line of work, don't I. Yes, it's a line of work where you get introduced by your wife. [*Laughter*] Thankfully, she said yes when I said, "Will you marry me?" What a great First Lady she is, a fabulous mom, and a wonderful wife. I'm going to

give you some reasons today why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

We're glad to be in Sioux land, and we thank you all for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here traveling this important State to say, there's more to do to make this country a safer, stronger, and better nation for all of our citizens. And I'd like your help. I'd like you to register your friends and neighbors. See, we have an obligation in this free land to vote. And I'd like my supporters to encourage all your citizens to register to vote and to do our duty. And when you get them headed to the polls, you might just tell them, for the sake of a better nation, George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're coming off a swing around the West. It's been a great trip. The crowds are large. The enthusiasm is strong. And there's no doubt in my mind with your help, we will carry Iowa, and we will win a great national victory in 2004.

Tomorrow I'm going to travel down to Florida to visit with those whose lives have been hurt by Hurricane Charley. I just want them to know that our Federal Government is responding quickly. We have got aid stations in place. FEMA Federal officials are on the ground working with State and local officials. Many lives have been affected by this hurricane. And I know you join me in sending our prayers to those people who look for solace and help.

I'm running with a really good man in Vice President Cheney. Look, I didn't pick him because he's the prettiest guy in—[*laughter*]—I picked him because he can do the job. I picked him for his advice and his sound judgment. And we're ready to go. I'm looking forward to it. There are big differences, and I'm looking forward to making those differences clear to the American people.

I want to thank my friend Congressman Steve King. I appreciate his leadership. I look forward to working with him for 4 more years for the good of this country.

I know the State auditor, David Vaudt, is here. I know the speaker is with us today, Christopher Rants. And I want to thank Ralph Klemme for coming. I want to thank all the State officials who are serving the State of Iowa and those from Nebraska. Those good souls from South Dakota who have come down here. Let me make something clear about South Dakota: John Thune needs to be the United States Senator.

I want to thank the mayor, Dave Ferris, here from Sioux City. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank my friend Dave Roederer, who is the State campaign chairman for Iowa. He knows what I know; we're going to carry this State.

Backstage, I had the honor of meeting Jeff Fortenberry. He's running for the United States Congress for Nebraska. I want to thank the Blue County band for being here. I appreciate you lending your talents. I thank the All-American Concert Band for being here. Most of all, I want to thank you all for being here. Thanks for taking time out of your weekend to come.

You know, in the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together. These have been hard times. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backwards, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. See, that's the only reason to look backwards, is who best to get the job done for the American people.

I'm asking for the vote, and I'm working hard to ask for the vote because so much is at stake in this election. We have much more to do to move this country forward. I'm running again because I want to work to continue to create jobs and improve our

schools. I'm running again because I know we've got to continue to fight the terrorists to secure our homeland. I'm running again to spread the peace. I'm running again—what I'm here to tell you is, we have made much progress, and there is more work to be done.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember, 3½ years ago, there was—when we came to office, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We have challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We have raised the bar. We believe in accountability because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. We believe in local control of schools. When we find schools that will not teach and will not change, we are bold enough to challenge the status quo.

There's more work to be done. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. We want to intervene early, before it's too late. We want to make sure that technology is in the classrooms so that we can bring high-level training to our kids. We want to emphasize math and science. What I'm telling you is after 4 more years, a rising generation will have skills and confidence necessary to compete in the 21st century.

We have more to do to make quality health care affordable and available. You might remember those Medicare debates. You might remember campaign after campaign, people would travel this State saying, "Don't worry. We'll strengthen Medicare." We got the job done. Drug discount cards that provide real savings are available for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

I was working with—I remember campaigning in this State in 2002. There were a lot of skeptics. People would say, "Well, you know, they talk a good game in Washington." Do you remember what was happening to the rural hospitals of Iowa? Do you remember what it was like when the reimbursement levels didn't support health care in this important State? I stood up for Charles Grassley, the fine United States Senator from Iowa. I said, "We're going to work together to get the job done," and we got the job done for the people of this State.

We're helping low-income seniors by expanding community health centers. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. We're getting the job done in America for health care, and there's more to do. We want our small businesses to be able to pool across jurisdictional boundaries so they can afford insurance just like big companies are able to do.

In order to make sure you've got health care available and affordable in Iowa and Nebraska and South Dakota, we need medical liability reform now. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform now.

We will expand research and seek cures for diseases. We will harness technology to reduce costs. And in all we do to improve health care in America, I'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Listen, there's more work to be done to keep our economy strong. We've been through a lot. Think about what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, a terror attack; yet we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because our workers are great. We've overcome them because our farmers and ranchers are really good

at what they do. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit of this country is really strong. We've overcome it because small businesses are vibrant and healthy and expanding. And we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts.

When it came time for providing tax relief, when it came time—which really means just letting you keep more of your own money. Sometimes you hear them in Washington say, "Well, we're going to give them some Government money." [*Laughter*] That's not Government money. No, that's the people's money. That's whose money it is. We said, "If you pay tax, you ought to get relief." It seems like to be the fair way to do things, instead of trying to pick winners and losers. If you're a mom or a dad, you got relief. We increased the child credit. We provided relief from the marriage penalty. I never quite understood a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. It seems like policy ought to encourage marriage in America. We helped our small businesses, and this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger. We've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, and right here in the State of Iowa, your unemployment rate is 4.3 percent.

And there's more work to be done. I'm running because I understand that we've got to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agricultural policy in order to make sure this economy stays strong and people can find work. You know, when I campaigned before, I said, "Give me a chance, and I'll stay focused on the agricultural economy of America." See, I understand, good agricultural policy is good economic policy for this country.

We passed a good farm bill, and it's working. Farm income is up. Property values are up. Our farmers and ranchers are making a good living, and that's good for the American economy. And we also did something else to help our farm economy, put the death tax on its way to extinction. The problem is, unless you have a President and Congress who understands how devastating the death tax is to our agricultural economy and our small-business economy, it's going to come back to life in 2011. It's going to make it kind of strange in 2010. I believe we ought to get rid of the death tax forever.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America and people can find work, we need an energy policy which makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's why I am a strong supporter of alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. Someday my hope is that somebody walks in the Oval Office and plops a report right in front of the President and says, "The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we must have wise trade policy. See, I believe in free trade, and I believe in fair trade. I believe the job of this administration is to reject economic isolationism and open up markets. One reason the farm economy is high is because not only are our farmers feeding Americans; they're feeding people all around the world.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we need less regulations and less lawsuits against our employers. In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we must not overspend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. And that's an issue in this campaign.

We've still got about 80 days to go in this campaign, and the fellow I'm running against has already made over $2.2 trillion of new promises. And so I said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll tax the rich." You've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? It's why the rich have got accountants—[*laughter*]—figure out how he can't tax them. In order to make sure he fulfills all his promises, guess who is going to pay? You are.

But the good news is we're not going to let him get in office in the first place.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running because I know we need to continue with a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer economic agenda to make sure people can find a decent wage in this country and to make sure this country is the strongest economy in the industrialized world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. See, if America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, the terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Government, the Saudi Government, is after Al Qaida. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

We looked at intelligence. Not only did we look at the facts, we looked at intelligence as we had it and saw a threat. I knew it was important to bring the Congress in, so I called on Congress to give me its judgment. The Congress remembered the facts and looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. You see, both of us saw a threat—me and the Congress saw a threat—because we remembered one of the lessons of September the 11th was, is that when we saw a threat we must deal with it before it fully materializes. It's a different world we're in. So Members of Congress—like me—saw that lesson and voted overwhelmingly to use force, if necessary, to protect America. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence and made that declaration. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion I did.

I then went to the United Nations. See, I do think it's important always to have war as the last resort and that we must try diplomacy as first resort in order to bring the peace. So I went to the U.N. They agreed with our assessment that Saddam Hussein was a threat. You might remember they voted overwhelmingly in the U.N. Security Council to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose. Disarm, or face serious consequences."

As he had for over a decade—he didn't care what the free world said. Remember, he defied the world, resolution after resolution after resolution. He did so again. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors

in to find out the facts, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, you need to remember that Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. And that's not a risk, after September the 11th, that we could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam is in a prison cell.

Now—and now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and about 220 days after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. [*Laughter*] He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. And I want to thank Senator Kerry for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] Although, I caution you, there are still 80 days left where he could change his mind again.

I'm running because I know we must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In this post-9/11 world, we cannot simply hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them in foreign lands so we do not have to face them here at home.

During the next 4 years, America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us in the pursuit of the terrorists and to spread peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I really appreciate the moms and dads in those countries who share the same sacrifices that the moms and dads and husbands and wives in our country share, knowing a loved one is serving a noble cause during historic times. I will continue to build alliances and strengthen alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

These are crucial time. They're crucial times, and we're doing the hard work to secure our country and to spread peace. And our commitments are being kept by our men and women of the military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a good example to those who wear the uniform today. I appreciate you all coming.

I've had the privilege of traveling to bases in our country and around the world. I've met those—with those who defend our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. I appreciated the bipartisan support my request received in the House and the Senate. It was a strong support in the United States Senate. As a matter of fact, only a small, what I would call, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 voted against the funding, and 2 of those 12 are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember his initial explanation. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That doesn't sound like the way people in Sioux land talk. The pressure got on a little bit about that vote. Then he said, well, he's proud of the vote, and he went on to say the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. These are historic times. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. See, Americans believe that peaceful societies emerge when governments listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. In Iraq and Afghanistan, there are strong leaders who have emerged who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people.

Success in Iraq will be achieved when more Iraqis are trained to defeat those who want to stop the advance of freedom. Our job is to stand with the Government that is heading toward elections and preparing the Iraqis for a day of security and freedom. That's what we're doing in Iraq.

And it's important work. It's important work because by serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and we're making our own country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. Free countries are peaceful countries. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving our deepest ideals as Americans. We believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me share a story with you right quick, tell you what I'm talking about. Laura and I were having dinner with Prime Minister of Japan, and—Prime Minister Koizumi—in Tokyo. And we're talking, and during the course of the conversation, it dawned on me that it's really interesting that I was having a meeting with the leader of a former enemy. My dad fought in World War II. Many of your dads fought against the Japanese, and here we were sitting down to dinner. What was remarkable about the conversation is, we were talking about how to keep the peace.

Fortunately, my predecessor and others in our Government after World War II believed in the power of liberty to transform enemies into allies and friends. They believed that liberty had the capacity to take a former enemy and help them become a peaceful advocate for freedom, and that's what happened. And fortunately, they defied the pessimists. They didn't listen to the doubters. They didn't listen to the naysayers. They held deep in their hearts this conviction that we hold in America that freedom is a right of people all around the world, and freedom is an amazingly powerful, transforming philosophy.

And so we were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to deal with North Korea, as allies in peace. Someday, when we complete our mission, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, saying to himself or herself, thank God America didn't forget its values, and they'll be talking about how to keep the peace.

We have more work to do. We have more work to do to protect our country. There's enemies who hate us. They still plot to harm us. You know, there's a debate about the course of action I've taken. They say—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I strongly disagree with that. There's obviously a clear difference of opinion. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy. I want you to remember, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. I don't think they need an excuse

for their hatred and their evil hearts. You do not create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're reforming how we protect our homeland. It's hard work to reform how you protect your homeland. It's hard work to reform at all in Washington—a lot of entrenched interests there. But we're making progress. You just need to know there's a lot of really good people working hard on your behalf to find terrorists before they can hurt us. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital piece of legislation which gives our law enforcement the tools necessary to crack these terrorist networks. And they do so without compromising your constitutional rights as an American. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which I found to be a very helpful report and a good report.

We've got more to do to secure our ports and borders and to train our first-responders and dramatically improve intelligence gathering capability. When Congress comes back in, we'll continue to work with them on the National Intelligence Director, so one person is in charge of coordinating intelligence overseas and at home. We're working hard. A lot of people are working hard, and I'm proud to be associated with great people at the Federal level and at the State level and the first-responders here at the local level who are doing their duty to the American citizens—for the American citizens.

I told you reform is hard. It's easy to advocate it in Washington, but you have to get the job done. When you're out campaigning and rounding up the voters, remind them, when it comes to reforming public schools and improving education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms and giving families more access and more choices in health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to a strong agricultural economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to growing our economy and creating quality jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing our Nation and spreading the peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put a man in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. These are exciting times we live in, and they're a time of change. And I think one of the ways that Government can help people during a time of change is to encourage an ownership society. We want more people owning their own health care accounts, so that if they change jobs, they can take the health care accounts with them. We want—look, I've got to tell you, I'm concerned about Social Security. For old guys like me, Social Security is fine. [*Laughter*] It's for the younger workers, those who are just starting to work, we've got to worry about the fiscal solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe we ought to allow younger workers to own their own personal retirement account in Social Security.

I love the fact, in a changing world, more people own their own home. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. There's nothing better than thinking about somebody opening a door, say, "Welcome to my home. Come into my piece of property." You know, the entrepreneurial sector of America is strong and vibrant. More people are owning their own business. The reason I believe in an ownership society is not only to provide stability during changing times, I also understand that if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

During changing times, though, there are some things that won't change, our belief in liberty, opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. Individual values we try to live by won't change, courage, compassion, reverence,

and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. By the way, these institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life, in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, you know, "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. Listen, if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in Sioux City, Iowa, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

No, I understand the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. Compassion* happens when a loving neighbor puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you," and "Can I help you?" I will continue to rally the armies of compassion so that we change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of nations when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is the times where we need firm resolve and clear vision, strong belief in the values that make us such a wonderful country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day that I'll never forget. Amidst all the scenes in my memory that day, a couple stand out—the workers in hardhats that were chanting, "Whatever it takes." I was working the ropeline. A guy grabs me. His eyes were bloodshot. He says, "Do not let me down." I remember meeting with the victims' families who had this great hope of all hopes that somehow a loved one who had rushed in the rubble to save life would still be alive. All of us there took that day personally. I took it personally. I know you took it personally.

I have a duty that goes on. Every day that I wake up, I think of best how to defend our country. I will never relent. I will stay firm in my desire to bring justice to the enemies, to keep America safe and secure, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together, and we've done hard work and important work. But there's more to be done. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We'll stay focused and firm in our resolve to secure America and to spread the peace.

You know, when I campaigned through your State in 2004, I said that if I had the high honor of holding this office, I would pledge to you that I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office of the Presidency. And with your help, during the next 4 years, I will continue to do so.

May God bless you all. Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

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* White House correction.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. at the Tyson Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Speaker Christopher Rants and State Representative Ralph Klemme, Iowa State House of Representatives; former Representative John R. Thune, senatorial candidate in South Dakota; Mayor Dave Ferris of Sioux City, IA; Jeff Fortenberry, candidate for Nebraska's First Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on the Devastation of Hurricane Charley and an Exchange With Reporters in Punta Gorda, Florida
August 15, 2004

The President. The job of the Federal Government and the State government is to surge resources as quickly as possible to disaster areas. And that's exactly what's happening now. We choppered over and saw the devastation of this area. A lot of people's lives are turned upside down. We've got ice and water moving in, trailers for people to live in are moving in. State is providing security so that people can have peace of mind that their neighborhoods will be safe. There's a lot of compassion moving in the area. The Red Cross is here.

What I'm telling is that there's a lot of help moving into this part of the world. It's going to take a while to rebuild it. But the Government's job is to help people help rebuild their lives, and that's what's happening.

The coordination between the Federal Government and the State government and the local government is really important. I think it's excellent now. The Governor can speak to that, if you like. But it's really important that when we say we're going to do something, that it actually happens. And that's what we're following through on now.

I'll answer some questions, if you've got some.

Community Response

Q. Can you tell us about some of the people who you spoke with and what they told you?

The President. Well, I've got—you know, these good folks here—this is this man's house here. His parents were uprooted from where they were living. They came here to spend the night. And that's what you're beginning to see. You're beginning to see neighbors helping neighbors. A lot of people who have been dislocated are staying with a friend or a neighbor. You know, out of these catastrophes the spirit of America really shines, and that spirit is neighbor helping neighbor. So that's the lesson here.

The fellow down the street came out okay; he had taken precautions necessary. Nearly everybody here that I've talked to had evacuated, as the State asked them to do, and therefore, the loss of life was minimized. Still, too many people lost their lives, but nevertheless, it was not as significant as it could have been. We're here, now, obviously, in a residential neighborhood where people's lives have been destroyed. They're beginning to worry about insurance claims, and the State is organized to handle insurance claims. The key is just to make sure that they expedite the services which are available as quickly as possible.

Federal Response

Q. There was some consternation after Andrew, that the Federal aid didn't arrive soon enough. Can you promise that there will be a more expeditious response this time?

The President. It's happening now——

Q. Sir——

The President. Hold up for a second. We're moving a lot of aid very quickly, and again, you can ask the Governor whether or not he's satisfied with how fast the aid is moving. All I can tell you is, is that FEMA was on the ground yesterday morning, and there's a lot of supplies surging this way.

Yes, ma'am.

Estimates of Damage

Q. Have you gotten an updated tally of the cost of the damage——

The President. Not yet. Jeb estimated billions. We'll see.

President's Visit

Q. Mr. President, some people are going to say that there's a political component to your rapid visit to Florida.

The President. Yes, and if I didn't come they would have said, "He should have been here more rapidly."

Q. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Federal Response

Q. What about what happened in '92, with Hurricane Andrew? That was obviously in August of a Presidential——

The President. This is now—this is now. And the Government is set up to respond very quickly, and we are.

Q. Was there a lesson learned back then, though?

The President. The lesson is, respond quickly. And we are responding quickly. And we're surging equipment. And the coordination between the Federal Government and the State government is excellent. And the Homeland Security Department is doing its job. FEMA Director Brown is doing an excellent job. You can talk to the Governor. He can give you a sense for—from the State perspective. But from the Federal perspective, I was notified that they're going to move as quickly as possible, and they are. A lot of stuff is coming. And thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio
August 16, 2004

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. And thanks for inviting me for your 105th national convention. I'm proud to be here.

One of the great honors of being Commander in Chief is meeting the courageous men and women who stand watch for freedom. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to look them in the eye and say on behalf of our country, "Thank you for your service." The same is true of each of you here today. When the enemies of freedom were on the march and our country and the world needed brave Americans to take up arms and stop their advance, you stepped forward to serve. And today I'm proud to stand before you as Commander in Chief, look you in the eye, and say, America thanks you for your service.

I want to thank Ed Banas for his service in being an effective commander of the VFW. I appreciate the job he's done, and

I want to thank his wife, Sandra, for standing by his side during this important time for the VFW. Ed, thank you, sir, for your service. I also thank my friend Bob Wallace, the executive director of the VFW.

I want to thank Governor Bob Taft for joining us today, from the State of Ohio; my friend Tony Principi—I'll say something about him here in a minute; and Congressman Rob Portman, Congressman from Ohio, is with us as well. I'm honored that these elected officials—and in Principi's case, appointed official—is with us today.

I want to thank John Furgess, the incoming VFW national commander in chief, and Alma. I want to thank Evelyn McCune, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary national president, and her husband, Don. I want to thank JoAnne Ott. I want to thank the VFW and Ladies Auxiliary members for letting me come and address you.

In the audience today are two people I've gotten to know during a very traumatic period during their lives. Carolyn and Keith Maupin are with us today. They're from this part of the world. Their son, Matt, has been missing in action for 4 months in Iraq. I have vowed to them we will do everything we can to find their loved one, Matt. I appreciate their courage. I continue to send my prayers to these two fine Americans during these difficult times for them. May God bless you, Keith and Carolyn.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars have always stood up for our Nation and those who wear the uniform. Since your founding in 1899, the members of the VFW have been serving the men and women who served America. I appreciate your dedication. The VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary are volunteering by transporting sick and disabled vets to and from their medical appointments. You're showing great compassion. You're supporting the men and women who serve today. Some 1,500 VFW posts have adopted military units deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other distant theaters. You've distributed more than 3.5 million prepaid calling cards to our deployed forces. You've sent thousands of care packages to our troops in the field. You've helped the families back home with groceries and home repairs and other necessities. America respects our military and their families. I thank you for showing that respect every day.

All our Nation's veterans have made serving America the highest priority of their lives, and serving our veterans is one of the highest priorities of my administration. To make sure my administration fulfills the commitments I have made to America's veterans, I selected one of the finest men ever to serve as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a combat-decorated Vietnam veteran, Secretary Tony Principi.

Thanks in large part to Tony's leadership, my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans. When my 2005 budget is approved by Congress, we will have increased overall funding for our Nation's veterans by almost $20 billion or 40 percent since 2001. We have increased funding for our veterans more in 4 years than the previous administration did in 8 years. To provide health care to veterans, we've increased VA medical care funding by 41 percent over the past 4 years.

We are bringing care to more veterans more quickly. Since 2001, we've enrolled 2.5 million more veterans in health care services. We've increased outpatient visits from 44 million to 54 million. We've increased the number of prescriptions filled from 98 million to 116 million. We're getting the job done. We've reduced the large backlog of disability claims by about a third. We will reduce it even further. We've cut the average time it takes to process disability claims by 70 days.

We have focused resources on the veterans who need it most, those with service-related disabilities and low incomes and special needs. We've established a new scheduling system to make certain that veterans seeking care for a service-connected condition are first in line. For more than a century, Federal law prohibited disabled

veterans from receiving both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve better. I was proud to be the first President in over 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation. We're getting the job done in Washington, DC.

My administration has launched a $35 million program to provide housing and health care and other support services to homeless veterans. No veteran who served in the blazing heat or bitter cold of foreign lands should have to live without shelter, exposed to the elements, in the very country whose freedom they fought for.

We are modernizing VA health centers and building new ones, especially in the South and West, where increasing numbers of our veterans live. Since 2001, we have opened 194 new community-based clinics nationwide. And through the CARES initiative, we are providing $1 billion—and have requested another half-billion for next year—to modernize VA facilities and to provide better care for veterans in areas where the need is growing, including here in Ohio. Our VA hospitals are, on average, 50 years old. That's why we are modernizing our facilities to make sure our veterans have 21st century health care. For example, here in Ohio, we're building one of the largest new VA clinics in America in Columbus, Ohio. We're spending more than $100 million to consolidate two VA hospitals in Cleveland into a single 21st century facility. When it comes to providing first-class care for our Nation's veterans, we are getting the job done.

Our Nation's debt extends not just to the veterans who served but to the families who supported them in war and depend on them today. Last December, I signed the Veterans Benefits Act, authorizing $1 billion in new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans and surviving spouses and their children.

America's veterans have defended America in hours of need. And to honor the veterans from the Second World War for their service to our country, the World War II Memorial now stands on the Washington Mall. And I thank you for your efforts and your hard work to get this memorial built. And we honor all of those here today who fought to defend freedom in the Second World War.

Like the Second World War, the war we face today began with a ruthless surprise attack on America. The world changed on that September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy; Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror; Afghanistan is now a place where many young girls get to go to school for the first time. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and strong message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th, a lesson this Nation must never forget, is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. I remembered what Saddam Hussein was like; I looked at the intelligence. I called upon Congress to remember his history and look at the intelligence. I thought it was important to

bring Congress—get their opinion on the subject of Saddam Hussein. So members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion that I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. I went to the United Nations. The U.N. Security Council looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. As a matter of fact, they passed a resolution, 15 to nothing, which said to Saddam, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for the past 12 years, he refused to comply. He ignored the demands of the free world. He systematically deceived the weapons inspectors.

So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemy, to the terrorists. It is not a risk, after September the 11th, that we could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

We have more hard work to do. I'll continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them in foreign lands, so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us pursue the terrorists and spread the peace. There are over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifices of the mothers and fathers from those countries, to have their sons and daughters stand with our troops to spread freedom and peace. I'll continue to build on those alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll help them become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders; they're on the path to elections. We set a clear goal that Iraq and Afghanistan will be peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. We'll meet that goal by helping secure their countries, allowing a peaceful political process to develop, and by training Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can make the hard decisions, so they can defend their country against those who are preventing the spread of freedom. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

It's important we send the right signals when we speak here in America. The other day, my opponent said if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. I think it sends the wrong signal. It sends the wrong signal to the enemy; they could easily wait 6 months and 1 day. It sends the wrong message to our troops, that completing the mission may not be necessary. It sends the wrong message to the Iraqi people who wonder whether or not America means what it says. Our friends and allies must know that when America speaks, we mean what we say. We will stay until the job is completed.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful

and examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries are peaceful countries. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of America. We believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are crucial times. We have an historic opportunity to win the war on terror by spreading freedom and peace. Our commitments are being kept by the men and women of our military. I've had the privilege of traveling to bases around our country and around the world. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

Those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of our Government. For almost 4 years, my administration has strengthened our military. We have enacted the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan served as the Commander in Chief. We've increased military pay by 21 percent. We have provided better housing and better training and better maintenance.

And last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I wanted to make sure they had the very best, so I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. The VFW strongly supported my request. I thank you for standing up for our troops. Your work on Capitol Hill paid off. After all, the funding received strong bipartisan support—so strong that in the United States Senate, only 12 Members voted against the funding, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

When pressed, he explained his vote, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] He went on to say he was proud of the vote and the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We have more work to do to defend freedom and protect our country. We will ensure that our forces are well-prepared and well-positioned to meet the threats of the future. Our Armed Forces have changed a lot. They're more agile and more lethal. They're better able to strike anywhere in the world over great distances on short notice. Yet for decades, Americans' Armed Forces abroad have essentially remained where the wars of the last century ended, in Europe and in Asia. America's current force posture was designed, for example, to protect us and our allies from Soviet aggression. The threat no longer exists.

More than 3 years ago, we launched a comprehensive review of America's global force posture, the numbers, types, locations, and capabilities of U.S. forces around the world. We've consulted closely with our allies and with Congress. We've examined the challenges posed by today's threats and emerging threats. And so, today I announce a new plan for deploying America's Armed Forces.

Over the coming decade, we'll deploy a more agile and more flexible force, which means that more of our troops will be stationed and deployed from here at home. We will move some of our troops and capability to new locations, so they can surge quickly to deal with unexpected threats. We'll take advantage of 21st century military technologies to rapidly deploy increased combat power.

The new plan will help us fight and win these wars of the 21st century. It will strengthen our alliances around the world, while we build new partnerships to better preserve the peace. It will reduce the stress

on our troops and our military families. Although we'll still have a significant presence overseas, under the plan I'm announcing today, over the next 10 years, we will bring home about 60,000 to 70,000 uniformed personnel and about 100,000 members and civilian employees—family members and civilian employees.

See, our servicemembers will have more time on the homefront and more predictability and fewer moves over a career. Our military spouses will have fewer job changes, greater stability, more time for their kids and to spend time with their families at home. The taxpayers will save money as we configure our military to meet the threats of the 21st century. There will be savings as we consolidate and close bases and facilities overseas no longer needed to face the threats of our time and defend the peace.

The world has changed a great deal, and our posture must change with it, for the sake of our military families, for the sake of our taxpayers, and so we can be more effective at projecting our strength and spreading freedom and peace.

Today, our troops have the most advanced technologies at their disposal. Weapons are more lethal, more precise than were available for you. Our troops are more mobile. They can communicate better. Yet their success in the wars we fight is being made possible by the same things that made your success possible, personal courage, love of country, dedication to duty.

As our troops fight today in Baghdad, in Najaf, in the Hindu Kush Mountains, and elsewhere, I know America's veterans feel a special pride in them. They're carrying on your legacy of sacrifice and service. They're determined to see the mission through. This country stands with them.

I want to thank you for the example you have set for our men and women in uniform. I want to thank you for your idealism, for your dedication to God and our country. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at the Dr. Albert B. Sabin Cincinnati Cinergy Center. In his remarks, he referred to Edward S. Banas, Sr., commander in chief, Bob Wallace, Washington office executive director, and John Furgess, senior vice commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Evelyn McCune, national president, and JoAnne Ott, national senior vice president, Ladies Auxiliary VFW. He also referred to the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Remarks in Traverse City, Michigan
August 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Boy, I'm glad to be here. This is a beautiful part of our country. It turns out, I'm the first sitting President to come up here since Gerald Ford was the President. Good to be here in cherry country. Today it looks like Bush-Cheney country too.

I'm looking forward to this race. I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come out and ask for the vote. I'm traveling your important State asking for the vote. You got some big differences in this campaign. One of them is that my opponent thinks you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood. I think you find it right here in Traverse City, Michigan.

We're going to be spending a lot of time in your important State, and there's no

doubt, with your help, we'll carry Michigan and we'll win in November of '04.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience member. We love you, Laura!

The President. Yes. She is a fantastic mom, a great wife. Listen, I'm going to give you a lot of reasons to be for me, but perhaps the most important one is to keep Laura as the First Lady for 4 more years.

And I'm running with a good man in Vice President Dick Cheney. I admit it—I admit it, he is not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank my friend Dave Camp, the Congressman from up here in northern Michigan. What a good man. I'm proud to work with him—good, honorable man. I want to thank Congressman Nick Smith for being here as well. Nick, I appreciate you coming.

I appreciate Trick Pony, the band that was playing here. I'm glad they're here. It's good of them to come.

Listen, I want to thank Betsy DeVos and all the grassroots activists. Let me tell you, grassroots activists are the people that put up the signs, make the phone calls, register the voters. We have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation to do our duty to show up at the polls. Do you realize, over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan? These people have got a taste of freedom, and they're showing up to vote. And so—our fellow citizens—so I urge you to register people. Head people to the polls, and when you get them headed there, just tell them this country is going to be safer, stronger, and better with George Bush and Dick Cheney.

You know, we've been through a lot together. In these past few years, Americans have been through a lot and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have so much more to do to move this country forward. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and we have much more work to do.

We have more to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember the mindset 3½ years ago, when we just shuffled children from grade to grade, year after year, and they didn't learn the basics. I went to Washington for a reason. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We're now measuring in return for extra Federal help, because we want to know whether or not our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract.

We believe in local control of schools, and we're willing to challenge the status quo when we find schools that will not teach and will not change. We're doing the hard work. When it comes to reforming our schools, there's more work to do. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure the high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science education so our young people can compete in the high-tech world. We'll expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation of Americans gain the skill and the confidence necessary to realize the great American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. You might remember all the old Medicare debates. Year after year, they'd come up here and tell you, "Don't worry. I'll get something done." We got the job done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards, which provide real savings for our seniors. And beginning in 2006,

all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose the plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more to do. We've expanded community health centers, and we'll continue to do so for low-income Americans. We want people getting their primary care in these centers and not in our emergency rooms in our hospitals. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choice, more opportunity in health care, we're getting the job done, but there's more work to be done. Most Americans get their health care through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, and a lot of small businesses have trouble providing health care for their employees. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to gather together to purchase insurance at discounts just like big companies get to do.

I'll tell you what else we need to do. We must end the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of health care. You cannot be—you can't be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care for America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We've got more to do to make this economy stronger. Listen, we've come through a lot together. Think about what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through terrorist attacks. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a stock market decline. We've overcome these obstacles because of the hard work of America's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners and workers. We've come through a lot.

We've also come through it because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way. If you pay tax, you get relief. We helped our families by raising the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. I mean, what kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? We ought to be encouraging marriage in America. We helped the small businesses. And this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown as a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, Americans added about 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent.

Listen, I fully understand we face challenges in some of our manufacturing communities. In some parts of Michigan, the recovery has lagged, but there are good signs. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger. We will not rest until anybody who wants to work can find a job.

I've got a strategy to make sure good jobs stay here in America. To make sure the jobs are here, our regulations need to be reasonable and fair. Some of you fill out paperwork—I can't promise you whether anybody has ever read it in Government. [*Laughter*] To keep jobs in America, we need tort reform. To keep jobs in America, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs in America, we must be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

We've got only 2 months left in the campaign, but the fellow I'm running against already has made about $2.2 trillion of new spending promises. No telling what's going to happen when we come down the stretch. So they said the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." You've heard that talk

before, haven't you? The rich hires accountants, and guess who gets stuck with the tab? You do. But we're not going to let him win, are we?

In order to keep jobs here, we'll insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. Listen, we want Traverse City cherries being sold and purchased all around the world. We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair. We want our farmers not only feeding Americans, but we want them feeding hungry mouths all across the globe. Farm income is up, and one of the reasons it's up is because of exports of agricultural products are on the rise, and I intend to keep it that way.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to use our resources wisely, like water. It starts with keeping the Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin. You might remember what my opponent said earlier this year about Great Lakes water diversion. He said it would be a delicate balancing act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It sounds just like him. [*Laughter*] My position is clear: We're never going to allow diversion of Great Lakes water.

I've got another position that's clear. We're spending money—Federal money to help clean up contaminated sediment in Lake Michigan and Superior, Erie and Huron, and Ontario. We want to make sure our natural resources are well preserved.

Give me 4 more years, and this economy will still be the greatest of any industrialized nation in the world. Our farmers will be doing well. Small businesses will be vibrant, and people will be able to find high-paying, good jobs.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Prior to September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers who set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Many young girls now go to school for the first time. America and the world are better off.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message—[*laughter*]—the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world, firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors, and he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. It is a vital lesson our country must never forget. It's one of the lessons of that terrible day. So I took the threat seriously. I went to the United States Congress and said, "I see a threat. Why don't you take the matter up." They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history I remember. And members of both political parties, including my opponent,

came to the same conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Diplomacy is important, and so I went to the United Nations, again. They looked at the intelligence, and they unanimously concluded, in the U.N. Security Council, that Saddam Hussein was a threat and that he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the free world. He had no intention of listening to those resolutions. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that the world sent in. So I had a choice to make at that point in history. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, remember that Saddam had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to others, our enemies. And after September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer because Saddam is in a prison cell.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank the Senator for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] But I want to remind you, there's still 78 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because I understand clearly there's more work to be done to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with these killers. You must not hope for the best. We will engage these enemies around the world, so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help defeat the terrorists. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I know you agree with me when I send my appreciation to the mothers and dads of the soldiers from those countries, who stand side by side with our soldiers to bring freedom and peace to the world. And I will continue to build our alliances and work with our friends to spread peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency. Today I met Petty Officer 3d Class Joel Oliver. He's from here. He was standing back there. He told me he served in the Navy, and he said something really interesting—when he'd come back from Iraq, he said, "This is a great time to serve. I was actually a part of history." He is a part of history. He's a part of spreading freedom and peace. I appreciate his service, and I appreciate the service of all who wear the uniform.

And I have made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones. They will have the full support of Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This money

is for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts for our military. It was necessary money. And my request received strong bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. As a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how he tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I suspect not a lot of people talk like that up here. [*Laughter*] I expect the people up here like the plain-spoken fellow. He got pressed a little further on that vote. He said he was proud of his vote. Then he said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries believe in peace.

Those are the lessons we learned after World War II. After all, one of my strongest allies in peace is the Prime Minister of Japan. Think about that. I'm talking about how to keep the peace—the man who runs a country that my dad fought against in World War II, and your dads did as well. And yet, we sit at the table and talk about peace. Listen, liberty can change attitudes. That's what Americans believe.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we bring hope to others, and that makes us more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the precious peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting to harm us. We have a difference of opinion about the nature of the enemy. The other day, my opponent said that going to war with terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I—the logic is upside-down, as far as I'm concerned. So is the misunderstanding of the enemy. See, during the 1990s——

Audience member. Louder! Louder!

The President. ——the terrorists—[*laughter*]—during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It is wrong to blame America for the evil in the hearts of these killers. We do not create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission when it said, the actions we've taken since September the 11th has made us safer but not yet safe enough. I understand that. You've just got to know, there's a lot of good people working hard to protect our homeland. We've created the Department of Homeland Security. We're communicating better than ever before. Intelligence sharing between domestic and foreign agencies are—is seamless and good. The PATRIOT Act is a vital part of the defense of America. Our law enforcement officers need to have the tools necessary to defend you. I'm looking forward to working with Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and at home.

There's more work to do—there's more work to do. But reform is never easy, particularly in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests up there. People are willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to get the job done.

I'd like for you to remind your friends and neighbors, when it came to reforming schools and providing an excellent education for all our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and overcoming obstacles so people can find work, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and defeating the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You know, we're living in exciting times. It's a time of change, and that can unsettle people. I understand that. But one way to help people during a time of change is to have Government encourage an ownership society. We want people owning their own health care accounts so if they change jobs, they can take it from job to job. If you're a younger worker, I'm a little concerned about the fiscal stability of Social Security. For old guys like me, we're doing okay when it comes to Social Security. But if you're younger, why don't you join me in advocating for personal retirement accounts that you can call your own.

In a changing world, it's a fantastic thought to know that homeownership rates in America are at an alltime high. I love the idea of somebody opening their door and saying, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property." We want more people owning their own small business. We're going to continue to advocate an ownership society because we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In these changing times, there are some things that will not change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by—courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose—our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. That's why I named Judge Rick Griffin to the Federal courts. He's right from here. He's a good, honest fellow. The problem is, people like my opponent are playing politics with the judicial system on the floor of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Rick needs an up-or-down vote in order to make sure these courts in this part of the world are able to function like you want them to. Stop playing politics with American justice.

We're making—we stand for a culture of responsibility in America, and we're making progress. See, this culture of ours is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "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 are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, Government can hand out money, but it can't put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's

life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who needs help, and says, "I love you," and "What can I do to help you?" I know by rallying the armies of compassion we can change America, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, strong belief in the values that have made us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. I will never forget the workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working the ropelines saying thanks to people, and a fellow with bloodshot eyes—he had just come out of the rubble, searching for one of his buddies—said, "Do not let down." He took that day personally. Everybody on that site took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so do I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day thinking how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean, every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our great country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected, so help me God. With your help, I will continue to do so for 4 more years.

Thank you for coming. Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:16 p.m. at the Grand Traverse County Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Richard A. Griffin, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Remarks to Boeing Company Employees in Ridley Park, Pennsylvania
August 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Gosh, it's good to be here.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. I am honored to be here. Weldon is right, I'm here to thank the employees of this important plant for giving our troops what is necessary to keep the country safe.

I appreciate the tour I just had. I want to thank Mark Madden. I appreciate Johnny D. If you don't know who Johnny D is, he's the president of Local 1069. He kindly came off vacation to say hi to the President. [*Laughter*] I was proud he did.

I'm equally as proud of the men and women who work here, working day and night to put out a good product on behalf of our country. This is a great plant because we've got great workers.

You know, this is my 32d visit to your State since I've been President. A lot of

people are wondering why I'm coming so much. It ought to be obvious to you. I like my cheesesteak "whiz with." I also want to win Pennsylvania. I'm coming to this State and asking people for the vote. I've got more to do to work with our country to keep us safer, stronger, and better.

We've done a lot. We've been through a lot together, but there's more work to do to realize the great promise of this country and to keep our country as secure as it possibly can be. With your help, we'll carry Pennsylvania. With your help, we're going to win in November of 2004.

Laura sends her best. She's terrific. She's heading out to Colorado. She's campaigning, which is good news for me. [*Laughter*] She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. Let's put me back in there so she can have 4 more years as the First Lady. I love her dearly.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] Yes. I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because of his judgment, his ability to get the job done.

I appreciate my friend Curt Weldon. He's right, he wasn't exaggerating. We were campaigning somewhere in this part of the world, and he said, "We need to go over there and thank the workers." I said, "Fine. Set it up." He said, "Your schedule is harder to get through than mine." But here I am. And I want to thank Curt for setting up this visit. I appreciate his leadership and his friendship. He's doing a fine job for the people of Pennsylvania.

I want to thank the president and the CEO of Boeing Company, Harry Stonecipher, for being here. I'm honored you're here, Harry. I want to thank Bill Hunt. He's a senior manager of the Chinook 47 operations. I want to thank all of the employees and families who are here. Thanks for coming by to say hello. I'm honored to be here. I appreciate you taking interest in the political process.

You know, we all have a duty to do in our democratic system. We all have the obligation to vote. Obviously, when people start heading to the polls, I've got a preference. [*Laughter*] But I do want everybody in this country to vote. And for those of you who are involved in grassroots politics, I want to thank you for encouraging your fellow citizens to go to the polls.

I'm on the ticket with Arlen Specter. He's a fine United States Senator. I'm proud to have his support and friendship. I appreciate my friend Jim Greenwood. Jim has served this part of the State with great skill, and we're going to miss him in the House of Representatives. I appreciate you coming, Jim. I'm honored you're here. I appreciate Mike Castle. He snuck across the border from Delaware. [*Applause*] Either others snuck across the border with you, or they know you here. [*Laughter*] Castle is a good man, a good, honest fellow. I appreciate working with him.

I know the statehouse speaker is with us, a lot of local officials. Thank you all for coming.

I first want to thank the veterans who are here. I know a lot of veterans work in this facility and are in this crowd. I'm honored you're here. I want to tell you what I told the VFW yesterday is, thanks for setting such a good example for the folks who wear the uniform today. I appreciate the high standards our veterans have set.

I also reminded them that just like the wars of the past, we have got to stay dedicated, focused, and resolved. We're once again fighting deadly enemies, and we're depending on the people here at Ridley Park. I just came out of a sophisticated Chinook chopper that some brave soldier is going to be flying soon. And I can tell him and I can tell his loved ones that chopper has got the best equipment, the best hydraulics, made by the best hands in America.

We're equipping our troops, as we should. Boeing company is not only making

good choppers; they're working on unmanned vehicles, advanced satellites, modern communication systems, the Army's future combat systems, all of which will help defend our country. In other words, this administration is thinking about today; we're also thinking about tomorrow. We're going to secure the country today, and we're going to prepare this country to be able to secure us down the road.

Another thing that's interesting that's happening at Boeing that probably you aren't aware of, but you should be, is that Boeing engineers lowered the first ballistic missile interceptor into its silo at Fort Greely, Alaska. It's the beginning of a missile defense system that was envisioned by Ronald Reagan, a system necessary to protect us against the threats of the 21st century. We want to continue to perfect this system, so we say to those tyrants who believe they can blackmail America and the free world, "You fire. We're going to shoot it down."

I think those who oppose this ballistic missile system really don't understand the threats of the 21st century. They're living in the past. We're living in the future. We're going to do what's necessary to protect this country.

Boeing is not only important for the defenses of America, Boeing is important because we've got great workers. And the great workers of America helped us overcome some economic obstacles that were pretty significant. You might remember, during the last 3½ years, we've been through a recession; we went through some corporate scandals; we went through a terrorist attack, all of which affected our economy. Yet we've overcome it. Our economy is strong and getting stronger. The reason we've overcome it is because we've got great workers in America. We've overcome it because we've got great small-business owners in America. We've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've got a great spirit in America.

I'll argue vehemently, we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts. [*Applause*] Yes. It helped when we put more money in the people's pockets. It helped when we said, "You know, we hear your cries, and you need more money if you've got a child in your family." It helped the families of America to raise the child credit. It helped to lessen the marriage penalty. I don't know what kind of tax—I know what kind of Tax Code it is that penalizes marriage. It's a code that needs to change. We ought to be rewarding marriage in America, not penalizing it.

We helped our small businesses today. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, well below the national averages of the seventies, eighties, and nineties. I understand there's still people looking for work here in America. So long as anybody wants to work and can't find a job, I know we've got more work to do in Washington, DC. It starts with making sure your taxes are low. Be careful of these folks who travel around the country making all these big promises and say, "Oh, don't worry. We'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You know how that goes. The rich hires accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him raise your taxes. For the sake of economic growth, for the sake of job creation, we will keep America's taxes low.

We've got more work to do to keep jobs here in America. We've got to make sure this is the best place for people to expand the job base in the world. And therefore, we're going to make sure trade is free and fair. I was out at the Boeing plant in Seattle. I said a clear statement about fair trade to the folks out in that part of the world. I said we're going to work to get rid of the subsidies of Airbus that makes it difficult for Boeing to compete on a fair and level playing field in the world. We want there to be trade. We want there to be fair trade, because American workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

We're going to make sure the health care system of America is accessible and affordable. You know, there's been a lot of talk about Medicare. For those of you with elderly parents, you've heard all this talk about Medicare reform. We got the job done. There's been a lot of politics with Medicare, but finally, an administration came along that could work with the Congress and strengthen Medicare so the seniors of America now have got prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

We need health savings accounts for American families. We need association health care plans for small businesses. You know what else we need in Pennsylvania and around the country? We need medical liability reform. These lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care, and they're running good docs out of practice right here in your State and in other States around the country. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform now.

We've got to make sure we have an energy policy in this country that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. You can't build these choppers without good energy supplies at affordable costs. I've submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy, ways to use coal in a clean way, ways to explore in environmentally friendly ways. The Congress needs to get an energy policy to my desk now in order to keep jobs here in America.

Finally, to make sure we keep jobs here, our education system has to be the best in the world. We're making pretty good progress when it comes to our public schools. You remember, when I came into office, we had a system that just moved our kids through grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we've increased Federal funding, but we've also, for the first time, asked the question, "Can you read and write?" It seems like a legitimate question for Government to ask on behalf of the taxpayers and families of America. And if you can read and write, we'll thank you; but if you can't, change before it's too late, so that no child gets left behind in this country.

We've done a lot of hard work, but there's more to do to move America forward. And there's more to do to protect this country from the threats of the 21st century. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. Since September the 11th, America has led the world, and the world has changed for the better.

There are some serious lessons that we must remember about September the 11th. I would like to share some of those with you today. First, we're fighting an enemy that is so coldblooded it's hard for many Americans to fathom. These people will cut off your head like that, trying to shake our will and shake our conscience. That's why I remind our fellow citizens we must be resolute, and we must be steadfast in the face of these coldblooded killers. You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best when it comes to these people. Therapy is not going to work. [*Laughter*] The only way to deal with them is to bring them to justice.

And we're making progress. Slowly but surely, we're bringing them to justice. It's a different kind of war. See, this is the kind of war where these killers will hide in a cave and use terror to shake our will. America's will will not be shaken. America will show strength and resolve for the sake of freedom and peace. We will continue to find these killers and defeat them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

In this different kind of war, we had to send a message to the world that we wanted others to join us, and they have.

We've got a vast coalition of nations sharing intelligence, cutting off money. There's some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate their service. As a matter of fact, this morning I talked to Tony Blair, Silvio Berlusconi—the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and Italy. Once again, I thanked them for the sacrifices of their citizens to provide help in places like Afghanistan and Iraq so that the world would be more free and peaceful. I will continue to work with coalitions, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that it's just not enough to go after the killers who killed thousands of Americans, but that if there's a country which harbors them or feeds them, they must be held equally to account. And so I said to the Taliban in Afghanistan, "Cough up Al Qaida, or face serious consequences."

Now, let me say something to you. When the American President speaks, it better be clear for everybody to understand and he better mean it. And I meant it. And as a result of some brave Americans and coalition troops, the Taliban no longer exists in Afghanistan. And America and the world are safer for it. And these Chinook choppers helped free Afghanistan from the Taliban.

It's an amazing—think about this in Afghanistan. You remember when the four women were drug off the bus. They were voter registration people, and they got drug off the bus by some remnants of the Taliban and were killed because they were trying to register voters. And I remember some people saying, "Well, gosh, it just goes to show how terrible it is there in Afghanistan, and they're not going to have much of an election." Do you realize that there's now about 9.5 million people who have registered to vote in Afghanistan? It's an amazing statistic. Think about the world 3½ years ago. These thugs were running the country and providing training bases for Al Qaida. And the world was dangerous. We didn't realize it at the time, but think about how dangerous the world was then. And now, because we took action and upheld doctrine—we did what we said we were going to do—Afghanistan is free. The people are registering to vote.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, recently and welcomed children to the International Children's Game, and there right to my right was the Afghan girls soccer team. They would not have been here without the United States of America having freed the people of that country.

And a free Afghanistan is not only an ally in the war on terror, and a free Afghanistan is not only a place where many young girls go to school for the first time, but a free Afghanistan makes America more secure and the world more peaceful.

Another important lesson of September the 11th that all Americans must realize is we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize, that you cannot hope for the best when you see a threat. In the old days, we could because we never thought anybody would attack us here at home, but that all changed on that day.

And so when I looked at Saddam Hussein, I saw a threat. And the reason I did is because he had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people, and he was a sworn enemy of America. He had provided safe haven for terrorists. He had paid money to the families of suiciders. He was an unstable—he was a source of instability in a volatile part of the world. He was firing at our pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He was a threat.

And I recognized that I needed to go to the United States Congress to get support. I wanted the Congress involved, and I took it to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and they remembered the history of Saddam Hussein that I remembered. And so members of both political parties, including my opponent, supported our position in Iraq. They saw a threat.

The United Nations Security Council saw a threat. Remember, I went to the U.N. I believe diplomacy must be tried, and we must exhaust all options in the diplomatic front. See, war is the last resort for a President. It's the toughest decision a President will make. It's the hardest call a Commander in Chief can possibly decide. So I went to the U.N., I said, "Look, why don't we, as the world, finally get together, when we say something, mean it, and let's disarm this guy. Take a look, and you decide if he needs to be disarmed." Remember, they had had resolution after resolution after resolution after resolution. And they passed another one, 15 to nothing, in the United Nations Security Council. It said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the free world said, in a 15-to-nothing vote.

Saddam Hussein defied the free world, just as he had for year after year after year. He didn't give a hoot about what they said. He wasn't interested in complying to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when we sent the inspectors in, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make. And the choice was, do I trust a madman? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best in this new era, or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

No, I realize we didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find. But I want you to remember, Saddam had the capability of making weapons, and he could have shared that capability with our enemies. And in the post-9/11 environment, that's a risk America could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

We have a mission in Afghanistan and Iraq and that is to help them achieve freedom. They've got leaders there now who believe in the future of their countries and want their countries to be free. As I told you, Afghanistan is headed toward elections; Iraq will be too. That's what we believe in. We believe in systems empowering the people. So we'll help them. We'll be there to help train their troops so they can stand up and take responsibility for their own societies. And we will complete the mission. It's in our national interest that these countries be free. They're going to be such powerful examples in neighborhoods that are desperate for freedom. You see, the way you defeat terror in the long run is to defeat hopelessness and poverty. And the best way to do that is to spread freedom. Free societies are peaceful societies.

By adhering to a—our beliefs in liberty, we're helping others and, at the same time, helping ourself. By standing strong for liberty, we're remembering lessons of the past. You know, I was talking to Prime Minister Koizumi—I do quite a bit—and my last dinner with him—I think my last dinner, one of my last dinners with him—it dawned on me how amazing it was that here I was talking to the leader of a country that my dad had fought against in World War II and your dads had fought against. And you know what we were talking about? We were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. And I was having that conversation in part because our country understood that liberty could transform the habits of former enemies. And as Japan was rebuilt after World War II, we stood strong to our belief in freedom for all people. See, we believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

These are historic times. These are historic times. We've done a lot of hard work, I know that. But we're headed toward a freer world and a more peaceful world. My dream for this country is that when your kids grow up, the world is more—America is more secure, and they look out and see

a peaceful horizon, not only for ourselves but for people all around the world. It's important we complete our mission in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I was disappointed the other day when my opponent said after he gets elected that he believes he'll substantially reduce the troops in Iraq in 6 months. See, I think that sets a terrible signal. I mean, after all, the enemy has got to wait for 6 months and 1 day. It sends a bad signal to our troops over there, who every day are doing their best to help that country rebuild and bring peace. It sends a bad signal to the Iraqis, doesn't it? They're wondering whether or not America is going to cut and run. They're wondering whether or not—you see, before they take risks for freedom, they're wondering or not whether we'll be there to help stabilize the country. So long as I'm the President of the United States, America will keep its word to the people around the world.

I'll tell you another commitment I have made and one I'll keep. Our troops are going to have the best training, the best pay, the best possible equipment. When we put these folks in harm's way, the Federal Government must stand squarely by their side. I've increased the defense budgets—strongly increased the defense budgets—because I want these folks to have the best, and I know you do too. As a matter of fact, the defense budgets have increased as great as they ever had since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States.

That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and said, "We need supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq." That was for body armor and fuel and spare parts, just all the things necessary to help these people complete their mission. And I—we got great bipartisan support. That means people from both parties realized the funding was important—so strong that only 12 people voted against it in the United States Senate, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. I think when you put people into harm's way, you ought to make sure they're well-equipped.

And so they asked him—they started pressing him. You know how it is in politics. And so he said, "Fine, well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I can assure you people don't talk like that on the floor of this factory. They'll tell you what's on their mind. And then he got pressed further, and he went on to say, well, he's proud of it, and then, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've done a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work, and there's more work to be done to do our duty, which is to secure our country, to protect our homeland, and to help the world become more free and more peaceful.

You know, this is a changing world of ours, and there are some things that won't change, however. The values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, and reverence and integrity, hard work and duty. The institutions that give us direction will not change, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. This is important to our country, that these values be strong.

That's why I stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility here in America. You know, the culture is changing 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're 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. You know, if you're worried about the quality of the education in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, you're responsible for doing something about it. A responsibility society is one in which every CEO in corporate America understands he or she is responsible for telling the truth to the shareholders and employees. And a responsibility society is one in which each of us understands we're responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running again because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion all around our country. See, Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arms around somebody, says, "I love you," and "How can I help you?" We must continue to rally those compassionate folks who are willing to volunteer their time so America can change one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time.

Tom Shaffer is a Boeing employee. He's up here. He runs the Race Against Drugs. He volunteers time to help convince kids to get off drugs. He's making a difference. All he's got to do is convince one soul, and he's helped that life and helped change America. Volunteers come—they do all kinds of things around our country.

Paula Zimmerman is with us. She started what's called Touch of Home. Her son, Private First Class Kevin Zimmerman, is a member of the Army's Crazy Horse Company, 1st Battalion. He's in Sadr City, Iraq. He's doing his duty for his country, and his mom has sent 160 care packages to Crazy Horse Company. She took time out of her life to volunteer, to lift somebody's spirit, to help some soul understand that a lot of people back home appreciate what they're doing. Government didn't make her do it. She decided to do it because she cares about her son and her country.

I realize one person can't do everything, but a person can do something to help change this country for the better. I want to thank our two examples for volunteers. I want to thank you all for loving your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. You're helping your country when you do so.

You know, for all of us, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, a strong belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were hardhats there, yelling at me, "Whatever it takes, Mr. President." I can remember walking down the line, shaking hands and thanking people. A guy looked me in the eye—he had just come out of the rubble—and he said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took that day personally. Everybody on that site took it personally. I know you took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up daily trying to best figure out how to protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies and secure the homeland, whatever it takes.

When I traveled your great State and our country 4 years ago, I said, if you would give me the honor of holding this office, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

Thank you for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at the Boeing Co. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Madden, employee, Boeing Co.; John DeFrancisco, president, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America Local 1069; John M. Perzel, speaker, Pennsylvania House of

Representatives; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Hedgesville, West Virginia
August 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming, and thanks for inviting me here to Hedgesville. It's such an honor to be back in what they call the Mountain State. What a beautiful place. I really—some of them think you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood. I think you find it right here. This is the heart and soul of America, as far as I'm concerned.

I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for bringing your families. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling your important State not only asking for the vote but asking for your help. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation in a free society to go to the polls. So I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors, and then, come voting time, head them to the polls. And remind them if they want this country to be safer, stronger, and better, put George Bush and Dick Cheney back in there. With your help, we carried this State in 2000. With your help, we'll carry it again and win a great victory in November of 2004.

I am sorry Laura is not with me today. She's out working. [*Laughter*] She's asking for the vote. What a great mother and a great wife, and she's doing a great job as our First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. He's a fine Vice President. I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Gale for his kind introduction. I appreciate his service to the West Virginia men's basketball team. What a great man he is and a great class act. I'm honored—I appreciate, Coach, that you'd introduce me. I appreciate standing by your side.

I want to thank my friend Shelley Moore Capito, the Congressman for the great State of West Virginia. I want to thank Don Dellinger, Manny Arvon, and Dr. Bill Queen of the school system around here. I appreciate you letting me come to this facility, and thanks for working to make sure our kids get a good education here in West Virginia. I want to thank all the people running for office, all the local officials. Thanks for showing up. Most importantly, I want to thank you all. I'm honored you're here. This is a huge turnout, and I'm grateful for it.

I want to thank the Hedgesville High School Marching Band for playing here today. And, of course, I've got to thank my friends the Bellamy Brothers for being here as well. I'm honored they're here.

Listen, I'm here asking for the vote, and I understand one thing about politics, though—there's only one reason to look backwards at the record, and that's who best to lead us forward. We've done a lot together. You think about what we've been through. We've been through a lot, and we've accomplished a lot. But I'm here to tell you there is more to do. We've got more work to do to make this country a hopeful place. We've got more work to do to make sure that our schools work. We've got more to do to keep us safe. We've

got more to do to spread freedom, and we've got more to do to make the world a peaceful place.

Audience member. You're the man for the job!

The President. [*Laughter*] Listen, we've got more work to do to make our schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We increased Federal funding, but we've also started to ask important questions: Can our children read and write and add and subtract? We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. And when we find schools that will not teach and will not change, we're bold enough to challenge the status quo.

And we're making progress all across America. We're closing an achievement gap in this country. But there's more work to be done. We want to make sure high school diplomas mean something. We want to make sure we have strong math and science in our classrooms so our children can compete in the 21st century. We want to make sure we've got Internet in our classrooms so we can bring the latest education to help every child in America. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years a rising generation will have more confidence and more skills to be able to realize the great promise of our country.

We got more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You might remember all the stale debates on Medicare. Campaign after campaign, they'd come to West Virginia and say, "Put me in office. We'll make sure Medicare is strengthened and modernized." We got the job done. Already more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards which will provide real savings for our seniors. And starting in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that meets their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more work to be done in health care. To make sure that people get quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've established health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their needs. Most people get their health insurance through their jobs, and many small businesses are having trouble affording health care for their employees. We must allow small businesses to pool their risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do.

We got to make sure we have technology in health care so—reduce the costs and reduce medical errors. And one thing is for certain: To make sure you've got health care which is affordable and available, we need medical liability reform. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that the health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, we've got more work to do to make this economy stronger. We've been through a lot. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, and a terrorist attack. Yet, this economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. And the reason why is because we've got great workers in America. We've got great farmers in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America, and so is the spirit of our fellow citizens. We've overcome those obstacles, and I think one of the main reasons why, besides the spirit of our country, is because of well-timed tax relief.

We didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." And

we're helping our families by raising the child credit. We're doing something about the marriage penalty. Listen, the Tax Code has got it wrong. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage.

We're helping our small businesses, and this time the check was actually in the mail. [*Laughter*] Because we acted, our economy, since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate in this important State is 5.3 percent. The people of this State are working.

I'm not going to rest until somebody who wants to work can find a job. There's more work to be done. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need an energy policy. That includes using West Virginia coal. We need more conservation, more renewable. We need to use the resources we have in environmentally friendly ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs here in America, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need tort reform. We need to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. And we need to keep your taxes low. You know, you've heard the talk in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has made over $2 trillion of new spending promises. And so they asked him the other day, they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, I'm going to tax the rich." You can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all his promises. So guess who is going to end up paying? Yes. But we're not going to let him. We're going to win in November.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we're going to make sure trade is fair for American workers and American manufacturers and American entrepreneurs. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, we've got to make sure our workers are trained for the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong backer in the community college system. The community college system will allow people to go back to work, and we'll provide help for them so they can get the skills necessary to fill the jobs that will exist in the 21st century.

After 4 more years, there will be better jobs in America. After 4 more years, there will be better—a better farm economy in America. After 4 more years, the entrepreneurial spirit will be strong. And after 4 more years, America will still be the strongest economy among any major industrialized nation in the world.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, young girls go to school for the first time in that country. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. I'm ready for 4 more years.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th is that this Nation must deal with threats before they fully materialize. I saw a threat, and I went to the United States Congress. I said, "This man is a threat to the United States." They looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the facts about Saddam Hussein, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, agreed that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

I then went to the United Nations, and I did so because force is the last resort for America. The decision to go to war is the toughest decision a President will ever make. I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at and the Congress looked at and came to the same conclusion we did: Saddam Hussein was a threat. In the U.N. Security Council, there was a 15-to-nothing vote that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He went so far as to systematically deceive the inspectors that we sent in that country.

So I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action necessary to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. After September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq, and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the stockpile of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank the Senator for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] Remember, there's over 75 days left in the campaign. He can still change his mind. [*Laughter*]

I'm running for 4 more years because I understand that we have more work to do to secure our country, to work with our friends and allies around the world, to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Today I talked to Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Ministers of great allies. We talked about how to spread peace and freedom around the world. These are important allies, and I appreciate their contributions. I will continue, over the next 4 years, to make sure our alliance is strong.

But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become democratic and peaceful societies. Those countries have now got strong leaders, men dedicated to the future of their countries. You realize over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan. They long for freedom. They want to be free, and we'll help them. Our military forces will help meet our goal of stable and free countries who are allies in the war on terror by not only providing security but by training Iraqi and Afghan forces so they can stand up and defend their countries. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible, so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

The other day my opponent said if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. That sends a dangerous message. The enemy can wait 6 months and 1 day. It sends the wrong message to our troops in theater. It sends the wrong message to the Iraqis. They're wondering whether or not America means what it says. They're wondering whether or not they are willing to take risks for freedom. They're wondering whether or not tyranny will come back into their land. No, when this country says something, we will honor our commitment. Afghanistan and Iraq will be free.

We've done a lot of hard work and the world is better for it. In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. We've got a fantastic military. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting the example for those who wear today's uniform. I've seen the decency of our troops, their great courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a commitment to them and to their loved ones. Our troops will have the resources they need to fight and win this war against the terrorists. This administration has met that commitment. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This funding went for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important vote. We received great bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate—such a strong vote in the Senate that only 12 Members voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When I asked him about it, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I don't think that's the way the folks around here talk. They tell you what's on your mind. You know, then he got pressed even further, and he said he was proud of his vote; then he said, "It was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror—that's poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Free societies are peaceful societies. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're helping others secure their freedom, and we're securing our own country. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace that we all long for. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We got more work to do to secure this homeland. There's an enemy who hate us,

and they're still plotting. It's the realities of the world we live in. We have a difference of opinion about these people. My opponent said the other day that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside down. It shows a misunderstanding of the people that we have to bring to justice. See, during the nineties, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before America went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for the evil of these killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; we defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're working hard to protect the homeland. You got to know there's a lot of people at the Federal and State and local level working as hard as they possibly can to protect our fellow citizens. And I'm grateful for their contributions and their sacrifice and their hard work. We created the Department of Homeland Security to better guard you. We've got better communications between our intelligence networks. The PATRIOT Act is a vital tool so law enforcement can run down these terrorists before they hit America again.

We've been working hard to reform everything in Washington, but reform in Washington is hard. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests there. It's hard to challenge the status quo, but I've been willing to do so. See, it's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

When it comes to reforming our schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families and seniors more access and better choices in health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to defending America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when it comes to electing a President, America must put somebody in the White House who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. You know, these are exciting times we're living in. It is a time of change, and change can be unsettling. I understand that. But if Government stands side by side with families or workers, it can help a lot. See, I want people owning something in America. I want people owning and controlling their own health care, so if they change jobs, they can take them from job to job. I want people owning and managing their own personal retirement accounts when it comes to Social Security. Listen, the Social Security system is in good shape for older folks like me. [*Laughter*] It's the younger workers we've got to be thinking about. In order to make sure the younger workers got a retirement system that meets its promises, younger workers ought to be allowed to own their own personal savings accounts.

You know, one of the things I love about America is, more and more people are owning their home. The homeownership rate is at the highest its ever been in this country. What a wonderful idea, when somebody opens their door and says, "This is my home. Welcome to my property." We want more people owning their home in this country. We want more people owning their own business in this country. The small-business sector is a vibrant part of the health of our Nation. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In these changing times, there are going to be some things that won't change, as far as I'm concerned: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the non-negotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture in life in America where every person counts and everybody matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. We stand for a culture of responsibility. You know this culture is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are a mother and father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the schools here in your neighborhood, you're responsible for doing something about it. You're responsible for supporting your teachers, your principals, the people involved with the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion. I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who needs some love and says, "What can I do to help you? How can I stand by you? What can I do to make your life better?" Listen, America is going to change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time because of the armies of compassion in this great land.

For all America, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time when we must have firm resolve, clear vision, and a strong abiding faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another one began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001, and it is a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working the line there to thank people, and a guy looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. The people searching the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Now, we've been through a lot together, and there's more work to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of a country. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a younger generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned around your State in 2000, I said that if you gave me the high honor of serving as your President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. We're on to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at Hedgesville High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gale Catlett, former men's basketball coach, University of West Virginia; Don Dellinger, principal, Hedgesville High School; Manny P. Arvon, superintendent, Berkley County Schools; William F. Queen, president, Berkley County Schools Board of Education; entertainers the Bellamy Brothers; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair

of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

Remarks in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin
August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. What a beautiful day. You know what I think? I think Wisconsin is "W" country. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate this warm hospitality. You know, my opponent said the other day, "You can find the heart and soul in Hollywood." I think you find it right here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. I'm glad to be with the heart and soul of America.

And I'm here to ask for your vote. I believe if you're seeking the vote, you've got to go ask for it. I'm here to tell you I've got more work to do to make this country safer and stronger and better for every single citizen. And I appreciate you coming out to say hello.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know it. She's in Colorado today campaigning. She is a fantastic First Lady, a great mom, and I love her dearly. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man. They call it the Bush-Cheney ticket. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Now listen, I admit to you, he isn't the prettiest one in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I appreciate the Kell boys for having us over here, John and Tom. I love to come to places where people are entrepreneurial, where people are willing to expand the job base. That's what it's all about in this country, to elevate the entrepreneurial spirit. And the Kells represent that spirit, and I'm honored that you would have us here.

I appreciate being on the same stage with my friend Congressman Mark Green. He's a good man. Treasurer Jack Voight is with us as well. I appreciate you being here, Jack. I'm honored you're here. I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Doug Sandvick, for being here. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. My only advice to you, Mr. Mayor, is fill the potholes.

State Senator Dale Schultz, the next Congressman from this part of the world, is with us today. I hope you put him in to the United States Congress. He'll do a fine job for the people of this part of the world. I appreciate all the State and local officials here. I want to thank everybody for organizing this fantastic event.

I know you join me in congratulating the Hamm brothers from the great State of Wisconsin for their performance in the Olympics. I know they made the people of Wisconsin proud. They made this Texan proud too.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls. I urge you to continue to register people to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. In a free land, people must participate in the elections. So do your duty as grassroots activists and continue to register people. Convince everybody to vote, and when you get them headed to the polls, remind them George Bush and Dick Cheney are willing and ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm traveling your State a lot. And I'm enjoying every minute of it. You know why I'm coming back? We were close last time. With your help, this time we will carry Wisconsin and have a great victory in November of 2004.

In the past few years, we have been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. I'm asking for your vote because we have so much more to do to move this country forward. We've got more to do to create jobs and improve schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace. We've made much progress, and we will do more on behalf of the American people.

We got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember what it was like 3½ years ago. We were spending money at the Federal level, but year after year, children were being shuffled from grade to grade without learning the basics. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I wanted to raise the bar. We've increased Federal funding, but now we're asking the question that you expect us to ask: Can our children read and write and add and subtract? And if not, we'll make sure they get help early. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in parental involvement, and we will challenge the status quo when we find schools that will not teach and will not change.

There's more work to be done. We want to have early intervention programs. We want to make sure we intervene in junior high when children can't read and write. We want to make sure we emphasize math and science so our kids have got the capabilities of competing in the 21st century. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. After 4 more years, a rising generation of youngsters will have the skills and the confidence necessary to realize the great promise of the American Dream.

We've got more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You might remember all the debates of the past, when politician after politician said, "We're going to fix Medicare." And nothing ever got done till we came to town. We got the job done. We have strengthened Medicare. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more to do. We've expanded community health centers to help low-income America—Americans get primary care. We've established what's called health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to working on the issue of costs and availability, we've made progress. There's more work to do be done. You see, most people get their health care through businesses and most small businesses cannot afford health care. And so, therefore, Government must allow small businesses to pool risk so they can afford health insurance for their employees, just like big businesses can.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures. In order to make sure your health care system works, in order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we must have medical liability reform. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now. And in all we do to improve health care, we

will make sure that health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by Government bureaucrats.

There's more to do to keep this economy growing. We've been through a lot. Our economy has overcome some mighty obstacles. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a war and a terrorist attack. And yet, we've overcome those obstacles because the spirit of this country is strong. Our workers are great. Our farmers are really good. The small-business sector is vibrant and alive. And I think one of the reasons we've come through these obstacles is because of well-timed tax cuts.

When we saw what was happening, we acted. We said to the Congress, "Let people keep more of their own money." Notice I said more of their own money; I didn't say Government money. If they have money in Washington, it's not the Government's money; it's your money. And by letting you keep more of your own money, this economy is growing. It's strong, and it's getting stronger. Our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added over 1.5 million—nearly 1.5 million new jobs in the past year. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 5 percent. We've done our job. We've created the conditions for economic growth, but there is more work to do.

I'm proud of our agricultural agenda. We set out a good agenda for Wisconsin's and America's farmers. You know, when I was campaigning, I said these dairy compacts must treat every farmer fairly. When you get people heading to the polls, remind them of what my opponent said. He supported a Northeast dairy compact, which put the farmers in this part of the world at a distinct disadvantage.

I believe there's more work to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. I want to continue and open up markets. You see, I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. I want people eating Wisconsin corn. I want them eating Wisconsin dairy products. Our farm economy is strong because markets are open to U.S. farm products, and I'll keep it that way.

There's more work to be done to make sure people have got work here at home. Listen, to make sure jobs are here, we need a national energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy, energy policy that encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for resources, clean coal technology, renewable sources of energy like biodiesel and ethanol, more conservation. But we must, in order to keep jobs here, have an energy policy. Congress needs to get my plan to my desk for my signature.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to have reasonable regulations. Many of you fill out a lot of paperwork. I can't guarantee anybody in Government has read it. [*Laughter*] But I do know that in order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to be reasonable about the requests we put on employers. We need tort reform here in America. We need fiscal discipline when it comes to spending your money. We got to be wise about how we spend it, and we must keep your taxes low.

This campaign is getting cranked up. My opponent has already promised over $2 trillion of new spending, and there's still 2 more months to go. [*Laughter*] So I asked him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Tax the rich." The problem is, you can't tax the rich enough to raise $2 trillion. So guess who's going to pay? You are. But we're not going to let him. We're going to win in November of 2004.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the

world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including the United States of America. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He killed tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th, a vital lesson of this country that we must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I went to the United States Congress to get congressional support. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history. Both Republicans and Democrats, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Listen, the toughest decision a President can ever make is to send citizens into combat. And so I went to the United Nations, hoping to solve this problem diplomatically. I said to the United Nations, "We see a threat." They responded. They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the history. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He wasn't listening to what the world said. As a matter of fact, you might remember, we sent inspectors into Iraq. He systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. It's a risk we could not afford to take after the attacks of September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles we all thought we would have found, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] But I want to remind you—I want to remind you, there's still 76 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind. [*Laughter*]

We have more to do. I'm running again because I understand there's more work to do to secure America. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, I don't believe you can talk sense to these people. I do not believe you can negotiate with them. I know we must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We've put together a great coalition. There's over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifice of the moms and dads from those countries who've joined with the sacrifices of the moms and dads of our countries, to have their loved ones overseas securing freedom and peace. It's a great contribution that these countries have made. I'll continue to work with those alliances. But I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq. It's important we do so. These countries are becoming free countries, peaceful countries. Do you realize over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan? It's an amazing thought, you know? Three-and-a-half years ago, they were run by the Taliban. They pulled women into the public square to whip them. Today, women are getting ready to vote. They're headed toward freedom. Iraq is going to head toward free elections. They got leaders who understand that if you listen to the aspirations of your people, the country will be better off. Our job is to provide a secure environment for those countries to head toward elections and, as well, train Iraqi and Afghan forces so they can defend themselves—to give them a chance to defeat those killers who are stopping the advance of freedom. We'll complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

But in this campaign, you better watch what you say. The other day, my opponent said if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. See, that's a bad signal to send to the enemy. All they got to do is wait 6 months and 1 day. It's a bad signal to send to our troops, that your mission won't be completed. It's a bad signal to send to the Iraqi citizens who wonder whether or not America will keep its word. I believe when America speaks, we must mean what we say. We will complete the mission so Iraq and Afghanistan are free and peaceful countries.

Our commitment are kept by the men and women who wear the uniform. I'm proud of our military. I appreciate the veterans who are here for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniforms. I met Specialist Wayne Trimbell, behind the stage here. He's from the 724th Engineering Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard. He served our country in Iraq. He was telling me how he built bridges and roads and installed electricity. He said, "It made me recognize the things America takes for granted. I'm proud to say I served my country." I'm proud he served his country too. I know the decency and courage of those who wear our uniform. The cause of freedom and peace is in really good hands.

And we got to make sure our military has everything they need to complete the mission. Our Federal Government owes them the best pay, the best training, the best equipment, and the best possible support. I have done my duty as the Commander in Chief to support our troops. As a matter of fact, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding. I asked Congress to spend money for spare parts and body armor and fuel. And we got great support in the halls of Congress. Matter of fact, that support was

so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the supplemental funding to support our troops in combat, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about why, he said, well, he actually did vote for the $87 billion right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] I don't think people talk like that here. He went on to say, when pressed, that he was proud of his vote, and then he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've had the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President. Military pay has gone up by 21 percent since I've been the President. The housing conditions are better for those who wear our uniform. Today I'm going to announce a new proposal to help our men and women activated for duty in the National Guard and Reserves. These brave Americans put their jobs on hold and leave their family behind when we called. Yet, under current rules, their education benefits don't reflect the high value of service we place on their time and duty. My proposal will help correct that by substantially increasing monthly education benefits for all Guard members and reservists on active duty for more than 90 consecutive days.

As well, we'll help our children of military families meet the challenges of a life on the move. People are going from base to base, and these moves often conflict with school rules from State to State. So we're going to put out grant money to help States ease the burden so it's more seamless for families to go from one State to the next, so their education—their kids get a great education. What I'm telling you is, we'll continue to stand side by side with those who wear the uniform and the family members of those who wear the uniform.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Freedom—free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

I know we've got a mom here whose son is overseas. I want to tell you, your son is serving during historic times. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others realize their dreams, and we're making America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our own country. Americans understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. Thank you for your son's service.

We'll do more to protect our country because there's enemies still out there who hate us. It's a reality of the times we're in. My opponent says—and this is a difference of opinion—I think you're going to find there's a lot of differences of opinion in this campaign—[*laughter*]—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic—I know the logic is upside down. It shows a misunderstanding of the nature of these people. See, during the 1990s, these killers and terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for anger and the evil of these killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We've started the hard process of reform in Washington. I emphasize "hard process." We've created the new Department of Homeland Security. There's a lot of good

people working hard at the Federal, State, and local level to protect you and the citizens, and I appreciate their hard work. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for our law enforcement to be able to find these terrorists before they attack again. Our FBI agents are working overtime. We're sharing information better than ever before. We'll continue to work to make sure our intelligence gathering is the best in the world so we can better protect the homeland. And we'll continue to push for reforms in Washington.

But it's not enough to advocate reform. You got to get the job done. That's what this campaign is really all about. When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to available and affordable health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to overcoming the obstacles to our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're living in exciting times, and these are times of change, and change can be unsettling. And one way for Government to help people during times of change is to make sure there's a lifetime of learning for workers at our community college systems. Another way to help is to promote an ownership society. See, we want people owning and managing their own health care accounts, where if they change jobs, it goes with them from job to job.

I'm worried about our Social Security system. I'm not worried about it for baby boomers like me. There's—the system is solvent. But if you're a younger worker, I think it's important that you be allowed to have your own personal savings account that you can carry with you throughout your life, to pass generation to generation.

In changing times, I love the idea of more and more Americans owning their own home. Today, the homeownership rate is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. Think about this: More and more of our citizens are opening up their door saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." I like the idea that more and more people in America are owning their own business. We'll continue to work for an ownership society in America. We understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

And during these changing times, though, there's some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. We stand for institutions like marriage and family which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who will faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. Listen, the culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you 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 worried about the quality of education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. You're responsible for supporting your teachers and your school board members and supporting the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the

truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul steps up and says, "What can I do for you? How can I help you? I love you. Can I make a difference in your life?"

Listen, there are thousands of people all across the country serving this Nation by helping somebody who hurts. To rally the armies of compassion means to call upon our citizens to continue hearing a call, because I understand we can change America one heart, one soul, and once conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve. This is a time where we need clear vision. This is a time where we need steadfast belief in the values that make this country a great country.

You know, I'll never forget the day when one era ended and another began, and I know you won't either. I was in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. I clearly remember the workers in hardhats screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking people's hands and thanking them, looking in a guy's eyes; they were bloodshot. He was tired and worn out. He'd been looking for a buddy in the rubble. He said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took that day personally. Everybody searching in the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect this country. I will never relent in chasing down the enemy and securing America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. We're making a difference. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity throughout every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a younger generation. We'll lead the cause of freedom and work to spread the peace.

When I campaigned in Wisconsin 4 years ago, I said, if you give me the high honor of holding this office, I would uphold the dignity and honor of the Presidency. And with your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at the Kell Container Corp. In his remarks, he referred to John Kell, president, and Tom Kell, chief executive officer, Kell Container Corp.; Wisconsin State Treasurer Jack C. Voight; Mayor Doug Sandvick of Chippewa Falls, WI; Dale Schultz, candidate for Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Paul and Morgan Hamm, who won silver medals as members of the U.S. men's gymnastics team at the Olympics in Athens, Greece, on August 16; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the Kansas City Chiefs Training Camp in River Falls, Wisconsin
August 18, 2004

Carl D. Peterson. Thank you so much for being here. It's great to have you. Thanks for taking your time. I know you know our head coach well.

The President. I do know Dick. Thanks. Thanks for letting me come by and say hi. I appreciate you coming out to say hello. I'm in the neighborhood. [*Laughter*] I'm shaking hands. But I wish you all the best this season.

I particularly want to thank the players who, in the off-season or during the season, are helping people who hurt. I know you've got a big platform, and you can make a difference in people's lives. The fact that you can help somebody who is in need is a great contribution. It's one thing to be a star on the field; it's another thing to be a star off the field. I know a lot of you are.

Head Coach Dick Vermeil. These guys are great guys.

Mr. Peterson. We're very proud of this guy's father—Priest Holmes's dad re-upped, and he's in Iraq right now. And our prayers and thoughts are with him. And we got to see Priest set the NFL record at Arrowhead last year, 27 touchdowns.

The President. I remember when I was the Governor of Texas—[*laughter*]—I'm trying to keep his taxes low. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Peterson. Everybody here wants you to continue to do the same thing, believe me.

The President. Good luck to you all. Let me walk around and shake some hands.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:21 p.m. at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Carl D. Peterson, president, general manager, and chief executive officer, Kansas City Chiefs, referred to running back Priest Holmes. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Hudson, Wisconsin
August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm ready to go. There's more work to be done. I'm here asking for 4 more years.

Thank you all for coming. I think we've got a pretty interesting way to explain why I'm running for President again today. What I thought I would do is spend some time talking about some issues with some of your fellow citizens here, who will help explain why I make decisions the way I do. Then if we've got time, I'd like to answer some questions from you. Then I've got to go across the river——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They vote too. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you all for coming. I really am out asking for the vote. I think it's really important to travel the States that are key States and ask people—and tell people why you're running. And that's what I'm doing today in your great State. You know, we came close last time in Wisconsin. This time we're going to win it.

I want to thank you all for your help. Listen, I know there's some people here

who volunteer for the campaign, and I want—let me tell you what that means. It means signs. It means making phone calls. It means encouraging people to register to vote.

You know, I like to tell people an interesting story about Afghanistan, and I'll talk about that a little more later on, but there was some doubt in people's minds as to whether or not, once free, the Afghan people would participate in democracy, particularly after the Taliban drug some people off one of the buses—women—off the buses and executed them because they happened to be holding voter registration cards. Today in that country, 3½ years after being brutalized by the Taliban, over 9 million people have registered to vote. See, they are—it's a great statistic, isn't it?

We have a duty in this country to vote. So I hope you register your friends and neighbors. Tell them they have a duty to vote. And when you head them—get them headed toward the polls, tell them if they want the country safer, stronger, and better, put old George Bush and Dick Cheney back in.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. Gosh, she would love this beautiful part of the world. She is in Colorado campaigning, and then she's headed to Texas. And after my speech tonight, I'm heading down to Crawford as well. But the reason I bring her up is she is—I'm a lucky man. She is a great mom. She's really a wonderful wife, and she's doing a great job as the First Lady. She has come to realize what I have realized, that simple gestures of kindness to people really can affect their lives in positive ways, that when we've been given this awesome responsibility and a high honor of serving our country, it really doesn't take much to help lift somebody's spirits. And Laura goes around the country talking to teachers and thanking them for teaching, and talking to people who are involved with literacy programs and thanking them for their literacy programs.

I remember when she did the radio address and spoke to the women of Afghanistan. The feedback on that was fantastic. People were just so grateful that somebody in a high position in America would speak to their hopes and aspirations. Her job satisfaction level is high. I hope there's a lot of reasons you want to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

A couple of things. I want to thank my friend Mark Green, Congressman Mark Green, for traveling today. He's a good fellow. Thank you, Congressman. He's a good, smart, honest guy with whom I've got a great working relationship.

I've also been traveling with Dale Schultz. He's going to make a fine United States Congressman. I appreciate him. He's working hard. He's knocking on a lot of doors, which is what you have to do if you're going to—if you intend on winning. I think he'll be a great Congressman.

Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. I'm proud you're here. Where are you? There he is. Mr. Mayor, thank you. Thanks for coming.

You know, I said I want the country to be stronger and safer and better. Let me start with what it means to be a better country. A better country is a country that makes sure every child is educated. One of the reasons I'm running again is because there's more work to do to make sure that the philosophy behind No Child Left Behind is fully implemented. What that philosophy said was—is that we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, if you have a system that doesn't expect the best, it's a system that tends to quit on kids too early and just shuffles them through, grade to grade. And guess who gets shuffled through? These so-called hard-to-educate. And that's not good enough for America. And so what we did in Washington is we said, "We'll spend more Federal dollars, and, in return for Federal dollars, we'll finally start asking the

question, have you achieved the goals?" See, we'll start to measure. And the reason you measure is not to punish. The reason you measure is to correct problems early, before it's too late.

And so the No Child Left Behind Act sets high expectations and high standards. It believes in local control of schools. It believes in empowering parents. But it also says, "Let's measure to determine whether curriculum works, to determine whether or not our children are learning to read." And if not, let's correct the problem before it is too late. And we're making good progress. These test scores are beginning to rise. The achievement gap is beginning to close. And what I'm telling you is there's more work to do when it comes to the education. I want the high school diploma to mean something. We need to focus on math and science to make sure our youngsters have the skills necessary to compete in this world. I like to tell people we've—we're getting the job done when it comes to our schools. And by making our schools work, America will be a better place.

I'll tell you what else will make America a better place. It's a place where those of us in Government understand the limitations of Government. See, money can hand out—Government hands out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's life. That happens when people who have been called to love a neighbor step up and put their arm around a lonely soul or somebody who hurts or somebody who needs compassion and says, "What can I do? How can I help you?" And so I'm running again to continue to rally the armies of compassion, to encourage people who want to love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves to continue to do so. And equally as well is to open up Federal monies, Federal grants to faith-based organizations, people that are able to—[*applause*].

One of the examples I like to use is, if somebody is addicted to drugs, sometimes a counselor can work. But a lot of times it requires a change of heart in order to change life. And the faith-based programs are those programs that are able to help a person change their heart, to get them less hooked on drugs or alcohol. And so there's a—part of my vision is for a better country. I want everybody in America to realize the great promise of this land.

This is a fantastic country we have. And the values are—when I'm talking about changing America one heart and one soul at a time, I'm talking about Scout masters who take time to work with these kids to pass on good, solid values. I'm talking about people who go see a neighbor and a shut-in. See, we can change and will change America one heart at a time, one soul at a time. Listen, I recognize somebody can't do everything, but somebody can do something to help this country be a compassionate, hopeful place.

I'm here to talk about making the country a stronger country. That starts with making sure our economy is strong. Listen, we want people working. That's what we want in America. And we've been through a lot. When you're out there campaigning and talking to people, remind them what we have been through as a country. We've been through a recession. That means we're going backwards. That means it's hard to find work. It means if you're a small-business owner, you're nervous about making payroll.

And then we went through a terrorist attack. They estimated it cost us, after that attack, about a million jobs. It hurt when the enemy hit us. We also went through corporate scandals, which affected us. I mean, look, we're a country that depends upon honesty. I mean, when people—when you're an investor or when you're looking at balance sheets, you expect there to be good, honest numbers. And when we started to uncover the fact that some didn't tell the truth, it began to affect our confidence. It just did. We acted. I mean, it's real clear right now that if you are dishonest in the boardrooms of America,

there's going to be a consequence. But we've overcome these obstacles.

And one of the reasons why I believe we overcame the obstacles is because of tax relief. I believe by cutting the taxes, it helped. And I want to thank the Congressman for his work on that. We did it, I think, the fair way. We said, "If you pay taxes, you get relief." We raised the child credit to help people with children. We've mitigated the consequences of the marriage penalty. We believe that the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage.

We helped our small businesses—we're going to talk to two entrepreneurs today about what the tax relief meant for their business. They can explain it better than I can. After all, they're the ones—they're the risktakers; they're the people who are on the frontline of when it comes to hiring people.

Before we talk to them and talk to some others who are benefiting from the tax relief and have got some interesting things to talk about, I do want to talk about what else needs to be done. You know, there's concern about jobs going overseas. I share the concern. We want people working here. We want our jobs here. And the best way to do so is to make sure this is the best place to do business in the world. The best way to make sure jobs are here is, this is a place for risktakers, feel comfortable taking risk, and you're able to do so without getting sued right and left. So we need tort reform.

And you know, I got to tell you, the plaintiff's attorneys are tough politically. But I believe it's the right thing to have a justice system that's fair, that you're not—that the legal system doesn't look like a lottery, but in fact, if somebody gets hurt, they've got their day in court. But if we keep having frivolous and junk lawsuits that threaten our employers, it's going to be hard to keep the job base active and alive here. So we need tort reform. We need less regulation.

In order to make sure that our economy continues to grow and jobs stay here, we've got to have free and fair trade. Let me tell you about the trade issue and my point of view on that. Most Presidents believe that it's important to have our markets open for foreign goods. Why? Because if you're a consumer, the more goods you have to choose from, the more likely it is you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's how the market works. And so administrations from both parties said, "Let's open up our markets for the good of consumers." My attitude is, is that if we treat a country by opening our markets, they ought to treat us the same way. That's good trade policy. We open up our markets; you open up yours.

And it's paying off. Our trade policy is paying off. Look at the agricultural sector here in America today. It's strong. You know why? Because our farmers can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere. All they needed was markets opened up to sell their products.

We need an energy plan. If we want to have jobs here, you know, we've got to have energy. And right now, we're too dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's just the way it is. I submitted an energy plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It was a plan that said we've got to diversify our energy supply, but we've got to be—and we've got to be wise about how we use the energy we have. We need clean coal technology to make sure we can use precious coal. We can explore in environmentally friendly ways. We need alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We need to be better at conservation. We need to promote technologies which change habits and uses, like hydrogen-driven automobiles. But for the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, I need an energy plan on my desk to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Health care is obviously an issue that matters as to whether or not we can keep

jobs here at home. Listen, most people receive their health insurance through their jobs. And most—a lot of small businesses are having trouble affording health care. And what we need to do is allow small businesses to pool together so they can be able to purchase health care at the discounts that big businesses are able to do. It's prohibited now from doing that. It's called association health plans.

You'll hear me talk about health savings accounts in a minute, as an innovative way for people to be able to make sure that the decisionmaking process is between them and their doctors, and it's a way to hold down costs. We've got somebody here who has actually used a health savings account that has worked. There are things we can do to help people who can't help themselves. My philosophy of government says government ought to help people who can't help themselves and help people help themselves. And part of helping people who can't help themselves is to expand community health centers so low-income people can get primary care in places other than emergency rooms in your hospitals.

We delivered on a promise. As I said when I was campaigning, we'd modernize Medicare, and was able to get that through the Congress. The Medicare system was—is a really important system, but it was old and wasn't working that well. Think about this. We would pay for the heart surgery of a senior, and we wouldn't pay for the medication to prevent the heart disease in the first place. I didn't think that made much sense for the taxpayers and for the seniors. So I went to Congress and said, "Well, look, let's do our duty. Let's kind of set aside all this bickering and why don't we focus on what's good for the seniors."

And I was proud to sign a Medicare reform bill that, first of all, provides drug discount cards for seniors. And if you're a senior here, I would strongly urge you to look into the drug discount cards for savings for your prescriptions. Secondly, in '05, we're now going to pay for screenings, preventative screenings, for the first time for our seniors, so we diagnose early, before it's too late. And in '06, a system will show up where seniors actually have choices. If you want to stay in the system as it is, you can do so, and you get prescription drug coverage. If you want choice in the marketplace, you're able to design the program that meets your needs. So in other words, we're doing good work when it comes to health care.

And one thing I want to assure you, in all the discussion about health care, we're going to make sure that the doctor and patient are the decisionmakers, not bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'll tell you a national issue that's an important issue when it comes to health care is medical liability reform. Green informed me that he had helped pass medical liability reform here in the State of Wisconsin. And it may not be nearly as big an issue here as it is elsewhere, but a lot of these lawsuits are driving docs out of business. I'm telling you, in State after State, one of the biggest complaints I hear from people is that, "My doc is leaving the business," or "His premiums are so high to stay in business, he's running up my cost."

Now, look, I don't think you can choose—I mean, I know you have to choose between patients and doctors and plaintiff's attorneys. You have to make a choice. You can't be for both. And my opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform now, for the sake of affordable and available health care.

Finally, let me talk about two quick things, and then we're going to talk to some of your fellow citizens here. One, education is really important for workers. If we want to keep jobs here in America, we better have a system that enables people to become retrained for the jobs which exist. That's why I'm a big backer of the community college system, and it's a system that's working. It's a system that is available and

affordable. They're everywhere, at reasonable price, and there's plenty of Government aid to help.

So I travel the country a lot. And let me tell you an interesting story. I met a lady in Phoenix, Arizona, went to Mesa Community College. She had worked for 12 years as a graphic artist. She decided to go back to college, got a little help to do so, went back and got an associates degree. And her—in other words, she enhanced her skills. And her first job out of the community college paid more in her first year than she was making in her 12th year as a graphic artist. In other words, what education does is it makes you a more productive worker. And Government has got to encourage people to go back to community college by helping them to do so.

And if we want to keep jobs here, we've got to train people for the jobs which actually exist. This is a changing world. The economy is changing. I was thinking about down in North Carolina where some of these textile plants have moved out because they couldn't compete, but the health care industry was strong. And so the compassionate thing to do is to help people who have lost their job gain the skills necessary to work in a field that is dynamic, and you make more money doing so.

Now, finally, I want to talk about fiscal discipline and fiscal sanity in Washington, DC. In order to keep the job base expanding so people can find work here, we must not overspend your money. And we must keep your taxes down. See, running up the taxes right now will hurt our economy. And we'll talk to some people that—when we run up—if their taxes get—they're not going to get run up; the guy is not going to win. And so it's—but your fellow citizens ought to worry about somebody who is out there making promise after promise after promise, like over $2 trillion worth of new promises and not telling you how he's going to pay for it. You know, he says, "Well, we can pay for it because we'll tax the rich." Well, we've heard that kind of language before. And you know what happens with this kind of tax-the-rich deal. That's why they've got accountants and lawyers. [*Laughter*] So the rich figure out ways not to pay, and you get stuck with the tab. That's not going to happen in 2004.

Old Mike Shaver is with us. Where are you, Mike? Mike is a small-business owner. He owns Hudson Machine and Tool. Before you say something, Mike, I want to tell people how you're organized, if you don't mind. He is a Subchapter S corporation. You know what that means? He pays taxes at the individual income-tax rate. So when you hear somebody saying, "Tax the rich," I want you thinking about small-business owners.

Most of small businesses in America are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. They pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Therefore, when we said, "Let's cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes," we're also talking about small businesses. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And if you're worried about people find work—finding work, it makes sense to stimulate the small-business sector of our country.

So here's a Subchapter S. All right, tell us about your company. Here's your chance. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mike Shaver made brief remarks.*]

The President. How many did you hire? How many did you hire?

Mike Shaver. We hired about half a dozen people, eight people, maybe.

The President. Yes, that's it. Let me tell you something. He hires eight. Another vibrant small business hires eight, and all of a sudden, you got people working in America. That's what I'm talking about.

Go ahead.

Mr. Shaver. But what made it possible for us to hire these people is the policy that you put in place has enabled me to

purchase capital equipment, and if I purchase capital equipment, I have to have people to run it.

The President. Let me tell you something. Part of the tax relief for small businesses was not just cutting the rates. We also incentivized people to buy equipment. In other words, if he bought equipment, he got a little extra help in the Tax Code.

And so what did you buy?

Mr. Shaver. We bought a horizontal machining center, and we added on to the building too.

The President. See, buys a horizontal machining center. [*Laughter*] But somebody had to make it, right? [*Laughter*] You see, we give—he makes a decision because the Tax Code said, you know, "It's in your interest if you do," which was to buy a machine. And somebody had to make the machine. And so what he just told you was, by buying a machine, it enabled him to hire two people. And by buying the machine, it also made the machine manufacturer more likely to either keep an employee or add one to help meet his demand. I think that's the way it works, don't you?

Mr. Shaver. That is correct.

The President. Yes, I understand it. Tell me about—he's got an interesting idea. First of all, are you planning on investing again?

Mr. Shaver. Yes, we've already—I've bought a—we spent about $150,000 this year so far on a new truck and a vertical machining center.

The President. You got the horizontal machining center—[*laughter*]. Education is really important. [*Laughter*]

Tell me about your—you got an interesting idea. See, one of the things that's important about having a vibrant small-business sector is that there's some really great ideas that happen through these entrepreneurs.

And so tell me about your apprenticeship program.

[*Mr. Shaver made further remarks.*]

The President. See, job training takes place in community colleges; job training takes place on the floors of small businesses. It's really important to make sure the small-business sector of the country is dynamic. The role of a Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which people like Mike Shaver feel comfortable about expanding the job base of America.

And I want to thank you for coming.

Mr. Shaver. Thank you very much.

The President. Appreciate you.

Doug Richardson is with us.

Doug Richardson. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, you're the same guy I met recently. [*Laughter*] He is the co-owner—you know, one of the things I love to talk about is ownership in America. I love it when guys like Mike and Doug own their own business. I love the idea of more people owning their own home. Do you realize that homeownership rates in America are at an alltime high? Isn't it wonderful to think about a country where more people own something. They open up their front door and say, "Welcome to my home." This guy Doug Richardson is co-owner, which is—I love the ring—he's an entrepreneur.

Tell us what you do.

Mr. Richardson. You stand up too.

The President. He's the other owner?

Mr. Richardson. The other owner is here too, Tim McCormick.

The President. Well, we've got you here because you're better looking. But anyway—[*laughter*]—let me tell you, Dick Cheney is not the prettiest guy in the race. [*Laughter*] Of course, I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because he can do the job. He probably picked you because you're a great co-owner. [*Laughter*] God, I hope he's still for me. Anyway—[*laughter*]. Sorry, Doug, I didn't mean to dis your guy here.

Mr. Richardson. That's okay. I do it all the time. [*Laughter*]

The President. What do both of you do?

Mr. Richardson. Well, you talk about risk. We bought Parco Manufacturing, which—we manufacture vinyl windows and patio doors. Talk about increasing business, I'm sure a number of you are in need of windows around here.

The President. This guy is a marketing genius. [*Laughter*] Except, you need to look over there for the cameras; it's a much bigger crowd.

[*Mr. Richardson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Are you investing at all?

Mr. Richardson. We invested about 170,000 in equipment over the last 2 years——

The President. Horizontal or vertical? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Richardson. Neither.

The President. Yes, that's good. What do you buy, seriously?

Mr. Richardson. We buy delivery trucks.

The President. Good.

Mr. Richardson. We buy manufacturing equipment to build our windows. And we've also invested a half-million dollars into property and another factory.

The President. Great, congratulations. Classic small business: two guys, two buddies, said, "Let's get after it." They take a risk. That's part of how the economy works; they're willing to take risk. And because they're dreamers and doers, people are working. And the role of Government is to encourage through good tax policy. We don't need to be running up the taxes. Look, let me remind you all, when you hear, "Tax the rich—oh, don't worry, we're just going to raise the top rates," it's going to affect the entrepreneurial class of America because most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations. We need to keep the taxes low on the small businesses of America, in order for them to feel comfortable about expanding the job base.

Thank you. Good job. I appreciate you coming.

Roger Ripplinger is with us. Hey, Rog, how are you?

Roger Ripplinger. Doing great.

The President. Good. Well, me too. He is a—what do you do?

Mr. Ripplinger. I hire people.

The President. Yes, my kind of guy. Get after it, will you? [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Ripplinger made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good. In other words, you're good at what you do. They hired you. Did you make any more money?

Mr. Ripplinger. I make a lot more money.

The President. Yes, see, what's happening is, is that, you know, it's an interesting world we're in—people are changing jobs, and that's a little unsettling. But if you're able to upgrade your skills or be good at what you do, a lot of times when people change jobs, they can make more money.

Now, one of the things that—let's see, you got a little tax relief. How much? Got to turn on his mike. I'll say that. He got a lot, he said. I'll be your interpreter. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Ripplinger. We got a check last July. And it was just in time—there we go—and it was just in time for back to school shopping, when all the sales hit, so we could even stretch it even farther. It was wonderful.

The President. He saved about $2,400 in his taxes last year. That's a lot of money for a family. And it's—you see, my philosophy—thank you, Rog—my philosophy is that Government meets priorities; once it meets its priorities, then the people can spend their money better than Government can. And I want Roger having that 2,400 in his pocket, because it helps the economy grow.

Did you do anything with it?

Mr. Ripplinger. Yes, we actually—we invested some.

The President. Good. That's a good thing.

Mr. Ripplinger. Yes, and we bought a new vehicle.

The President. That means there's more capital, by the way, available for people when they go out an buy horizontal machines. [*Laughter*] That's how the economy works. When he says "investing," it's part of saving. Go ahead.

Mr. Ripplinger. And we bought a new vehicle as well.

The President. Good, yes, well, somebody had to sell it to you. And then somebody had to make it. By the way, parts of the tax relief package expire. See, the tax relief was not permanent—a permanent fixture. They said, "We'll give you tax relief for a while." And the child credit goes down to $700 a child this year if Congress doesn't act. The marriage penalty goes up if Congress doesn't act. The 10-percent bracket is affected if Congress doesn't act. This guy will pay $1,100 more in taxes if Congress doesn't act. So when you hear me going around the country saying, "Let's keep the tax cuts permanent," that's what I'm talking about, not taking money out of his pocket.

All right, Rog, thanks for coming.

We got the Garzas with us. There they are. Oh, yes. Who you got with you?

Jesse Garza. This is Page.

The President. Page.

Mr. Garza. Say, "Hi, Mr. President."

The President. Yes, I know how you feel sometimes. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. Kate and Jesse are workers—both of them in the workplace?

Mr. Garza. My wife is a hospice social worker here in——

The President. Thanks. Thanks for doing that.

Mr. Garza. Yes, no problem.

The President. No, I'm talking to her. [*Laughter*] Thanks for doing that—we'll try it again.

Kate Garza. My husband works for his family business and manages that.

The President. Great. The reason I've asked them to come is to talk about tax relief again. See, oftentimes in the course of the discussion about tax relief, we talk numbers. And people seem to forget—particularly in Washington—that tax relief affects people's lives in incredibly positive ways. How much relief did you get, 1,200? Yes. Isn't that right?

Mr. Garza. Yes, we did.

The President. And this year about $1,700, they tell me?

Mr. Garza. I hope so.

The President. She wants to talk.

Page Garza. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] All education begins at home, by the way.

So what has it meant for you, tax relief? Explain. Here's your chance to tell people who say, "Oh, tax relief only benefited certain people."

[*Mr. Garza made brief remarks.*]

The President. Oh, fantastic. See, it helps people. It helps them with their lives. They improved their home because they've got another child coming. Tax relief helps families in tangible ways, and Congress needs to make it permanent. We don't need to be taking money out of the pockets of our small businesses and the working people here in America.

Mr. Garza. Mr. President——

The President. Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. Garza. If you want to help our family and the families out here, just do one thing: Win.

The President. Thank you, sir. I intend to. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Finally, we've got Kris Walker with us. There he is.

Kris Walker. Mr. President.

The President. Yes. I'm George Walker Bush. He's old, just plain Kris Walker. [*Laughter*] Cousin.

Mr. Walker. Right on.

The President. Kris has done something; he's bought a health savings account. I've asked him to come because I want him to explain what it means. It's an interesting way for people to take care of their own health care needs. It's a very interesting

concept, by the way, for small-business owners who are struggling with affordable health care.

Go ahead and tell us what it is.

[*Mr. Walker made brief remarks.*]

The President. Now, let me tell you what that is. Here's the way it works. He goes out and buys a high deductible, catastrophic plan, which means that after the deductible, insurance takes care of the health care needs. And then the health savings account says you've got your high deductible and then you can contribute, tax-free, to cover from zero to the limits of your deductible—tax-free. And the money stays in your account and earns interest, tax-free. And you can take the money out, tax-free. And so in other words, it is an incentive program that he has used, and it is $700 a month less expensive.

Mr. Walker. [*Inaudible*]—dollars less. And for me, it's a great thing, and I think for the 35 million Americans that are uninsured, it's a fabulous way to be insured. And for small business, it's a great way to be competitive in the market.

The President. Yes, it really is. I appreciate you saying that. What's really interesting about this plan, by the way, is that it's—you see your own money. See, you put your own money in, tax-free. It's your money. You can save it over time if you don't spend it, obviously, and therefore, it provides an incentive to make better choices about health care needs. And all of a sudden, Kris starts saying, "Well, you know, I may not need this"—doc says you think you need it—"I may not need it." In other words, he is directly involved with the pricing and purchasing of health care, which I think is a vital component to make sure that health care decisions are aligned properly and that a health care market begins to adjust to consumer demand. And that's really what health savings accounts do. I really want to thank you for sharing with us his idea.

By the way, he got tax relief, and he got a tax relief big enough to make the cash contribution equal to his deductible. So in other words, it's—smart guy. I appreciate you sharing that with us.

Mr. Walker. Thanks for having me. Good luck in '04.

The President. Yes, thank you, sir. I appreciate you coming.

Listen, I want to thank you all for coming. I hope you found this to be an innovative way to talk about how to keep the country stronger. Let me talk about how to keep it safer.

I tell people that if this country shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift to tragedy. It's not going to happen on my watch. Our country changed on September the 11th. Our whole perspective about security and peace must change with the lessons of September the 11th. Let me share some of the things I've learned as the President.

First, we face an enemy that is—that has no conscience. They are—they'll cut off a head just like that and not care. They will take innocent life in order to achieve a dark vision. That's the reality of these people. That's why I tell people you cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with them. In order to secure our country, we must stay on the offense and bring them to justice, defeat them elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

That is the reality of the world we live in today, and it's a stark reality, but it's necessary. It's a reality that is in the forefront of my thinking. The Government has a solemn duty to protect us, and so when you hear talk about staying on the offense, that's why. And we're making progress. We're dismantling the Al Qaida network. And it's a hard work.

It's a different—I see some great vets here with us today. This is a different kind of war that we're in. It is a—[*applause*]. Thanks for coming, men. But it is a different kind of war than you're used to.

It's a war where there is a patient, ruthless enemy that hides and waits for countries to lower their guard and then strikes. And they're trying to intimidate us. This is really—the war on terror is an interesting way to describe the world in which we live. It's really a battle and a struggle against ideological extremists who have hijacked a great religion and used terror as a weapon to intimidate people of good heart and good soul and good conscience. I clearly see the task at hand.

Secondly, in this new kind of war, we must not only deal with the terrorists; we must send clear signals to those who would harbor terrorists. See, we've got to disrupt their capacity to find safe haven. And when an American President speaks, he better speak clearly and mean what he says. If a President sends mixed signals, the world will drift toward tragedy.

And so I said to the Taliban, "Give them up, or face serious consequences." "Give them up" meant give up Al Qaida. They defied. They said, "America really doesn't mean what it says." But I did. And so we put together a coalition, and we routed the Taliban. We upheld the doctrine. We said—[*applause*]. And the world is better for it. America is safer as a result of our action.

I told you about the people showing up to vote in Afghanistan. It is amazing to me, at least, to think that 3½ years ago, the Taliban, these unbelievably barbaric people, by the way, were running the country. They would take a woman out in the public square and whip her because they didn't think she conformed to their dark view of the world. If you dared speak out, if you dared exercise your religion in a way you were comfortable with, you were punished. And now they're headed toward a democracy. People are showing up to vote. The world is more peaceful as a result, and Afghanistan is an ally. They're an ally in the war on terror.

You know, I was in Cleveland a couple of weeks ago, and I was there to kick off the International Children's Games. And right there to my right as I stood up to say welcome to America, was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was amazing. It was a very emotional moment for me. I was so proud of our country that, in acting in our own self-interest, we acted in the interests of those young girls, who would not have been in our great country to play soccer had it not been for our willingness to uphold doctrine, to defend our security, and to liberate people.

Another lesson of September the 11th which is a vital lesson, and it's a lesson that's very important for our security, is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. See, I'm confident no—very few Americans would have ever felt that a President would have needed to stand up and say that, except September the 11th came. We used to think oceans could protect us. If we saw a threat overseas, we could say, "Gosh, well, there's a threat. We may have to deal with it, may not have to deal with it, but it's unlikely to cause us any harm." That's what happened on September the 11th—we no long have that luxury of thinking our security is afforded by protection from oceans.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I looked at his history. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. His organization was harbored there in Iraq. Zarqawi, we knew, was in and out. He's the guy who beheads people now and brags about it on Arab TV, trying to intimidate us. He was in and out of Iraq. He funded families of suiciders. That's an unconscionable act, and yet this guy said, "We'll provide a little financial incentive for you." He killed thousands of his own people. He's a dangerous man.

And remembering the lessons of September the 11th, I went to the United Nations and the Congress. I said to the Congress, I said, "Look, he's a threat. The

intelligence shows he's a threat. His history shows he's a threat. And we've got to remember the world we live in." And the Congress responded. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence and data and came to the conclusion I came to. By far, the vast majority of Members of the Senate and the House—including my opponent, by the way—looked at the same intelligence and said, "Saddam Hussein was a threat."

I then went to the United Nations, and I did for a reason—one, I want that organization to be effective. And so I basically said, "Look, you can either be an empty debating society or an effective international organization. When you say something, you mean it." And secondly, they had said year after year after year, resolution after resolution after resolution, "You're a problem, and we'll deal with you," and they never did, which, in my judgment, emboldens a tyrant. It certainly didn't frighten the tyrant.

So I went to the United Nations and said, "Look, this is a different era. The world changed. We see a threat. Do you?" And in a 15 to nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, they said, "Saddam is a threat. Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That is what the free world said.

And so we—but as he had for decades—a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, we agreed to inspectors. We thought they would be a good thing.

Let me say something. Let me step back. The reason I thought diplomacy was important and the inspectors were important is because the use of military is the last option of the President. It's serious business when the President puts people into harm's way. It is the toughest decision a Commander in Chief can make, to say to moms and dads and husbands and wives, "I believe it's necessary for your loved one to defend our security." And so I was hoping that we could solve this diplomatically and peacefully.

You know, he deceived the inspectors. So I'm confronted with a choice at this point. Having tried diplomacy, working with the United States Congress, and seeing the deception taking place, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of this madman and hope for the best, or do I take action to defend the country? I will tell you, given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you. A couple of other points I want to make. [*Applause*] Thanks. Thanks a lot. I appreciate that.

You know, we didn't find the stockpiles with thought we would find, but I want to remind you, he had the capability of making weapons. And had he once again defied the world, he would have made them. And having that capability, it also gave him the opportunity to pass them on to an enemy. It's a risk we just simply couldn't take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. I firmly believe America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Let me talk about three more points, then I'll answer some questions if we have time. Sometimes I can get a little windy. [*Laughter*]

We put together a vast coalition, nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan and nearly 30 in Iraq. And it's important we work with others in this war on terror because you've got to share intelligence, and you've got to work to cut off money. And when we find a threat, it's important to be able to pick up the phone and call a friend like Great Britain and say, "Pick this person up, please," because—"and here's the evidence." In other words, there's got to be a collaborative effort. And we are. And we're working closely with countries around the world. I'll continue to work on this coalition when I'm your President for 4 more years. But I will never turn over our

security—national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I'm proud of the coalition we've put together. And it's very important for those of us with the microphones to be singing the praises of the coalition partners and thanking the moms and dads from Great Britain, Italy, South Korea, Japan, Poland, from all around the world, for the same contributions that the families of our troops have made.

And speaking about our troops, I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones: They'll have all the support that we can give them from the Federal Government. And we met that duty. I don't know if you know this, but military pay is up by 21 percent since I've been the President. Housing is better for those who—for the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. We're transforming our military, which is important.

You know, we were configured—our troops deployments were configured for the cold war. We were configured to fight an enemy that no longer exists. The Soviet Union doesn't exist, and yet we had troops stationed around Europe, for example, with the equipment necessary to take on the Soviet Union. That's why at the VFW the other day, I said, "Wait a minute. Let's be smart about how we deploy our troops. Equipment has changed since the Soviet era. We can replace tanks with Stryker Brigades and achieve the same objective. We don't need as many troops stationed overseas anymore because the Soviet era is no longer a threat."

When you can replace land troops with more effective aircraft, it means people are stationed at home, that they can be deployed rapidly, and it means less unsettling times for our troops, less rotations, less pressure on the system, plus taxpayer savings. We're doing wise things with our military. We're funding the military and we're transforming the military to meet the threats of a new era. And it's important for the Commander in Chief to see clearly how best to align our military to keep the peace.

When it came to funding our troops, we have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I put a supplemental up to the Congress in September of last year. It was money for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, and fuel, that which is necessary when you've got people in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq. And I want to thank the members of both political parties for their strong bipartisan support. We had great bipartisan support, so much so that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. It's an issue in this campaign. He—when pressed, my opponent said, you know, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." It's kind of an interesting explanation. People around here are plain talkers. And then he went on, when pressed, to say, "Well, gosh, it was"—you know, "I did the right thing," or he's proud of his vote, I think he said, and then said, "It's a complicated matter." Now, there's nothing complicated about providing for our troops in combat. I will continue to be a Commander in Chief who supports our troops.

Two quick points. One, the goal in Iraq and Afghanistan is for there to be democratic and free countries who are allies in the war on terror. That's the goal. We will meet that goal by providing security so that their political processes can work. There will be Presidential elections this fall in Afghanistan. There will be elections in Iraq. There are two leaders in Afghanistan and Iraq who believe in the aspirations of their people. These are people who are committed to democracy. It's—we will stay there to get the job done.

It's—the Iraqis—it's tough to go from tyranny to freedom. You can imagine a society in which, if you stepped out of line, you were either done in or tortured. And so people in Iraq are watching us carefully. They wonder whether or not America is going to honor its word. That's why the

other day I took exception when my opponent said, if he's elected, we'll substantially reduce the troops in 6 months. He shouldn't have said that. See, it sends a mixed signal to the enemy, for starters, so the enemy hangs around for 6 months and 1 day. It sends a mixed signal to our own troops, and it says something to the Iraqis. It says, maybe America isn't going to keep its word. It's vital when we say something to the Iraqi people, we keep our word, so that they begin to take risk toward a free society. They want to be free—they want to be free.

And so what the strategy is, to stay there as long as it takes to get the job done and not one day longer. That's the message I send to the people of Iraq and our troops and the enemy.

And you'll see an Afghan army grow up, and you'll see an Iraqi police force and army grow up to take care of those who want to stop the advance of freedom, and that's really what we're talking about.

Just real quick, I believe freedom changes societies, and I believe a free society is a peaceful society. And therefore, it is in our national interests to promote a liberty in a part of the world that is full of hatred and resentment and intolerance.

I talk about a dinner I had with Prime Minister Koizumi, and I think I talked about that today with some people on Air Force One, if I'm not mistaken. And anyway, so I'm having dinner with Koizumi, and we're talking about North Korea. See, I made the decision that no longer can we convince Kim Chong-il to disarm if it's only the United States talking to the North Koreans. I felt it was important to bring other countries into the mix, like China and Japan and South Korea and Russia, so there's now five countries saying to the tyrant in North Korea, "Disarm—disarm."

And so I'm talking to Prime Minister Koizumi about that. Really what I'm talking about is how to keep the peace, how to use U.S. influence and Japanese influence, in this case, to keep the peace. He's the Prime Minister of a country that my dad went to war with. It's amazing, isn't it, that, gosh, half a century later, after a young Navy pilot—and I'm sure your dads or granddads might have fought in the same theater—we're back talking peace with a former enemy. You know why? Because after World War II, my predecessor and others believed that liberty had the capacity to transform an enemy into a peaceful partner, and that's what happened.

There were some doubters and skeptics. "The reconstruction effort wasn't going well," or, "It was too tough over there, and maybe, maybe the Japanese don't have the capacity to self-govern." But somebody that served in Government had great faith in liberty and didn't abandon the concept that we hold dear. And here I am, sitting down with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about the peace. Someday, when we complete our job in Iraq, an American President is going to be having dinner with an elected leader from Iraq talking about peace, and the world will be better for it.

I want to talk—just real quick, a story, and then I'll be glad to answer your questions. Let me say also, when I say liberty, by serving the cause of liberty, I tell people, serves our security interests. It also serves something which I believe is part of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. We believe that in America. I think it's one of the most noble aspects of our national character, is that we believe in human dignity, no matter the religion of the person.

Let me tell you an interesting story, and then I promise to answer some questions. [*Laughter*] If Laura were here, she'd be giving me the hook. [*Laughter*] That's the way it is. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, the Oval Office door opens up and in walks seven men from Iraq, all of whom had had their right hands cut off

by Saddam Hussein. They had been to Houston, Texas, where a newscaster had—a quite famous newscaster—had raised money and set up a foundation to help people. He saw their story through a documentary, and he flew them to Houston to get new hands. So these guys come walking in the Oval Office—I mean, it was a powerful moment. The Oval Office is a—it's a shrine to democracy, and it tends to take everybody's breath away who walks in—except Mother's—[*laughter*]—who is still telling me what to do. [*Laughter*] And I'm listening—about half the time. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, so these guys walk in, you know, and I was emotional. They were emotional. And I said, "Why you?" He said, "The Saddam dinar had devalued and"—he was a merchant, a small-business man; I don't know if he was a Subchapter S corporation or not, but he was a small-business man. And he had sold dinars on a particular day to buy another currency, euros or dollars, so he could buy gold to manufacture his product. And because the Iraqi * dinar had devalued, Saddam Hussein plucked this guy out of society to punish him and six other small merchants, for the devaluation of their currency. He just summarily said, "You're it, come here," and cut his hand off.

Isn't it an amazing contrast, to think of a country that was ruled by a tyrant who just said, "We'll cut the hands off of people to make me look better," and a country that has got a compassionate individual who is willing to pay for their way to America to get a new hand? That's what we're talking about. It's such a stark, vivid contrast about a country that is compassionate and strong and decent and noble and a country run by a tyrant, where seven poor individuals had their lives severely affected until rescued by an American.

The guy takes a Sharpie. He holds the pen, and he writes "God Bless America" in Arabic. It was a powerful moment in my Presidency. I told him, I said, "Welcome to the Oval Office." I said, "I want you to understand that the Office of President is bigger than the individual, and when you have a free society in Iraq and have the institutions bigger than the people, no longer will a thug be able to summarily affect your life the way Saddam Hussein did." He said, "Thank God for America." He said, "You're my liberator." I said, "No, I want you to walk out and look in the camera, and I want you to thank the moms and dads of our service people and the taxpayers of America for liberating you and making you free."

These are historic times—these are historic times. I'm asking for 4 more years to spread freedom and peace.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me answer some questions right quick.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You can chant that, or I'll answer questions. [*Laughter*] Yes, sir. Sit down, please. First of all, great color shirt. [*Laughter*] Go ahead and yell it. If I don't like it, I'll just change the question. [*Laughter*]

Praying for the President

Q. On behalf of all—thank you and God bless you. We're praying for you.

The President. Thank you. He said he's praying for me. I appreciate that. Thanks. And by the way, I appreciate the prayers. It's an amazing country, where people pray for me. It really is. It's great. Thank you.

Go ahead. Do you have a question?

The President and Labor Unions

Q. Yes. Being that Wisconsin and Minnesota are swing States and——

The President. Minnesota and Wisconsin are swing States, I agree with that.

Q. Thankfully, I believe, because of talk radio.

The President. Yes.

* White House correction.

Q. But in addition to that, they're also big union States.

The President. Sure, union States.

Q. Being in a union——

The President. You're a union member. Good, see, I'm interpreting faithfully. [*Laughter*]

Q. But being a union member, I have had a lot of feedback that you're not 100 percent for unions, and I'd like you——

The President. Yes, he said—the question is, do I like unions?

Q. Well, that's one of—yes, that is the question.

The President. I respect everybody's right to unionize if they so choose. But let me tell you what's equally important. When you cut taxes, you cut taxes on people whether they're in a union or not. Your union members have got more money in their pocket, thanks to what I did. This wasn't a union-nonunion tax cut. This was a tax cut for everybody. And when you're securing America, you're securing it not only for union people but nonunion people. But go ahead. You tell your workers I respect unions, and I respect the people who work for unions.

Yesterday I was in Ridley, Pennsylvania, at a Boeing plant, a unionized plant, was warmly received on the shop floor by union workers. Go ahead. This is kind of like a dialog, you know. [*Laughter*]

Q. They believe the reason why is because of your views or your regulations on immigration, and I——

Immigration Policy

The President. Yes. He's asking my views on immigration. Thanks. Here's what I believe. I believe that we have a policy today that is not working, and my responsibility is to address problems. We have a situation where we've got willing employers who can't find workers here in America to fill jobs, who are looking for people who are coming across the border. Talk to some of your farm workers—they know what I'm talking about—or your—people—meatpackers. I mean, there's a lot of workers—lot of employers who can't find workers. Interestingly enough, there's a lot of people who want to improve themselves, and so they're willing to walk miles to work. And so I believe a good policy is for a willing employer, who can't find a U.S. citizen to fill the job, to be able to look in a legal fashion for somebody who's willing to fill the job.

I think that's an important part of keeping the economy growing. I also know it's an important part of being a compassionate America. I mean, why would you want to have a system where the employer is illegal, the worker is illegal, and if the worker gets harmed, he or she is fearful of bringing a complaint, for fear of not being able to fulfill their function.

Look, I was the Governor of the great State of Texas. We had a—[*applause*]—thank you, ma'am. We had a—there you go. We had a—we obviously had an issue with this. There's moms and dads who live in Mexico who feel an obligation to work to feed their kids, and if they can make $5 in America as opposed to 50 cents in Mexico, they're going to come. And so, therefore, in order to, in my judgment, to better enforce our borders, which we must do, we need a temporary-worker program that says to people—again, I repeat, if you can't find a worker, let's have it legal so you can find somebody to do the job.

Now, this will enable somebody to go back and forth to their country. There will be a—you know, looking forward to working with Congress on limiting this. This doesn't mean automatic citizenship. I don't think you ought to penalize people who have been waiting in line for citizenship with somebody who has got a temporary-worker card. But I think the system needs to be changed, and that's what you can tell your union buddies, that this is a system that says we can't—if you can't find a worker, then you ought to be able to legally be able to hire somebody who's willing to do the job.

Let me also tell you something. One reason I'm for trade in our neighborhood is because I know ultimately the way to keep pressure off our borders is for people to be able to find work close to home, that people want to be able to work close to home. You got to understand, moms and dads in Mexico have the same desire as moms and dads here to put food on the table for their families. And if they can find work at home, it's going to take the pressure of our borders. And the best way to do so is to have free and fair trade in our neighborhood as well.

Yes, sir.

Culture of Life

Q. Could you tell us how you intend to cultivate what you call the "culture of life" in America?

The President. He wants to know about culture of life. Well, culture of life says that, Mr. President, sign the partial-birth abortion bill, in order to discourage the brutal practice of partial-birth. Encouraging a culture of life is to encourage parental notification laws. Encouraging a culture of life is to say that if a pregnant mom is killed, that that person who killed that mom is also equally culpable for the death of their child. In other words, it's to pass reasonable laws that begin to say to people, life matters in America.

Now, cultures change slowly, and this is still a very—it's a very heartfelt debate on behalf of—in the political process, on the abortion issue. And my attitude is, is that I'll sign laws that begin to change people's perception of life and, at the same time, speak out for a culture of life, because I think a culture of—a society that embraces a culture of life is a much more hospitable, generous, and compassionate society. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Yes, what you got? The mike holder has got a question.

Drug Use/Faith-Based and Community Initiative

Q. What I would like to ask——

The President. Here I'm standing by the speaker. Kind of blew me——

Q. Well, first of all, is that I agree with this gentleman. I'm glad that we're all praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'm a local youth minister, recently hired. And one of the things—two of the things we've talked about today are enemies and freedom. And I believe that the enemy that we need the greatest freedom from right now happens to be Satan, and it's the enemy that we also don't necessarily always see. There's so many people who are being attacked on every level. A lot of those people are youth that are in our middle schools and our high schools. And I was just wondering how we can do more for faith-based initiatives for children, before they're drug addicts?

The President. Yes. I appreciate you saying that. Look, well, first of all, it's for me to call upon people such as yourself to interface with children early, before it's too late. You answered the question by your actions. But in terms of reducing demand for drug—you ask a specific issue on drug use, for example. We've got a collaborative effort with faith-based groups, community groups, neighborhood groups all aimed at sending the same message you're sending. And it's a kind of universal effort necessary to say to a child, "Drugs will destroy you." And it's working, frankly. We've reduced drug use by 11 percent in 3½ years—it's not "we," it's community groups have done so in 3½ years.

You're right, there needs to be a positive message sent to our youth. There also needs to be a focused effort on helping the drug addicts who consume most of the drugs. A percentage of—a relatively small percentage of the people consume most of the drugs, and that's why I'm working with Congress to fund a drug recovery program,

of which an integral part of that will be a Faith-Based Initiative. And the way it works is, is a person gets a voucher that he or she can redeem at the program he or she chooses that meets her own or his own needs. And that includes the ability of faith-based programs to become involved, as I told you, with helping people change their hearts and, therefore, change their lives.

Thank you for what you do. I appreciate you being a youth minister. Thanks.

Yes, ma'am. You're not nervous, are you? [*Laughter*]

Funding for the Arts

Q. No, not at all.

The President. You kind of look like it. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President—[*inaudible*]—pray for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. ——I realize what you've done, and I was curious to know what your—[*inaudible*]—is for funding leaders involved across the United States.

The President. Funding the arts? Well, we do that through the National Endowment of the Arts, is the best way to do that. It's the vehicle that we use in Washington, DC.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Sure. You're welcome. Glad you're here.

Yes, ma'am.

Prescription Drug Costs

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. Great question. Her question was about the cost of drugs. Well, one is to expedite generic drugs on the market. Generic drugs are sold at a vast discount from brand-name drugs. And we put through, in the Medicare bill, as well as executive action through the FDA, a way to speed generics to the market so people are able to buy the very same drug that's sold at 50 at 10.

Secondly, I believer that part of good marketing is for people to have exposure to price of drugs. So one of the things we've done is we've put a virtual market right on the computer for people to look up the different costs of drugs at their local pharmacy, so that there's better selection when it comes to purchasing.

Thirdly, we are studying whether or not importation will work. I put together a committee to make sure that—look, what I don't want to do is be the President that says, "We'll allow for importation," and all of a sudden, drugs that are manufactured somewhere else come in over the Internet, and it begins to harm our citizens. But I'm looking at this. There is a lot of pressure in Congress for importation. So I think it makes sense for us to make sure that we can do so in a safe way. If it's safe, then it makes sense.

But again, I repeat to you, I have an obligation to—for the safety of our citizens. And what I don't want is somebody to say, "Oh, gosh, I'll be able to buy a cheaper drug from Canada," and that drug ends up coming from another country without proper inspection and proper safety. I believe—I know Government has an obligation to make sure, before we put policy in place, that that which somebody buys is actually the product they think they're buying and it's safe. We have an obligation to do that.

So there are some of the decisions that will make—hopefully help keep the cost—but by far, the most effective way to help on drug costs is to move generics to the market faster. People say, "Well, why aren't they moving fast?" Well, first of all, you want people to be able to recoup investment. I mean, part of allowing for a drug company to be able to price a drug at a higher rate for a while is so that they can recoup research and development. And we want our pharmaceutical companies to be on the leading edge of change. I mean, they've come up with some amazing cures

for diseases through research and development. And it's an incentive for them to be able to recoup that investment.

But for a while, until we got in there, they were able to deny or delay generic drugs from being able to come on the market to compete with the brand-name drug through all kinds of interesting head fakes, I guess, is the proper way of putting it. In other words, they'd say, "Well, there's a patent issue here or a patent issue there," and they would delay, delay, and delay. And so what we've done is we've said, "Here's a reasonable time for you to recoup your investment, and then generics are coming behind." And there's a lot of generics coming on to the market. And part of making sure that people get drugs at a reasonable price is for there to be consumer information available. And that's also a response of the—responsibility for Medicare bureaucracy.

Listen, I've got the hook. I got the sign to go. We could be here for hours, but the problem is there's about 15,000 people waiting somewhere else—[*laughter*]—equally as important as you all. They vote. It's an important State, as the guy said. He said, "It's a swing State." We intend to not only carry Wisconsin but Minnesota as well.

I want to thank you all for coming. I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have. Thank you for your help. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:28 p.m. at Lakefront Park. In his remarks, he referred to Dale Schultz, candidate for Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Mayor Jack Breault of Hudson, WI; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in St. Paul, Minnesota
August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. Thanks for having me. I'm glad we came, Mr. Mayor. I'm proud to stand by your side. I am really proud to have your endorsement. St. Paul has got a wise and tough and principled man as the mayor of this city. I appreciate him bucking the political winds to do what he thinks is right in the 2004 campaign.

You know, there's a lot of differences in this campaign. The other day, my opponent said he thought you could find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. I think you can find it right here in this hall. I'm proud to be with the heart and soul of America tonight, and thank you for coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm in this important State to let the people know I'm asking for the vote. There is more to do to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every single citizen.

I'm also here to thank the grassroots activists for your support. I want you to work hard to put up the signs, man the phones, register your friends and neighbors to vote. I appreciate all your hard work, and when you get them headed toward the polls, remember that George Bush and Dick Cheney are what's best for this country. [*Applause*] Thank you. With your help, we will carry the great State of Minnesota. With your help, we'll achieve a great victory in November of this year.

I only wish Laura could be here to see and hear this crowd. She's a wonderful

mother and a great wife. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Listen, I admit it. He's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his experience, his ability to get the job done.

I'm proud to be up here with a great United States Senator, Norman Coleman. I appreciate his service. He's here with his dad. It's good to see you, Mr. Coleman. Thank you for being here. I want to thank members of the Minnesota congressional delegation who are here, Gil Gutknecht, John Kline, and Mark Kennedy, three fine Members of the House. Thank you all for coming, proud you're here.

I want to thank Pat Anderson and Erik Paulsen for coming. I want to thank all the elected officials who are here. Thank you for serving your State and your community.

I appreciate Laura Ingraham for being the emcee of this fine event. I want to thank all the veterans who are here tonight. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank my friend Joe Repya. I want to thank the Minnesota Teen Challenge Choir for joining us tonight. Thank you all for coming. And I appreciate my friend Ricky Skaggs for being here as well.

Most of all, thank you all for taking time out of your day to come by and say hello. I appreciate it. It means a lot—it means a lot. You know, in the past few years we've been through a lot together. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that's to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I'm asking for the vote because so much is at stake. We have so much more to do to move this Nation forward. We've got more to do to create jobs and to improve our schools. We've got more to do to protect our homeland and spread the peace. We've made much progress, and there is more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. You know, when we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being shuffled grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability so we know whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract. We're willing to challenge the status quo if our children are being failed in America.

There's more work to do. We want our high schools to issue a diploma that means something. We want to encourage math and science so our children have the schools necessary to work in the—for the jobs of the 21st century. We'll bring the Internet to high-level—for high-level training in the classrooms. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the confidence and the skills necessary to realize the great promise of America.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. You might remember the old debates on Medicare. Year after year, the politicians would promise you a modernized Medicare system. We got the job done. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose the plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs. We've done more. We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans so they can get primary care in places other than emergency rooms in your hospitals. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices for their own health care and making health care more affordable, we are moving America forward.

Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health care. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures. And to make sure we've got available and affordable health care, we must have medical liability reform. I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I stand with the patients and doctors. I support medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And there's more work to be done to make our economy stronger. Our economy's been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through a terror attack that some estimated cost us a million jobs. We've been through corporate scandals. But we've overcome these obstacles, because the spirit of America is strong. We've got great workers, great farmers, great small-business owners. And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You know, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We did it the fair way. We said, "If you pay Federal income taxes, you ought to get relief." We helped our families with children. We reduced the marriage penalty. It's a bad tax system that penalizes marriage. We ought to be encouraging marriage in America. We helped our small businesses, and this time, the check actually was in the mail. Because we acted, our economy has—since last summer, has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added 1.5 million new jobs since last August and the unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent. Because we acted, Minnesota's unemployment rate is at 4.4 percent. When it comes to creating jobs, we're moving America forward, and we're not going to turn back.

Our farm economy is strong, and I intend to keep it that way. I appreciate the farmers who are here today.

There's more work to be done to make sure that we've got jobs here in America. Listen, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress nearly 2 years ago. It needs to get to my desk—an energy plan that encourages conservation, renewable sources of energy, an energy plan that encourages the exploration of natural resources here, close to home, in environmentally friendly ways. But one thing is certain: For the sake of economic security and the sake of national security, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We got to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm a strong backer of lifetime learning for America's workers and the smart utilization of our community college system here in this country.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here in America, we need reasonable regulations on our business creators, our job creators. We need tort reform. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure we open up markets for Minnesota products, and reject economic isolationism. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

We have a difference in opinion on this campaign about taxes. My opponent said that he's going to—he promised about over $2 trillion of new programs. And so we said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, I'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You've heard that before, haven't

you? You've heard that line. That's why people hire accountants and lawyers, so you won't be able to tax them. You can't raise enough money to pay for all his spending by so-called taxing the rich. He's going to try to stick you with the tax bill. We're not going to let him raise your taxes. He's not going to win. When you put me back into office for 4 more years, I'll continue to pursue a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer agenda that enables America to remain the strongest economy in the industrialized world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against the terrorists, and many young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler in Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. Saddam Hussein was a threat.

One of the important lessons that we must never forget is that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I recognized that. I realized that, and so I went to the United States Congress and said, "I believe there is a threat in Iraq." Members of the Congress, the House and the Senate, members of both political parties, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat. Listen, the hardest decision a President ever makes is to commit those who wear our uniform into combat. It's a hard decision, and it ought to be the last option for a President. So I went to the United Nations, and I said to the United Nations, I said, "I believe there's a threat." They looked at the same intelligence; they remembered the same history and came to the same conclusion. They passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The world spoke. But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He wasn't about to disclose or disarm, because he didn't think there were serious consequences. As a matter of fact, we sent—we didn't—the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, but he systematically deceived the inspectors. I knew he was systematically deceiving the inspectors, as did others. So I had a choice to make: Either to forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman who is a sworn enemy of America, or take action necessary to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, I want you to remember that Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. And that was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th.

Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same course of action. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Massachusetts Senator now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles of weapons we all believed were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him clarifying his position. [*Laughter*] There are—however, there are still 76 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind.

We have more to do. I'm running because I understand there's more work to be done. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to join us in the defeat of our enemies. Listen, there's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifices the moms and dads and husbands and wives of those countries are making alongside those of our country to secure our freedom. We will continue to build alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful democratic societies. See, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. And we have a clear goal in those two countries, peaceful and democratic societies which are allies of ours in the war on terror. We will help those people meet those goals by providing security as the political process moves forward. We will help them train their own troops, so they can step up and do the hard work necessary for a free society. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

We have a difference of opinion as to how to handle this issue in Iraq. After all, my opponent said the other day that if he's elected, the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. I don't think it's a wise statement. You see, it sends the wrong signal. I mean, after all, the enemy says, "Fine, I'll wait 6 months and 1 day." It sends the wrong signal to our troops. It sends the wrong signal to the Iraqis. See, they're watching carefully. They wonder whether or not we will stand with them as they do the hard work for a free society to emerge. So long as I am the President, when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women that wear our uniform. I'm really proud of our military. We've got a fantastic military. I've traveled our country and met with our troops. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. Ladies and gentlemen, I can assure you the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a commitment to them and to their loved ones: Our troops will have the resources they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. And that's why—so last September I went to the Congress, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, and I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This was an important piece of legislation. It was money for body armor

and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. We received great bipartisan support. Members of both political parties recognized that when you had people in harm's way, they deserve the full support of Government. As a matter of fact, it was such good bipartisan support only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I don't think they talk that way in St. Paul, Minnesota. They pressed him on the vote, and he said, well, he's proud of the vote. Then he finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We'll work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace that we all want. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of America. We understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting. It's the reality of the world we live in today. We have a difference of opinion about these folks. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is wrong. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the enemy we face. See, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame the actions of our country for the anger and evil of those killers. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. We defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're working hard here at home to protect you. There's a lot of really good, decent people at the Federal level, the State level, the first-responders here in St. Paul, Minnesota, that are working long hours to do everything we can to protect the American people. This is our most solemn duty. It's what we're called to do. We created the new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is necessary for law enforcement to be able to protect you. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than before. I've already taken a lot of action on a majority of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. We're working hard to secure our ports and our borders, to train first-responders, to improve dramatically our intelligence gathering capability.

We're working on reform. It's not easy in Washington to reform things. There's a lot of entrenched interests there. There's a lot of people interested in defending the status quo. You see, it's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

When it comes to reforming our schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to get families and seniors more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and spreading freedom and peace, we are getting the job done. What I'm saying to you is, when it comes to

electing a President, put somebody back in the White House who can get the job done.

You know, we live in a time of rapid change. These are exciting times, and times have changed. It's important for Government to help by standing side by side with families and workers. And a great way to do that is to promote an ownership society. I'll continue to promote ownership in America. Listen, it's important for people to own their own health care account so if they change jobs, they can take their own health care account with them. If you're a younger worker, you ought to be concerned about the fiscal stability of Social Security. Old baby boomers like me are okay, but for younger workers, there's a question about the fiscal solvency of Social Security, and therefore, I think you ought to be given the choice to have a personal savings account and Social Security to call your own.

You know, one of the great—one of the heartening statistics of our country today is ownership rates are at an alltime high. It's a fantastic thought, when you think more and more Americans from all walks of life are opening the door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." We want more people to own things. We want to create an environment so more people own their own business. We want the small-business sector of our economy to remain vibrant and strong. The reason why I continue to promote an ownership society in America is because I understand if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In changing times there's some things that won't change: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matter and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, the culture of our country is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in your community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion all across America. See, I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put love in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? I want to walk with you. I want to stand with you." You see, I believe by rallying the armies of compassion, we can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, to make sure this great American experience is available to all our citizens.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm

resolve, clear vision, and a deep belief in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. Workers in hardhats were yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking people's hands and a guy looked me in the eye, his bloodshot eyes, he'd just come out of the rubble, saying, "Do not let me down."

It was a powerful day. You know, I came away from that site recognizing that everybody there searching through the rubble took that day personally. My fellow citizens took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. Every day that I wake up, I think about how best to secure our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work. But there's more work to be done to move this country forward. During the next 4 years, we will spread opportunity and ownership throughout every corner of our country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to work to spread freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned in your State 4 years ago, I asked—when I was asking for the vote, I made a pledge to the people of Minnesota and the people of our country that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Xcel Energy Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Randy Kelly of St. Paul, MN; Minnesota State Auditor Patricia Anderson; Minnesota State Representative Erik Paulsen; talk radio show host Laura Ingraham; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USAR (Ret.), Bush Cheney '04 Minnesota veteran co-chair; entertainer Ricky Skaggs; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

The President's Radio Address
August 21, 2004

Good morning. In the coming weeks, children across our Nation will begin a new school year. They're looking forward to meeting new teachers and learning new subjects and making new friends. And thanks to good schools and good policies, we can all be confident this year will be a year of achievement for America's students and families.

Two-and-a-half years ago, I signed the No Child Left Behind Act, a bipartisan law that is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations in public education. My budget for next year increases school funding to $37 billion, a 49-percent increase since 2001. And we're insisting on results in return. We are leaving behind the broken system that shuffled children from grade to grade, even when they were not learning the basics. We're requiring regular testing, providing extra help for children falling behind. We're giving information and options to parents. We are holding schools accountable for the progress of every child.

We are already seeing hopeful results. Math scores are up from fourth and eight

grades across the country. Fourth graders in urban schools are showing strong gains in both reading and math. And from Georgia, North Carolina, and Maryland, to Illinois, Wisconsin, and New Mexico, minority children are improving test scores and narrowing the achievement gap.

We recognize that some schools have catching up to do. That is why we are making extra resources available to the schools that need the most help. We are empowering parents, getting local education experts involved, and offering tutors to striving students. And to help the most disadvantaged students, we have boosted Title I funding to an unprecedented $12.3 billion, an increase of 41 percent since I took office.

One Federal grant went to Asheville City Schools in North Carolina, the home district of Ira B. Jones Elementary School. Two years ago, Jones did not meet standards under the new law. So district leaders used more than $200,000 dollars in Federal aid to help Jones hire a reading coach, train additional teachers, increase parent involvement, and start an extended-day program for struggling students. This past school year, their efforts paid off. Jones met its target for yearly progress. This is how a fourth grade teacher described her reaction: "We screamed and yelled. We were absolutely thrilled."

We want to see that kind of achievement at schools around the Nation, both in the primary grades and in our high schools. So I'll work with Congress to pass my proposals to help high school students struggling in reading and math. We will expand Advanced Placement programs at low-income schools. We will ensure that high schools offer a rigorous curriculum in English, math, science, and social studies, so we can be certain a high school diploma means something. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training to students around the country.

These plans will build on the results we have seen these past 2 years. The pattern is clear and encouraging. The No Child Left Behind Act is bringing progress and hope to America's students, parents, and educators. We are gaining momentum, and we will not turn back.

By ensuring a quality education for every child, we meet an important duty to the next generation. We're giving young people the confidence and skills they need to succeed in higher education and to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Education is the gateway to a more hopeful future, and we will make sure that gate is open to all Americans.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:50 a.m. on August 20 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference in Crawford, Texas
August 23, 2004

The President. Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming. General Myers, Vice President, and Condi and I just had a long-ranging discussion with our key members of the defense team about a variety of subjects. We talked about Iraq, the way forward in Iraq, the way to help the Iraqis get to elections. We're making progress on the ground. We were briefed not only by the Secretary and General Myers but as well

by General Casey and General Abizaid via secure communications.

We talked about transformation issues. We spent some time talking about the reconfiguration of our forces around the world, to better be able to keep the peace. And Mr. Secretary, I thank you for your leadership on that issue. The Secretary did a great job of not only coming up with a strategy to enable America to better protect ourselves and friends and allies against the true threats of the 21st century, but he consulted with our allies in such a way that the response was very positive and I thought very good.

We talked about intelligence reform. We just talked about a variety of issues that are important for the security of the country. And I appreciate you coming, sir. Thank you for being here.

I'll answer some questions. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

2004 Election

Q. Some of your supporters are refighting the Vietnam war with their comments about Kerry's war record. Do you think that these attacks of this nature are unpatriotic, un-American, seeing as we're sending young people to war at this time?

The President. Yes. I think we ought to be debating who best to be leading this country in the war against terror. And that's what I'll continue to try to convince the American people of, is that I'm the right person to continue to lead the country in the war on terror. I think we ought to be looking forward, not backward. And that's the kind of campaign I'll continue to run.

Swift Boat Veterans for Truth Ad/527 Campaign Ads

Q. But why won't you denounce the charges that your supporters are making against Kerry?

The President. I'm denouncing all the stuff being on TV of the 527s. That's what I've said. I said this kind of unregulated soft money is wrong for the process. And I asked Senator Kerry to join me in getting rid of all that kind of soft money, not only on TV but used for other purposes as well. I frankly thought we'd gotten rid of that when I signed the McCain-Feingold bill. I thought we were going to, once and for all, get rid of a system where people could just pour tons of money in and not be held to account for the advertising. And so I'm disappointed with all those kinds of ads.

Yes, Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

John Kerry's Military Service/Leadership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. This doesn't have anything to do with other 527 ads. You've been accused of mounting a smear campaign. Do you think Senator Kerry lied about his war record?

The President. I think Senator Kerry served admirably, and he ought to be proud of his record. But the question is, who best to lead the country in the war on terror, who can handle the responsibilities of the Commander in Chief, who's got a clear vision of the risks that the country faces.

Yes.

527 Campaign Ads

Q. Mr. President, some Republicans such as Bob Dole and some Republican donors such as——

The President. What paper are you with?

Q. I'm with Bloomberg.

The President. Okay, good. First time I've seen you out here. Welcome.

Q. Thank you.

The President. No problem. Did you write the story about the Vice President? [*Laughter*] Yes, go ahead.

Q. That's okay. Some Republicans such as Bob Dole and some Republican donors such as Bob Perry have contributed and endorsed the message of these 527 Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ads——

The President. Right.

Q. Do you—when you say that you want to stop all——

The President. All of them.

Q. Does that mean——

The President. That means that ad, every other ad.

Q. Would you encourage Republicans not to give to——

The President. Absolutely. I don't think we ought to have 527s. I can't be more plain about it. And I wish—I hope my opponent joins me in saying—condemning these activities of the 527s. It's the—I think they're bad for the system. That's why I signed the bill, McCain-Feingold. I've been disappointed that for the first 6 months of this year, 527s were just pouring tons of money, billionaires writing checks. And I spoke out against them early. I tried to get others to speak out against them as well. And I just don't—I think they're bad for the system.

Yes, Robert [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

Oil Prices

Q. Sir, on the price of oil, it's at or near record levels. Other than pushing for your energy proposals, which we know about, what else are you doing to try to mitigate the price of oil?

The President. That's the best thing, is to come up with a comprehensive energy strategy that encourages conservation, encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for natural resources in our own hemisphere. It talks about, of course, dealing with new forms of energy. And admittedly, those aren't going to come on market in time to deal with the current price of oil——

Q. Did you talk to President Putin about it this morning?

The President. Yes, I talked to him about it.

Q. What did he say?

The President. He said he recognizes that we don't need to be—he doesn't need to be causing conditions such that it hurts consuming nations. He's wise about that. But we've got a lot of countries beginning to use more energy, and we haven't done a good job of increasing supply.

Q. Just one more thing along that line. Are you concerned that the price of energy could become a campaign issue here of larger proportions than it already is?

The President. I think the people know that we have—this administration has been asking for Congress to pass a comprehensive energy plan for over 2 years. We recognized this problem 2 years ago and spoke out clearly and urged the Members of Congress to pass a bill, and it's stuck. So people know we've been proactive on the issue.

Last question. Yes. Hold on. Yes, Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Republican National Convention

Q. Thank you. Sir, how is work coming——

The President. You've got your earphones on so you're speaking very loudly. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sorry, didn't mean to do that. How is work coming on your convention speech? What should we expect from it? And are you worried about violent protests at the convention?

The President. Let's see. You know, I—people are allowed to express themselves in democracies, and hopefully they'll do so in a peaceful way.

In terms of the speech, I'm working on it. But I don't want to give you any tidbits——

Q. Just a little bit.

The President. I don't want to give you any tidbits, for fear that you may not pay attention when I actually stand up there and deliver it. [*Laughter*]

Q. Oh, he'll pay attention.

The President. You think he will? [*Laughter*] I'm looking forward to giving it. I want to talk about what I intend to do. We've got a great record, when you think about it: led the world in the war on terror; the world is safer as a result of the actions we've taken; Afghanistan is no longer run by the Taliban; Saddam

Hussein sits in a prison cell; Muammar Qadhafi has gotten rid of his weapons; Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror. There's more work to be done in fighting off these terrorists. I clearly see that. I understand that we've got to use all resources at our disposal to find and bring these people to justice.

When you think about domestic politics, we've faced a recession, had tax cuts that encouraged economic growth and vitality. We've helped reform a education system with the No Child Left Behind Act. We've reformed Medicare, first administration ever to get Congress to move forward on Medicare reform. We got trade promotion authority; it opened up more markets for U.S. entrepreneurs and farmers and manufacturers.

We've had a great record. But the only reason to even talk about the record is to say, "Give us a chance to move the country forward. We're people who can get the job done. We've proven to you we can get the job done, and there's more work to be done." And I'll talk about that in the convention. In other words, it's going to be a forward-looking speech.

Last question. I know you all are hungry.

Legislation To Restructure the Intelligence Community

Q. Absolutely. Mr. President, thank you. Intelligence Committee Chairman Pat Roberts has proposed a bill to radically restructure the intelligence community. He splits up the CIA, gives complete budgetary authority to the new NID, as well as personnel hiring and firing authority, and more—takes a number of intelligence collection agencies out of the Pentagon and transmits them over to the NID. I wonder what you think of that proposal, and what is the status of the White House effort on this front?

The President. I haven't seen it. I haven't seen his proposal. He was on TV yesterday morning talking about his ideas, and I'm sure he's going to send it over to us to take a look at it.

There is a lot of ideas moving around. And we've got a lot of smart people looking at the best way to fashion intelligence so that the President and his Cabinet Secretaries have got the ability to make good judgment calls on behalf of the American people. That's what I'm interested in. I'm interested in how to get the best intelligence to my desk so I can be a good decisionmaker on behalf of the people of this country. And intelligence is a vital part of winning this war against these terrorists. We've got to know who they are, what they're thinking, where they are. And so that's how we're approaching this issue.

Now, listen, I've called for a National Intelligence Director because I think it's an important part of coordinating activities to make sure the analysis of information is as good as it can possibly be. I am not for anything standing in between me and my line operators like the Secretary of Defense. In other words, once intelligence is in place and once we come up with a decision as to how to act, I want to make sure the person responsible for the actions has a direct report to me.

And so we're looking at all options, including the budget option, all aimed at making sure that me and future Presidents have got the best information possible. And so Senator Roberts is a good, thoughtful guy. He came up with an idea, and we'll look at it. We'll take a look at it and determine whether or not it works or not. But there's going to be a lot of other ideas too as this debate goes forward.

Listen, thank you all.

Summer Olympics

Q. You're not going to Athens this week, are you?

The President. Athens, Texas? [*Laughter*]

Q. The Olympics, Greece.

The President. Oh, the Olympics. No, I'm not.

Q. Have you been watching them?

The President. Oh, yes. Yes, it's been exciting.

Q. Any particular moment stand out?

The President. Particular moment? I like the—let's see—Iraqi soccer. I liked seeing the Afghan woman carrying the flag, coming in. I loved our gymnasts. I've been watching the swimming. I've seen a lot, yes.

Listen, thank you all. Enjoy yourself.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:05 p.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. He also referred to organizations described in Section 527 of the Tax Code. A reporter referred to former Senator Bob Dole; and Bob J. Perry, chief executive officer, Perry Homes, a Joint Venture.

Remarks in Las Cruces, New Mexico
August 26, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. *Vamos a ganar.* Thanks for coming. It's great to be here. I am proud to be traveling with my friend Rudy Giuliani. This is a part of the world, Rudy, where the boots outnumber the suits. Nice to be in country where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties.

I appreciate so many people showing up. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe it's important to get out and ask for the vote. I believe it's important to travel this great State and our country talking about where I intend to lead the country. And I'm so proud to be traveling with a man who is a strong leader, a man who brought calm to the citizens of New York City during a tragic day, a man who helped lift the spirit of that important part of our country, Rudy Giuliani.

I told Rudy, I said, "Rudy, we're in good country here in Las Cruces." I said, "I know this part of the State well." You might remember I used to be the Governor of your neighbor. I told Rudy, I said, "I've been to Las Cruces a lot, and here in Las Cruces, you're going to find some really fine people." And after here, we're off to Farmington and then back down to Albuquerque. We're taking this State seriously. With your help, we'll carry New Mexico. With your help, we'll carry the country in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I understand. I kissed her goodbye in Crawford this morning, and I said, "I've got to go to work." [*Laughter*] She said, you get over to New Mexico, and you remind them that her kinfolk were raised right down the road in Anthony. I'm proud of Laura. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. I'll give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He is a fine man. I picked him not necessarily because he's the prettiest face in America. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done. I picked him for his experience and his judgment. And I'm proud to be running with him, proud to call him friend, and proud to call him runningmate.

I'm also proud to be working with a great United States Senator in Pete Domenici. Pete is a—he's a close friend. He's a great New Mexican. He's a wonderful person. He

is on vacation. I wish he and Nancy a well-deserved rest. I'm proud also to be here with the United States Congressman, Steve Pearce. I'm glad you brought Cynthia. It's good to see you both, proud to work with you.

I'm glad the mayor is here, Bill Mattiace. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming—fill the potholes.

I appreciate Ted Scanlon and los Desperados for playing here today. I appreciate Mariachi Espuelas de la Plata. I'm glad they were here. Thank you all for coming.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are with us today. I want to thank Al Solis, who is the party chairman from Dona Ana County. I want to thank the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. I ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote.

We have a duty in this country to vote. We have an obligation in a free society to show up to the polls. Please do your duty and get people to vote. Get them into those polls. Obviously, when you're working to gather the vote, I've got a preference. [*Laughter*] In order to keep this country safer, stronger, and better, put Dick and I back into office.

We've been through a lot together in the last 4 years, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only reason to look backward at the record, and that is who best to lead us forward. That's what I want to talk about. I want to remind you, we have much at stake in this election, and we have more to do to move America forward. We have more to do to create jobs and improve our schools. We have more to do to fight terror, to protect the homeland. We have more to do to spread freedom and peace. We've made much progress. I'm here to tell you I'm ready for the job. I'm ready to accomplish more for the American people.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we know they all can be so no child is left behind. You might remember when we came to office 3½ years ago, children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in local control of schools. But we believe in accountability so we can determine whether every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract.

We have more to do. I understand this is a changing world we live in, and therefore, the jobs of the future will require more knowledge. We've got to expand math and science in our high schools. We need early intervention programs to make sure high school kids can read, write, add, and subtract. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something. Over the next 4 years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. Listen, when we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember those old debates about Medicare: "Oh, just elect me. Something is going to get done." But year after year, those promises were empty. We got the job done. We've strengthened Medicare for our seniors.

There's more to do. We've expanded quality care through community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to making—giving Americans more choices, more control over their lives, we're making progress. We're not turning back.

There's more to do over the next 4 years. Most people get their health insurance through small businesses, and yet, small businesses are having trouble providing health coverage. To help more Americans get health insurance, we must allow small

employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get in America.

We'll use technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for deadly diseases. And to make sure you've got affordable and available health care here in New Mexico, we need medical liability reform. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and they're running good docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice: I am for medical liability reform.

We have more to do to make this economy stronger. Listen, we've been through a lot in this economy. Think about it. We went through a recession. The stock market declined. We've been through attacks. We've had corporate scandals. But we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because the American workers are the best in the world. We've overcome it because our farmers and ranchers know what they're doing. We've overcome it—we've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector of our economy is vibrant. I also think we've overcome it because of well-timed tax cuts.

When you're talking to your friends and neighbors, remember to tell them we've helped American families by raising the child credit. We've helped America's families by reducing the marriage penalty. By the way, the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We helped small businesses. And this time the check actually was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, we've created about 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. Because we acted, the national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in your great State is 5.3 percent. Because we acted, the people of this country are working.

There's more work to be done. In order to make sure American jobs stay here in America, we need less regulations on our employers. You ask your small-business neighbor what it's like to fill out the paperwork. They'll say it's quite onerous. My problem is I can't promise anybody in Washington has ever read the paperwork.

We need tort reform to keep jobs here in America. To make sure people can find good work here at home, we need an energy policy. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. In order to keep jobs here at home, we've got to make sure other nations treat us in trade the way we treat them. Our markets are open for other—for products from other countries because it's good for consumers. And all we're saying is, "Just make sure you open up your markets." We can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere with fair rules.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to make sure our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I believe so strongly in our community college system, to make sure that there's money available, that the colleges are affordable for people all across America to be able to match their desire to work with the skills necessary to fill the new jobs.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here in America, we've got to keep your taxes low. And we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. I'm running against a fellow who has already made over $2.2 trillion worth of new promises. And we're just getting started. We're coming down the stretch. You know how tempting it is to get out in front of people and make promise after promise, but he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. Well, he said he's

just going to tax the rich. You've heard that kind of language before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. Just remember why we've got all those accountants and lawyers out there. There's not enough money to tax the rich to pay for all his promises. If he gets elected, he's going to tax you. But the good news is we're not going to let him get elected.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. We have more to do to keep this country secure. See, our future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells all around the world, including our own country. Today, because America acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Over 10 million people have registered to vote in that country. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Many young girls now go to school for the first time, because we acted. And America and the world are safer.

Before September 11th, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia didn't take Al Qaida seriously. Today, they are allies in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Because America and our allies sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He purchased and used weapons of mass destruction. He invaded his neighbors. He had harbored terrorists. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens.

Audience member. He's not doing it anymore!

The President. He was a source of great instability. I saw a threat. One of the lessons of September the 11th that we must always remember is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. Remembering that lesson, I went to the United States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the intelligence. They looked at Saddam's history. They came to the same conclusion I did, including my opponent.

I went to the United Nations because this country must always try diplomacy first. I went to the U.N. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein. And as they had for over a decade, they demanded a full accounting, a disposal of his weapons and weapons programs, or face serious consequences. That's what they said. The world spoke.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He said, "I don't care what you say." We then sent inspectors into his country. He systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman or take action to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons. And he had the willingness to pass that capability—or he could have had the willingness to pass that capability on to our enemy. It's a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer.

Now, almost after—2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we've not found the stockpile of weapons we all thought were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein. I want to thanks the Senator for clearing that up. There's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because I understand we have more to do. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq, 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. I'll continue to work to build alliances and work with our friends for the sake of freedom and peace. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. Those two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people committed to the aspirations of their people. We have a clear goal in those two countries, to help them develop a peaceful, democratic country that will be an ally in the war on terror. It's in our national interest that they become peaceful, free countries. And to help them meet that goal, we're training Afghan forces and Iraqi forces so they can do the hard work of securing their country, so they can fight the terrorists who want to stop—[*applause*].

Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary. The thing about our troops in these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our security and defend our freedom. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of liberty is in great hands. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for setting such a great example for those who—[*applause*].

I made a commitment to our troops and to the families of our troops, that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. We received great bipartisan support for that important spending. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it. Two of them are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The Senator tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, he's offering a different explanation. Recently, he said he was proud of the vote. And then when pressed, he said it was just a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to

change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for liberty. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their own citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the values we hold dear to our heart. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every person in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. There are enemies out there that still are plotting to harm us. See, my opponent said something I thought was—showed the contrast between our visions. He said that the war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the nature of these people. See, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame the actions of this country for the evil of the killers. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We have more work to do, as the 9/11 Commission report said. It said America—the actions we've taken have made America safer but not yet safe. I agree. And that's why we're pushing hard for reforms in Washington, DC—intelligence reforms. That's why we created the Department of Homeland Security, so agencies talk better, so that Washington now talks better with New Mexico, and New Mexico talks better with Las Cruces—the great first-responders here in this part of the world. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which is a vital tool for our law enforcement to disrupt terrorist cells before they attack in America.

There's a lot of good people working on your behalf to secure the homeland. I want to thank them—continually thank them for their hard work. We're working hard to achieve reform in Washington, but it's not easy over there in Washington to achieve reform. There's a lot of entrenched interests. There's a lot of people willing to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you have to be able to get the job done.

When you're out there campaigning on my behalf, remember, when it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes for health care reforms to give our families and our seniors more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. Remind your friends and neighbors that when it comes time to elect a President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

This is a time of rapid change for our country, and it's an exciting time to be an American. Change can sometimes create instability, and Government ought to recognize that and stand side by side with workers and families. The role of Government is not to give you orders. The role of Government is to help you have the tools necessary to be able to realize your dreams. And one way to do that is to continue to promote an ownership society in America. We want workers to be able to own their own health care accounts, so they can take them from job to job if they change jobs.

Listen, I see a lot of younger folks here. I want to thank you all for coming. You ought to be listening very carefully to the debate on Social Security. Baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to

Social Security. Younger workers need to be concerned about the fiscal sanity of—fiscal stability of Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to own a personal retirement account they call their own, so they can pass it on from one generation to the next.

We want to create the conditions so more people own their own business. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. I intend to keep it that way. Listen, one of the great statistics of the modern era is more people—the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We want to encourage—we want more people owning their own home. There's nothing better when somebody opens the door and says, "Welcome to my home." I believe in encouraging ownership because I know if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In this changing world, there are some things that will not change, our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. I believe in the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, hard work and duty. I believe in the institutions that give us purpose and direction, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing 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're 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. I'm running because I understand the role of Government is limited. See, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That's done when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody that hurts and says, "I love you. How can I help you?" See, I believe strongly American society can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, by rallying the true strength of America, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, strong belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, with Rudy by my side, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow just came out of the rubble. He had bloodshot eyes. He looked at me right in the eye and said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. Everybody—I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. The last years, we have come through a lot. We have done a lot of hard work. There's

more to be done. We will spread opportunity and ownership to every corner of America. We will pass enduring values of our country to another generation. We will lead the cause of peace and freedom. And we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our country, when I was asking for the vote. I made a pledge to our fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming, and God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Pan American Center at New Mexico State University. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; Nancy Domenici, wife of Senator Pete Domenici; Cynthia Pearce, wife of Representative Steve Pearce; Mayor William Michael Mattiace of Las Cruces, NM; entertainers Ted Scanlon and the Desperados, and Mariachi Espuelas de Plata; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

Remarks in Farmington, New Mexico
August 26, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate—It's good to be here in Farmington, New Mexico, in the Four Corners area of our country. I appreciate you all coming out. I told Rudy, I said, "I can't wait to get to Farmington. You're going to meet some really fine people here. It's a part of the country where the boots outnumber the suits."

The other day, my opponent said he thinks he can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think you find it right here in Farmington, New Mexico. I appreciate your hospitality. Rudy and I love being here. I want thank you all for coming out. It's such a beautiful day. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling with this great leader around New Mexico to tell the people I've got more to do to make this country safer, stronger, and better.

I also want to thank those of you who are involved with grassroots politics. Those are the people who put up the signs. Those are the people who make the phone calls. Those are the people who help register the voters, people like Bill Redmond, people who run the county here. These are the people who do their duty. See, I think we have a duty in America to vote.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I think we have an obligation. I think we have an obligation in this society to go to the polls, and so therefore, I'm asking for your help. I hope you will register people to vote—register Republicans, register independents. I see a man here, he says, "Navajo Democrats for Bush." Register Democrats to vote. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them we're ready to lead for 4 more years. Tell them we're ready to make this country a safer place and a better place.

I regret that Laura's not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know, she's fabulous. I met the Vice President of the Navajo Nation out at the airport and met his beautiful wife, and the first thing she asked me, she said, "Where's Laura?" [*Laughter*] She's working. [*Laughter*]

I kissed her goodbye today in Crawford and headed west. I'm really proud of her.

She's a great mom and a wonderful wife. She's a fabulous First Lady. Today I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man for Vice President, Dick Cheney. He is a—I know there's a State rep named Dick Cheney from this part of the world. I hope he's as good a man as the Dick Cheney I call runningmate. I bet he is. Dick Cheney is solid as a rock. I picked him because he knows what he's doing. I picked him because he can get the job done. That's why I'm running with Dick Cheney.

Listen, I enjoy working with your Senator, Pete Domenici. He's a good man. He and Nancy are taking a vacation. I don't blame them. He's been working hard for the people of New Mexico. But in his stead, we've got another great United States Senator with us today, and that's my friend Ben Nighthorse Campbell and his wife, Linda, from the State of Colorado. Where are you? Oh, yeah. [*Laughter*] I'm going to miss you, friend. I'm going to win, and I'm going to miss your presence in the United States Senate. He's a great man. I appreciate you coming.

I want to remind you that we have been through a lot together. We have accomplished a lot too. But you know something, the only reason to look backward at the record is to—who best to lead us forward into the future. I'm here traveling your State because there's so much at stake.

We have done much, but there is more to do to move this country forward. We have more to do to create jobs and improve our schools. We have more to do to fight terror and to protect the American people. We have more to do to spread freedom and peace we all want. We've made progress, and over the next 4 years, we will do more on behalf of the American people.

We've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we know they can be so no child is left behind in America. You might remember how the system worked 3½ years ago. Too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I said, "We'll provide more money from Washington to help the schools, but in return we expect results." We want our children to learn to read and write and add and subtract, and our plan is working. We're closing the achievement gap in America, but there's more to be done. We got to make sure our high school students get more math and sciences, because in order to be able to compete in the 21st century, we're going to need new skills. We got to have early intervention programs to make sure no child is left behind. We want to make sure our high school diploma means something when a kid graduates from high school, so they can find work. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and the confidence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We've got more to do to make sure that we've got quality health care that's affordable to our citizens. Listen, when we came to office, the Medicare promise had been broken year after year. You might remember those old campaigns. They'd say, "Vote for me. I'm going to strengthen Medicare." Sure enough, nothing took place in Washington. There's a lot of special interests there, a lot of people dug in. But we got the job done. We strengthened Medicare for our seniors. Starting in the year 2006, seniors will have choices in Medicare, including prescription drug coverage.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We will continue to do so over the next 4 years. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their health care needs. We're making progress. There is more work to be done. Listen, most Americans get health coverage through

their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses. But small businesses all across America are having trouble with health care. In order to help American families get the health care they need, we must allow small employers to join together so they can purchase insurance at the same discount that big businesses are able to do so.

We will harness technology to save money in health care and to cut down on errors. We will continue to expand research and seek new cures. In order to make sure you've got good docs here in Farmington, New Mexico, in order to make sure we got good health care in this part of the world that's affordable, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits that are running up your cost of medicine.

See, I don't think you can be pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I'm standing with the patients and the doctors. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health care decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We've got more to do to make this economy stronger. Our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a severe attack on our country, and yet, the economy is strong, and it's getting stronger, because our workers are great. Our farmers are great. Our ranchers know what they're doing. The small-business sector of America is strong and vibrant. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in this country.

I also think one of the reasons we've overcome these obstacles is because of well-timed tax cuts. We gave tax relief to every American who pays taxes. That seems fair.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You might remember we helped American families by raising the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code penalizes marriage. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage. We're helping our small businesses. And this time, the check actually was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Since last August, we've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate nationally is 5.5 percent, and the unemployment rate in your important State is 5.3 percent.

The economy is strong. It's getting stronger, and there's more to do to keep jobs here at home. We've got to make sure our regulations are reasonable and fair. We need tort reform, not only in the health care field but all across the board to make sure our employers don't spend their money on frivolous lawsuits but are able to do so on their employees.

Listen, in order to make sure jobs stay here, we need a sound energy policy. Of course, we need to encourage conservation and renewable sources of energy, but we need to be exploring for natural gas right here in America too. We need to be less dependent—in order to make sure jobs stay in America, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to open up markets like we've opened up ours. Listen, I believe American workers and farmers and ranchers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America, we've got to make sure our workers have a lifetime of learning available to them. See, this is a changing world, and jobs are changing. The skill sets are different. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system. I believe we need to use our community colleges and help workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. Listen carefully to the rhetoric coming out of Washington. They say, "Well, we're going to spend the Government's money." That's not what I think, and that's what I know—not—that's what I know. We're not talking about the Government's money. We're talking about the people's money. It's your money we spend in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here in America, we must keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the working people and the small businesses of America will slow down this economic recovery. Now, I'm running against a fellow who's already made over $2 trillion of promises in the course of the campaign, and we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. [*Laughter*] We're not even coming down the pike. No telling what he'll promise in October. [*Laughter*] The problem is, he hasn't said how he's going to pay for it. Well, he said one thing; he said he's going to tax the rich. You've heard that before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. Guess what? The rich dodge, and you pay.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. But we're not going to let him. We're going to beat him come November. And it's going to start with carrying the great State of New Mexico.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th of 2001, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million people have registered to vote in a country that a short time ago was brutalized by a barbaric regime called the Taliban. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan and Saudi didn't take Al Qaida seriously. Today, they are allies in the war against the terrorists. America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein and his henchmen murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

Audience member. No longer!

Audience member. Not anymore!

The President. After September the 11th, we had to look at the world differently. It's very important for our country to remember the lessons of September the 11th. One of the clearest lessons is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

So I went to the United States Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered Saddam's history and came to the same conclusion I did—he was a threat—including the person

I'm running against, came to that same conclusion.

Because a military action ought to be the last option of an American President, I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations, "You have seen a threat in the past. We see a threat. The world has changed since September the 11th. What do you think?" They came together after a debate, looked at the same intelligence we did, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat, that he must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. The world spoke.

But as he had for over a decade, he defied the demands of the free world. See, he didn't seem to care what the free world said. Not only that, when we sent inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. Do I trust a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action necessary to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability on to our enemy, and that was a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell, and America and the world are safer.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and nearly 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. However, there's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because I understand we must continue to work with our allies and friends to aggressively pursue the terrorist enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us. There's over 40 nations involved—or nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq, 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. We'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends for the sake of security and peace. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

When America says something, we've got to mean it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. In order to make this world a more peaceful place when we speak, we better mean what we say. And so we'll keep our commitments to the people in Afghanistan and Iraq as they become peaceful and democratic societies. It's in our interest they become peaceful and democratic societies, and now they've got two strong leaders who are guiding those nations, people committed to the hopes and aspirations of their fellow citizens. We're training up Iraqi citizens and Afghan citizens to defeat the terrorists who are trying to stop the advance of freedom. We're helping them so they can help themselves. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops don't a stay a day longer than necessary.

It's important work we're doing. We're talking about keeping the peace. We're talking about spreading freedom. And our

troops are helping us to keep our commitments. I'm proud of the United States military. I'm proud of our troops.

I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. We're going to support our troops. That's a commitment we owe not only to those who wear the uniform but the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important piece of legislation.

We received great bipartisan support. Matter of fact, the support was so strong in the United States Senate that only 12 Senators voted against that funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him, they said, why? He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." That's not exactly the way people talk in this part of the world.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. So they pressed him further. He said, well, he's proud of his vote, and the whole thing was just a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will set powerful examples to a part of the world that is desperate for liberty. Free nations do not export terror. Free nations are able to defeat hopelessness, because they listen to the hopes of their people.

By serving the cause of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're spreading the peace that we all want. And by serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American spirit. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running because I know there's more work to do to protect the homeland. There's enemies who hate us out there that are still plotting. We have a difference of opinion on the enemy, it seems. My opponent said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. The logic is upside-down. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the enemy. See, during the 1990's, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It is wrong to blame this country for staying on the offense. See, we don't create enemies and terrorists by fighting back. We defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We're working hard to protect you. There's a lot of good people at the Federal level and the State level and the local level who are working long hours to protect the American people. We're working on reform. There'll be good, solid intelligence reform to make sure that I've got what's needed to make good decisions on behalf of the American people, that we can respond to the threats as they exist.

We've created the Department of Homeland Security to better protect you. We've got to do a better job on our ports and borders. We've got to do a better job of strengthening our intelligence sharing. We need to renew the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for law enforcement to bust these terrorist organizations.

I'll continue to push for reform, but it's hard. I mean, there's a lot of entrenched interests. The special interests are strong. That's why it's not enough to advocate reform. You've got to be able to get the job done.

So when you're out campaigning, and when you're out convincing people to go

to the polls, you might remind them, when it comes to reforming schools to lift the standard so every child can learn, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms that have helped our seniors and helped our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to choosing a President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're living in a time—we're living in changing times. A lot of moms are working. A lot of people are changing jobs. A lot of people need new skills in order to fill the jobs of the 21st century. These are changing times, and I recognize they can be unsettling. But Government can help by standing side by side with people. Instead of ordering people around, Government can help people have the tools so they can decide for themselves. And one way to do so is to promote an ownership society. We want people owning their own health care accounts, so they can take them from job to job.

I see we got a lot of younger workers here. I appreciate you coming. Baby boomers and older folks can look at Social Security and know it's going to be around for us. Younger workers need to be concerned about the fiscal solvency of Social Security. That's why I believe we ought to give younger workers the option of establishing personal savings accounts with their own money, that they call their own and pass on from generation to generation.

In order to meet the changing times, we've got to change the work rules to give our families flex-time and comp-time so you can better juggle your family needs. In order to make sure that we've got a hopeful America, we've got to continue to spread ownership—ownership of businesses. Listen, I love the fact that the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We'll continue to expand homeownership over the next 4 years. We'll continue to expand ownership—homeownership. There's nothing better than somebody opening up a front door of the house, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." We believe in ownership because we know that when somebody owns something, they have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In this world of rapid change, there are some things that will not change, our belief in liberty, our belief in opportunity, and our belief in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must honor those institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. Listen, the culture of our country is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in Farmington, New Mexico, you're responsible for supporting your teachers and doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this responsibility society of ours, each of us is responsible for loving

our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, I believe we can change this country one heart and one soul at a time by relying upon the true strength of America, which is the hearts and souls of the American people.

Today I met Rod Conover. He's involved with Project Read. He's a volunteer. He's taking time out of his life to help somebody else learn to read. See, we'll change this country. We'll change this country by calling upon the great love of the American people to serve something greater than themselves, to help somebody in need, to help the homeless, to feed the hungry, to help the addicted by surrounding with something the Government can't live, which is love. Now, Government can give money, but Government cannot give love. And so over the next 4 years, I'll continue to call upon the great spirit of the American people.

We're living in a—we've come through a lot together. The last 4 years have brought great challenges. I'll never forget the day Rudy and I went to the ruins of the Twin Towers. It was a very emotional day. I remember the workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a worker looking me in the eye and saying, "Do not let me down." See, it's clear to me, and I know it's clear to Rudy, that that day, people took it personally on that site. I took it personally. I know you did as well. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day trying to figure out how best to secure this homeland. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've done hard work over the past years, and there's more work to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity so everybody can realize the great promise of America. During the next 4 years, we will continue to pass on the enduring values of our country to a younger generation. During the next 4 years, we will continue to lead in the cause of freedom and peace. With your support, I'll be a leader America can count on in a world of change.

For 4 years, I traveled this great country, including your great State, asking for the vote—4 years ago I did, asking for the vote. I said if you gave me a chance to serve in this high office, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at Ricketts Park. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; former Representative Bill Redmond of New Mexico; Frank Dayish, Jr., Vice President, Navajo Nation, and his wife, Virginia; New Mexico State Representative Richard P. Cheney; Nancy Domenici, wife of Senator Pete Domenici; Linda Nighthorse Campbell, wife of Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 26, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming. Gosh, I appreciate so many coming out to say hello to Rudy. [*Laughter*] We were in Las Cruces and Farmington, and here we end up in the great city of Albuquerque. It's been a fantastic day in the Land of Enchantment.

I want to thank you all for coming out. I told Rudy, "You're going to like it here." I said, "You're going to see more cowboy hats than you see ties." No, we're right here in the heart and soul of America, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I'm proud to be traveling with this good man. He's a great leader, a great friend, and a wonderful American. He showed the world great courage during traumatic times, and I'm proud to be standing by him. I'm proud he's out working for me. And I'm proud you all are here too. I'm here asking for your vote, and I'm here asking for your help. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry New Mexico and win a great victory in November.

I am sorry that Laura is not here. I kissed her goodbye in Crawford this morning. I said, "I'm heading west." I said, "I got to go work. I'm anxious for people to hear my story. I want people to know I've got more to do to lead this Nation for 4 more years." I'm really proud of Laura. I'm proud of her. She's a great mom and a wonderful wife. And she's a wonderful First Lady as well. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought put me back in there, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He might be short on hair, but he's long on experience. He can get the job done.

I appreciate—listen, I enjoy working with Pete Domenici. What a good man Pete is. He's a—I'm proud to work with him. I know you're proud to call him Senator. I'm also really pleased to be here with Congresswoman Heather Wilson. She is as good as they come in the United States Congress.

I want to thank all of my friends who are the grassroots activists, John Sanchez and Manny Lujan. I want to thank them for their work.

I appreciate the fact that Brooks and Dunn are here. What great Americans they are, and not only that, they can sing. Really proud to have them here. I want to thank Tony Lynn for announcing the program.

Most of all, I want to thank you for being here. I just want you to know I believe all of us in America have a duty to vote. And I would like for you to encourage your neighbors to register to vote. We have an obligation to do that, to vote in our society, and one way you can help in this campaign is to become a part of this massive registration campaign that we've got going and vote—register Republicans and independents and discerning Democrats. Remind them we've got more work to do. Remind them that with 4 more years, America will be a safer, stronger, and better country.

We've been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But the only reason to look backward is to best determine who to lead us forward, and that's what I'm here to talk about. We've done a lot, but there is more to do to move America forward. We've got more to do to create jobs, more to do to improve our schools. We've got more to do to fight terror. We have got more to do to spread liberty and peace.

We've made much progress. I'm here to tell you I'm ready to lead the country for 4 more years to do more for the people.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. We came to office 3½ years ago; too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we decided to try something different. We said, "We'll send more money back to the States, but

in return, we expect results." We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We're empowering parents. We believe in local control of schools, and we're making progress.

There is more work to be done. We've got to make sure we've got more science and math courses for our high school kids. We've got to bring the Internet in to bring the latest to our classrooms. We must have intervention programs to make sure children do not slip behind. We want to make sure a high school diploma means something. After 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and the confidence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. You might remember the old Medicare debates of the past. Politician after politician say, "Give us a chance to strengthen Medicare," and nothing got done. We got the job done. We now have a Medicare system that will allow seniors to make their own choices to meet their own needs, and starting in 2006, a Medicare system that will provide prescription drugs for our seniors.

We've done more. We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We want people getting primary care in these centers, not in emergency rooms. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs.

There is more work to be done. Most people get their health care through jobs—their jobs, and most new jobs are created by small businesses. But many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In order to allow small businesses to afford health care so American families get the help they need, we must allow small employers to join together to be able to purchase health care at the discounts that big companies get. We will harness technology to reduce costs and reduce errors. We will continue to expand research and find new cures. And in order to make sure health care is available, affordable in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we must do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine.

See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I have made my choice. I'm standing with the patients and the doctors, the nurses and the hospitals. I am for medical liability reform—now.

We've got more to do to make sure this economy is strong. Remember what we've been through in a short period of time. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through the terror attacks.

But we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome the obstacles because the American worker is great. We've overcome the obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We've overcome the obstacles because small-business owners are dreaming about expanding and creating new jobs. We've overcome the obstacles because our farmers and ranchers know what they're doing.

We have overcome those obstacles because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't try to pick winners or losers when it came to cutting taxes. We said, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." We also helped our families. Remember, we raised the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage.

We helped our small businesses. Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as nearly—as any rate in nearly 20 years. Over the last 12 months, we've added nearly 1.5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate across our country is 5.5 percent. That is well below the national average of the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties. The unemployment rate in the great State of New Mexico is 5.3 percent.

We are moving forward. We're not going to go backward. There is more work to be done. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must make sure our regulations are reasonable and fair. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. In order to keep jobs here, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are threatening the small-business job creators of America.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we want other countries to treat us the way we treat them. Listen, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to have an education system that provides a lifetime of learning for America's workers. Listen, the job base is changing. And some of these new jobs that pay more require new skills. That's why I strongly support helping people go back to the community colleges all across America to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to make sure jobs stay here and this economy continues to grow, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. In order to keep jobs here and to keep the economy growing, we need to keep your taxes low. I think taxes are an issue in this campaign. My opponent has already promised over $2 trillion of new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we've still got the stretch run. [*Laughter*] We've still got September and October to go. And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he used that old, tired class warfare line, "We're just going to tax the rich." But you know how that works, don't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You've heard them say "tax the rich." First of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for all the promises. And secondly, the rich are pretty good about hiring accountants and lawyers. Generally, when you hear that, be careful because he's aiming his tax increase at you. But we're not going to let him have it. We're going to win in November.

We're doing some smart things. I passed an important law to protect the residents of this State and the forests from catastrophic wildfires.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Our Healthy Forests Restoration Act is good law for New Mexico. It's important law to help us preserve these national treasures. The Cibola National Forest will benefit from this important legislation. We had a difference of opinion on this subject. My opponent said that the Healthy Forests Act was—really means we're taking a chainsaw to public forests. Then when he came out here to campaign, he turned his position around. He says he likes part of the law. [*Laughter*] I guess it's not only the wildfires that shift in the wind. [*Laughter*]

I'm running again because I understand we have more to do to wage and win the war against terrorism. Our future, America's future, depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served at the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells around the world, including America. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Over 10 million people in that country have registered to vote in the upcoming election. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, a message that's easy to understand, the leader of Libya abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world and firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suiciders. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own people. He was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world. He was a threat. One of the lessons of September the 11th that we must never forget is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize.

I went to the United States Congress. I said, "This administration sees a threat." They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam Hussein, and they came to the same conclusion I did—including my opponent, who came to the same conclusion I did.

Because I believe we ought to try diplomacy before we ever commit troops, I went to the United Nations. I said to the world, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence and concluded, with a 15-to-nothing vote in the Security Council that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. And as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused to comply with the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, we sent in inspectors. He systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Either trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the terrorist enemy. That's a risk we could not have afforded to take after September the 11th. Knowing what we know today, I would have taken the same action in Iraq.

America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and about 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found another nuance. [*Laughter*] See, he now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, he now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles we all thought he had, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam from power. And I want to thank him for clearing that up. There's still a little over 60 days in this campaign for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running because I understand we have more to do. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense into these people. You cannot try to negotiate with them.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot hope for the best.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. We must engage these enemies overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition to help us. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on our alliances and work with our friends. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll do so because when America says something, it better mean what it says in order to make the world a more peaceful place. We'll do so because it's in our interest they become democracies and peaceful societies. These nations are now governed by two strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of the people that live in those countries. We set a clear goal. We're for peaceful, democratic countries who can self-govern and who are allies in the war against these terrorists. And so our military forces are there to provide security as they head to elections, and we're there to help train Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can defeat the terrorists who are trying to stop and prevent the hopes of many from emerging. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

Our Nation's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases around the country, I have had the high privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and spread the peace. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I appreciate the veterans who are here today, who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

Our troops must have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. They must have the full support of our Government. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and in Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided money for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important piece of legislation, and it received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When they asked him about that vote, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Doesn't sound like the way people in Albuquerque, New Mexico, talk to me. But they pressed him further, and he said he was proud of his vote. And they kept pressing, and he said, "Well, it was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples—they'll be powerful examples to their neighbors. They'll be powerful examples in the part of the world that's desperate for liberty and freedom.

Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace that we all want. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our Nation. We understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Now, we've got more to do to protect our country. There's an enemy out there that still hates us. We have a difference of opinion on this. The other day, he said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. I think it shows a misunderstanding of the enemy we face. See, during the 1990's, the terrorists were recruiting, and they were training for war with us long before we went to war

with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. Staying on the offense is necessary to protect this country. See, you don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

There's a lot of good people working on your behalfs, a lot of good people at the Federal level and the State level and the local level responding to threats. We've got work to do, and we'll continue to do it to make sure that we get the best intelligence possible so we can react to the threats. We need the PATRIOT Act renewed. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for those who are working to disrupt the terrorist networks. We created the Department of Homeland Security. We're continuing to work to better safeguard our borders and our ports. We're working better between levels of government.

But I got to tell you, reform isn't easy, particularly in Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests there. There's a lot of people who are willing to hold on to the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you've got to be able to get the job done.

So when you're out there campaigning, I want you to remind people that when it comes to reforming our schools to provide an excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms for our seniors and for our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And remind your friends and neighbors, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

We're living in a time of change, and I understand change can be unsettling. It's an exciting time, but it's a time that Government needs to change its ways of thinking. Government needs to not be giving dictates to people; Government needs to be helping people. One way to do so is to understand that a lot of moms are working these days, and therefore, people need flex-time and comp-time so they can adjust their work schedules to meet the demands of family. One way to help people with changing times is to encourage an ownership society. That's why we want people owning their own health care accounts, so they can manage their own accounts and take them from job to job if they need to.

These are changing times, and they're exciting times. I see a lot of the younger folks out here today. I thank you for coming. But when it comes time to think about Social Security, baby boomers like me are in good shape. [*Laughter*] But some younger workers are going to have a problem because there's a lot of baby boomers, and the Social Security system needs to be made fiscally sound for you. And I believe the best way to do so is to let younger workers take some of their own money in personal savings accounts so they can carry it from one generation to the next.

We want more people owning their own business in America. You know, there's some fantastic success stories right here in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where people had a dream and they built their own companies that they can call their own. In changing times, if you own your own home, it can help provide stability. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We'll continue to pursue policies to encourage people to own their own home. There's nothing better than somebody opening that front door and saying, "Welcome to my house. Thank you for coming to my home." We understand in America that if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In changing times, there are some things that won't change, our belief in liberty, our belief in opportunity, and our belief in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by

shouldn't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We will continue to support the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. Listen, the culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. Listen, the great strength of America is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. People are volunteering all over our country to help improve somebody's life. I met with Bernice Young. She volunteered more than 11,000 hours at the Children's Hospital of New Mexico. She's taking time out of her life to help make somebody else's life better. See, I believe societies will change. I believe our country will change, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, if we rally the great army of compassion, which is willing to love a neighbor.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and strong belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Rudy and I were in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. It is a day Rudy will never forget. I remember the workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes, President. Whatever it takes." I remember shaking the hand of a man who had just gotten out of the rubble. He had bloodshot eyes. He said, "Do not let me down." It was a—I wake up every morning thinking about how better to protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together, and we've done a lot of hard work. But there's more to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

With your support and prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a time of change. Four years ago, I traveled this great country and your wonderful State asking for the vote. I said if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Albuquerque Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; John Sanchez and Manuel Lujan, Jr., executive

committee members, Republican Party of New Mexico; entertainers Brooks and Dunn; radio show host Tony Lynn; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Statement on Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation
August 26, 2004

Americans have a long tradition of conservation and stewardship of our Nation's lands and other natural resources. It was this ethic that led 30 years ago to passage of landmark legislation that continues to help improve America's water and air quality. Over the last three decades, we have made remarkable progress, working together to meet our conservation goals and improve the quality of our air and water.

Today I have directed the Federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource policies and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with States, local governments, tribes, and individuals. Local involvement is critical to ensuring successful, effective, and long-lasting conservation results. The Executive order on cooperative conservation that I have signed today will help us continue to make sure that decisions in Washington, DC, are well-informed by those closest to the land and their communities.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Hurricane Charley in Miami, Florida
August 27, 2004

I have just been briefed by Mike Brown here at FEMA about the progress that the Federal Government, in working with the State government, is making toward helping these poor people who got hurt by Hurricane Charley and Tropical Storm Bonnie.

When I came down here a while ago, I said that—I promised that there would be a full-scale Federal focus on helping the State of Florida. And I tasked Mike Brown to make sure that that happened, and he has done a great job. I appreciate you serving the people of this State.

And Jeb has done a fine job too. He is—he understands that a Governor must lead, and he had led. And he has helped focus resources on helping these people that need help.

There is further work to be done here in Florida. Chairman Bill Young is with us. We have been discussing the need for a supplemental fund, supplemental funding request of the Congress for $2 billion to help continue to rebuild Florida. The chairman and I had a good discussion on this issue. He knows Florida well. He knows the west coast of Florida really well. And as importantly, he knows how the Congress works well. And he said as soon as they get back, they'll take this matter up. This money will help for cleanup and housing and other services, small-business loans that are provided through FEMA.

As well, we're concerned about the citrus growers here in Florida, the nursery men and women in the State of Florida. We

think there is ample money in the agricultural budgets to handle the damage done by Charley to the citrus industry and the nursery industry and the vegetable industry. If not, we'll work with the chairman to provide money at the Federal level to help this State rebuild.

The main thing that's happened here in Florida is the people have responded. I want to thank the Red Cross for being at the table here. The Red Cross is always first on the scene to provide compassion and love. Senator Miller used to be a Governor, and he spent time at disasters. And as Governor of Texas I have too, and Jeb obviously has, and as President I've been there too. And always, the Red Cross led the army of compassion at the sites. And the people of Florida have responded really well, provided compassion and decency and care.

I also want to thank the power companies from the Southeast that have responded. It's amazing how much electricity has been restored. We're down to, here in this State, less than 20,000 people—I think it is, isn't it, Mike—that are looking for electricity. Heck, the last time I was here, it was 1.7 million people that didn't have electricity. And a lot of the reason why the electricity has been restored is, not only have the Florida power companies responded, but the power companies from around the Southeast have responded.

What I'm saying is, is that these disasters cause a lot of harm and grief, but they also bring out the best in our citizenry. And there's a lot of compassion for the people whose lives have been turned upside down. And I want to thank those here in Florida and around this part of the world for providing that help.

Again, Jeb, good job, and same to you, Mike. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:36 p.m. at Fire Station Number Two. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Senator Zell Miller of Georgia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Miami
August 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. *Vamos a ganar en Noviembre.* Thanks for coming. I like a line of work where you get introduced by your wife. I love her dearly. She's a great wife, a wonderful mother, and she is a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

Listen, Laura and I are thrilled to be here with our friend Zell Miller from Georgia. He is—I've asked him to give a big speech next week. He's the keynote speaker for our convention. I asked him because he puts his country above partisan politics. I asked him because he's a man of—he's got a great heart, and he cares about people from all walks of life. I picked the right guy to give a big speech for us next Wednesday night.

I'm sorry my brother is not here, *mi hermanito.* He's working. He's doing what the people of Florida expect him to do, and that is to do his job. I just saw him, and we were talking about the damage done by Hurricane Charley and the response by the Federal Government and the State government, which has been swift and sure. We're helping the people that need help on the west coast and throughout the

interior of your State. We're doing our jobs as public servants.

I was just talking to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He was with us. He happens to be from Florida as well, Chairman Young, and we both agreed we'll provide the money necessary to help people with their housing and small-business loans and Government assistance as well to help the citrus growers and vegetable growers and nursery men and women who've been hurt by this storm. I want to thank them for their hard work.

I appreciate Congressman Mark Foley who's with us today—Congressman Foley. I want to thank my friend Mario Diaz-Balart, who's with us today. Mario—*bienvenidos,* Mario.

I want to appreciate David Dermer, who happens to be the mayor of Miami Beach. I appreciate him being here. Mr. Mayor, *gracias por su apoyo. Su apoyo es muy importante.*

I appreciate my friend Lynn Swann. He's the head of the President's Council on Physical Fitness, and he is an—he sets an important message: Exercise. [*Laughter*] Take care of your bodies. Get out and move around. He just warned me, he forgot to tell me what it means to fall off a mountain bike. [*Laughter*] But I'm proud of my friendship with Lynn. I want to thank him.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are participating in the political process. We have a duty in this country to vote. See, we have a duty in a free country to go to the polls. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. See, reach out to people from all walks of life. You can find Republicans who need to register. You'll find some discerning independents who need to register. You can find some Democrats just like Zell who need to register. And get them to the poll and remind them that if they're interested in this country being safer, stronger, and better, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Now, I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is to turn out that vote. When we're coming down the stretch, get your friends and neighbors to the polls and remind them that we've been through a lot together during the past years and we've accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you, I'm ready to lead this country for 4 more years. I've got an agenda.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do. We have more to do to make sure our public schools are the centers of excellence we know they all can be. You might remember what it was like 3½ years ago. We had a system that just shuffled the children through, grade after grade, year after year, without them learning the basics. We came to Washington to challenge that system. Listen, we provided more Federal funding to help the schools down here, but we now expect results. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We believe in accountability. We're helping kids early, before it's too late.

We're making progress. And at my speech next week, I'm going to talk about how to continue to build on the foundation of excellence we laid. We want more high school kids taking math and sciences so they can compete in the 21st century. We're going to have problems—we'll be solving problems early so every child has a chance to succeed. We want to make sure a high school diploma means something. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to compete in the 21st century.

There's more work to be done to make sure health care is available and affordable. I know some seniors in this State have heard that old Medicare debate campaign after campaign after campaign, and nothing

ever got done. The system needed to be changed to help our seniors. I went to Washington with an idea and a plan to strengthen Medicare for our seniors, and we got the job done.

We've not only helped our seniors, we've helped low-income Americans by expanding community health centers all across our country. We provided health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. But there's more to be done. Listen, I fully understand most new jobs in this country are created by small businesses. Most small businesses are having trouble—many small businesses are having trouble affording health insurance for their employees. It seems to make sense to me to allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the rate, the discounts that big companies are able to do.

There is more work to be done in order to make sure health care is available and affordable here in south Florida. We need to stop those junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine.

Audience member. Kerry won't do it.

The President. Right. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the patients and docs and hospitals for medical liability reform. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by patients and doctors, and not by Government bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We've got more to do to keep this economy growing. Remind your friends and neighbors what this—what we've been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through an attack. We've been through corporate scandals. And yet, we've overcome these obstacles. You know why? We've got the best workers in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great entrepreneurs in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is doing well. We've overcome these obstacles because of our farmers and ranchers. We've also overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember that we—our theory was, if you pay taxes, you get relief. We didn't try to pick or choose winners. We reduced the rates of everybody. We also increased the child credit. If you're a mom or dad, we wanted to help you out. We reduced the marriage penalty. See, we believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We helped our small businesses.

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added about 1.5 million new jobs over the last 12 months. Because we acted, the national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in the State of Florida is 4.4 percent.

Listen, there's more work to be done to keep this economy growing. To keep jobs here in America, we need to reduce the regulatory burden on the employers of America. We need tort reform so that small businesses are able to keep their doors open. We need to make sure that trade around the world is fair. We just want countries to treat us like we treat them, because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere when the rules are fair.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. In order to make sure we have jobs here in America and the economy continues to grow, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the Congress 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation and encourages renewable sources of

energy. It encourages exploration for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It encourages clean coal technology. What it says is in order to grow this economy, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow and people can find work here at home, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and we need to keep your taxes low. I'm running against a fellow—he's already made over $2 trillion worth of promises. [*Laughter*] And we're just coming down the stretch. We have 2 more months to go. Imagine what it's going to be like. And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he put out that same old, tired slogan, "Oh, I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich."

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. But you've heard that before, haven't you?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. You know how the system works. They say they're going to tax the rich, but they hire lawyers and accountants, and then you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you because I'm going to win.

We have more to do. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we've changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers in cells around the world, including the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Over 10 million people in that country have registered to vote. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was the source of great instability in a world's volatile region, and so, I saw a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th that we must never forget is that this Nation must deal with threats before they fully materialize. It's an important lesson. So with that in mind, I went to the United States Congress—I went to the Congress. I said, "I see a threat. My administration sees a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history of the dictator, and they saw a threat, including my opponent. He saw a threat. He saw a threat and, along with many, authorized the use of force.

Committing our troops into combat is the last choice of a President—it must be the last choice, so I went to the United Nations. And I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the history, and they saw a threat. Remember, they passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

But as he had for over a decade, he refused to comply with the demands of the free world. He chose defiance once again. As a matter of fact, when we tried to send

inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. The choice was: Do I trust a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take actions to defend America? I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to others, including our enemy. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

I'm running because I understand we have more to do to defend this country. It's the most solemn duty of Government, is to defend the American people. So we'll continue to work with our friends and allies to aggressively pursue these terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world. You cannot talk sense to these people. You can't rationalize with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them and defeat them around the world so we do not face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. We will continue to work with our alliances and our friends for the sake of freedom and peace, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful democratic societies. That's what we're going to do. You see, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders. They're on the path to elections. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we've set a clear goal, peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. Our military forces will help them meet that goal by training Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can defend their own countries. Our military will complete—*un momento*—we will complete our mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

Our commitments are being kept by a fantastic military. I am so proud——

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. At bases across the country and around the world, I've seen the great decency and the unselfish courage of our service men and women. I want to thank the veterans who are here for setting such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war on terror. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This was legislation that provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. This was necessary funding. We received great bipartisan support. In the Senate, matter of fact, the bipartisan support was so strong only 12 Members voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said—they asked him, they said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." *"Voto si, y despues voto no." Muy claro.* [*Laughter*]

And so they said, "Well, wait a minute." And they kept pressing. And he said, "Well, I was proud of the vote." And then finally he said, "It's just a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to

change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in their neighborhood. See, we believe in America that free countries do not export terror; free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading the peace that we all long for. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our national soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

And over the next 4 years, I will continue to work to ensure that gift of freedom reaches the men and women of Cuba. Last weekend, we're continuing to implement our strategy of *la verdad,* the truth. We took action to continue breaking the dictator's information blockade. We launched the first of what will be regular airborne broadcasts into Cuba. We will continue those broadcasts. The Cuban people are hearing the truth once again.

I believe and strongly believe the people of Cuba should be free from the tyrant. And I believe that enforcing the embargo is a necessary part of that strategy. My opponent has a different approach. Last year, after Castro launched a brutal crackdown on dissidents, my opponent responded by voting to reward the dictator by lifting the tourism travel ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He even criticized some of the dissidents. He said their efforts to promote democracy were counterproductive.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he said they had brought down the hammer on themselves.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Sus palabra. A few years earlier in 2000, he said the only reason we don't change the embargo is because of the politics of Florida.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now he's changing his tune. Earlier this year, he came down here, and he explained his position on the Helms-Burton law. It's a tough measure that has succeeded in denying hard currency into Cuba to the Castro regime so he can exploit the people. He said, and I quote, "I voted for the Helms-Burton legislation," end quote. That's what he said. But there's one problem. He voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. To clear things up, his campaign said that while he did vote against final passage, he had voted for it months earlier.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In other words, he voted for it before he voted against it. *"Voto si, y despues voto no."*

When I say something, I mean it. We will not rest until the Cuban people enjoy the same freedoms in Havana that they receive here in America.

There's more work to be done to protect the homeland. We've got more work to do. I just want you to know there's a lot of really good people who are working hard and long hours to protect you, people at the Federal level, people at the State level, first-responders here at the local level. We're spending a lot of time. I appreciate the firefighters and police officers and emergency teams that are here with us today.

There's more work to be done. You know, we created the Department of Homeland Security. We're now reforming our intelligence service so we can get better intelligence and share the intelligence better to disrupt terrorist plots. We've got to do better in our ports and on our borders. We've got a lot of work to do. But I just want to warn you, reform isn't easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests up there. A lot of people say they

like the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You've got to be able to get the job done.

So when you go out and work on our behalf, you tell them that when it comes to reforming our schools and raising the standards and improving the lives of our children, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms that helps our seniors and our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, we are getting the job done. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror and spreading peace and freedom, we're getting the job done. When it comes to a firm policy on Cuba, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. These are changing times we live in. These are changing times, and they're challenging times. They're exciting times as well. But in these changing times, there are—some things will never change: Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity; our belief in the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will honor our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Our culture is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," "You got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and deep belief in the values that make this country such a wonderful country.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I was traveling with Rudy Giuliani yesterday in New Mexico, and I—it reminded me of the day we spent together, September the 14th, 2001, the day I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers, the day that, obviously, I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling, "Whatever it takes." I was walking down, thanking people, and a fellow looked me and said, "Do not let me down." This is one of these memories that have been indelibly etched in my mind. I wake up every day in this great job of mine thinking about how best to protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

We have done a lot together. We have done a lot together, and we've done a lot of hard work. We've done a lot of hard work. There's more work to be done. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean every corner. I want everybody, no matter where they're from, where they were raised, to be able to realize the great potential, the

great dream of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. During the next 4 years, we will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

When I campaigned in your great State 4 years ago and around our Nation, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans, if you honored me with the great responsibility of being President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. *Y con su apoyo*—and with your help, I will do so *por quatro mas años.*

Thank you all for coming. *Vamos a ganar.* Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:13 p.m. at the Miami Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; and Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD–11—Comprehensive Terrorist-Related Screening Procedures

August 27, 2004

Subject: Comprehensive Terrorist-Related Screening Procedures

(1) In order more effectively to detect and interdict individuals known or reasonably suspected to be or have been engaged in conduct constituting, in preparation for, in aid of, or related to terrorism ("suspected terrorists") and terrorist activities, it is the policy of the United States to:

(a) enhance terrorist-related screening (as defined below) through comprehensive, coordinated procedures that detect, identify, track, and interdict people, cargo, conveyances, and other entities and objects that pose a threat to homeland security, and to do so in a manner that safeguards legal rights, including freedoms, civil liberties, and information privacy guaranteed by Federal law, and builds upon existing risk assessment capabilities while facilitating the efficient movement of people, cargo, conveyances, and other potentially affected activities in commerce; and

(b) implement a coordinated and comprehensive approach to terrorist-related screening—in immigration, law enforcement, intelligence, counterintelligence, and protection of the border, transportation systems, and critical infrastructure—that supports homeland security, at home and abroad.

(2) This directive builds upon HSPD–6, "Integration and Use of Screening Information to Protect Against Terrorism." The Terrorist Screening Center (TSC), which was established and is administered by the Attorney General pursuant to HSPD–6, enables Government officials to check individuals against a consolidated Terrorist Screening Center Database. Other screening activities underway within the Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) and the Department of Homeland Security further strengthen the ability of the United States Government to protect the people, property, and territory of the United States against acts of terrorism.

(3) In this directive, the term "terrorist-related screening" means the collection,

analysis, dissemination, and use of information related to people, cargo, conveyances, and other entities and objects that pose a threat to homeland security. Terrorist-related screening also includes risk assessment, inspection, and credentialing.

(4) Not later than 75 days after the date of this directive, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, the Secretaries of State, Defense, Transportation, Energy, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Agriculture, the Directors of Central Intelligence and the Office of Management and Budget, and the heads of other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to me, through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security, a report setting forth plans and progress in the implementation of this directive, including as further described in sections 5 and 6 of this directive.

(5) The report shall outline a strategy to enhance the effectiveness of terrorist-related screening activities, in accordance with the policy set forth in section 1 of this directive, by developing comprehensive, coordinated, systematic terrorist-related screening procedures and capabilities that also take into account the need to:

(a) maintain no less than current levels of security created by existing screening and protective measures;
(b) encourage innovations that exceed established standards;
(c) ensure sufficient flexibility to respond rapidly to changing threats and priorities;
(d) permit flexibility to incorporate advancements into screening applications and technology rapidly;
(e) incorporate security features, including unpredictability, that resist circumvention to the greatest extent possible;
(f) build upon existing systems and best practices and, where appropriate, integrate, consolidate, or eliminate duplicative systems used for terrorist-related screening;
(g) facilitate legitimate trade and travel, both domestically and internationally;
(h) limit delays caused by screening procedures that adversely impact foreign relations, or economic, commercial, or scientific interests of the United States; and
(i) enhance information flow between various screening programs.

(6) The report shall also include the following:

(a) the purposes for which individuals will undergo terrorist-related screening;
(b) a description of the screening opportunities to which terrorist-related screening will be applied;
(c) the information individuals must present, including, as appropriate, the type of biometric identifier or other form of identification or identifying information to be presented, at particular screening opportunities;
(d) mechanisms to protect data, including during transfer of information;
(e) mechanisms to address data inaccuracies, including names inaccurately contained in the terrorist screening data consolidated pursuant to HSPD–6;
(f) the procedures and frequency for screening people, cargo, and conveyances;
(g) protocols to support consistent risk assessment and inspection procedures;
(h) the skills and training required for the screeners at screening opportunities;
(i) the hierarchy of consequences that should occur if a risk indicator is generated as a result of a screening opportunity;
(j) mechanisms for sharing information among screeners and all relevant Government agencies, including results of screening and new information acquired regarding suspected terrorists between screening opportunities;

(k) recommended research and development on technologies designed to enhance screening effectiveness and further protect privacy interests; and

(l) a plan for incorporating known traveler programs into the screening procedures, where appropriate.

(7) Not later than 90 days after the date of this directive, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the heads of the Federal departments and agencies listed in section 4 of this directive, shall also provide to me, through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, a prioritized investment and implementation plan for a systematic approach to terrorist-related screening that optimizes detection and interdiction of suspected terrorists and terrorist activities. The plan shall describe the scope, governance, principles, outcomes, milestones, training objectives, metrics, costs, and schedule of activities to implement the policy set forth in section 1 of this directive. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall further provide a report on the status of the implementation of the plan to me through the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security 6 months after the date of this directive and shall thereafter report to me on such progress or any recommended changes from time to time as appropriate.

(8) In order to ensure comprehensive and coordinated terrorist-related screening procedures, the implementation of this directive shall be consistent with Government-wide efforts to improve information sharing. Additionally, the reports and plan required under sections 4 and 7 of this directive shall inform development of Government-wide information sharing improvements.

(9) This directive does not alter existing authorities or responsibilities of department and agency heads including to carry out operational activities or provide or receive information. This directive is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch of the Federal Government, and it is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD–12—Policy for a Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors

August 27, 2004

Subject: Policy for a Common Identification Standard for Federal Employees and Contractors

(1) Wide variations in the quality and security of forms of identification used to gain access to secure Federal and other facilities where there is potential for terrorist attacks need to be eliminated. Therefore, it is the policy of the United States to enhance security, increase Government efficiency, reduce identity fraud, and protect personal privacy by establishing a mandatory, Government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of identification issued by the Federal Government to its employees and contractors (including contractor employees).

(2) To implement the policy set forth in paragraph (1), the Secretary of Commerce shall promulgate in accordance with applicable law a Federal standard for secure and reliable forms of identification (the "Standard") not later than 6 months

after the date of this directive in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The Secretary of Commerce shall periodically review the Standard and update the Standard as appropriate in consultation with the affected agencies.

(3) "Secure and reliable forms of identification" for purposes of this directive means identification that (a) is issued based on sound criteria for verifying an individual employee's identity; (b) is strongly resistant to identity fraud, tampering, counterfeiting, and terrorist exploitation; (c) can be rapidly authenticated electronically; and (d) is issued only by providers whose reliability has been established by an official accreditation process. The Standard will include graduated criteria, from least secure to most secure, to ensure flexibility in selecting the appropriate level of security for each application. The Standard shall not apply to identification associated with national security systems as defined by 44 U.S.C. 3542(b)(2).

(4) Not later than 4 months following promulgation of the Standard, the heads of executive departments and agencies shall have a program in place to ensure that identification issued by their departments and agencies to Federal employees and contractors meets the Standard. As promptly as possible, but in no case later than 8 months after the date of promulgation of the Standard, the heads of executive departments and agencies shall, to the maximum extent practicable, require the use of identification by Federal employees and contractors that meets the Standard in gaining physical access to Federally controlled facilities and logical access to Federally controlled information systems. Departments and agencies shall implement this directive in a manner consistent with ongoing Government-wide activities, policies and guidance issued by OMB, which shall ensure compliance.

(5) Not later than 6 months following promulgation of the Standard, the heads of executive departments and agencies shall identify to the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and the Director of OMB those Federally controlled facilities, Federally controlled information systems, and other Federal applications that are important for security and for which use of the Standard in circumstances not covered by this directive should be considered. Not later than 7 months following the promulgation of the Standard, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and the Director of OMB shall make recommendations to the President concerning possible use of the Standard for such additional Federal applications.

(6) This directive shall be implemented in a manner consistent with the Constitution and applicable laws, including the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and other statutes protecting the rights of Americans.

(7) Nothing in this directive alters, or impedes the ability to carry out, the authorities of the Federal departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under law and consistent with applicable legal authorities and presidential guidance. This directive is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch of the Federal Government, and it is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

(8) The Assistant to the President for Homeland Security shall report to me not later than 7 months after the promulgation of the Standard on progress made to implement this directive, and shall thereafter report to me on such progress or any

recommended changes from time to time as appropriate.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The President's Radio Address
August 28, 2004

Good morning. In the 3 years since our country was attacked, America has remained on the offensive against terrorist enemies wherever they hide and plot. Part of that offensive has been to reorganize our Government so that all our intelligence and law enforcement agencies cooperate effectively to expose and disrupt threats against America.

The Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission, concluded that these efforts have made America safer. They also concluded that America is still not safe. I agree with both of those conclusions, and so my administration is taking additional actions to reform our intelligence services and improve America's ability to find, track, and stop dangerous terrorists.

This week, I signed a series of Executive orders to ensure that the people in Government responsible for defending America and countering terrorism have the best possible information and support to identify threats and to protect the homeland. Some of these orders reflect specific recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. All of them are essential to America's security as we wage the war on terror.

First, I have ordered the Director of Central Intelligence to perform the functions of the National Intelligence Director within the constraints of existing law, until Congress establishes that position. I agree with the 9/11 Commission that America needs a single official to coordinate the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community with authority over personnel, budgeting, and policy. I am working with Members of Congress to create this position, and while we act, the Director of Central Intelligence will play an expanded role. I also urge Congress to act swiftly on my nomination of Porter Goss, a proven reformer with decades of experience in intelligence to lead the CIA.

Second, I have ordered the establishment of a National Counterterrorism Center. This new center builds on the capabilities of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, which I created more than a year ago. The Center will become our Government's central knowledge bank for information about known and suspected terrorists and will help ensure effective joint action across the Government so that our efforts against terrorists are unified in priority and purpose. Center personnel will also prepare the daily terrorism threat report that comes to me and to senior Government officials.

Third, we're making sure that all agencies of our Government share vital threat information. I have ordered the Director of Central Intelligence to ensure that we have common standards and clear accountability measures for intelligence sharing across the agencies of our Government. I have established a new Information Systems Council to identify and break down any remaining barriers to the rapid sharing of threat information by America's intelligence agencies, law enforcement agencies, and State and local governments. To continue to protect the freedoms and privacy of our citizens, I've established a Civil Liberties Board to monitor information-sharing practices.

America faces a great threat, and our Government is doing everything in its power to confront and defeat that threat. We have made great progress against the terrorists who seek to harm our Nation. We have made great progress in protecting our homeland. In all that lies ahead, America will stay focused and determined, and we will prevail.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:25 p.m. on August 27 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Troy, Ohio
August 28, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you for bringing your families. Thanks for taking time out of your Saturday morning to provide such a warm welcome to somebody who is coming here to ask for your help and ask for your vote. I'm proud to be in Miami County, Ohio, today to kick off a bus tour across your important State. I'm here to say to you, I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years, and I want your help.

Boehner said if you came to this part of the world, some people might show up to say hello. He was right, and I'm grateful. Thanks for being here. I'm proud to call John Boehner my friend. I know you're proud to call him Congressman. He's doing a great job on the people of this part of the world, and I appreciate serving with him.

I wish Laura were here to see the size of this crowd. She's not going to believe when I tell her how many people came. She's going to say it was just a Texas tall tale. Laura is a great mother, a wonderful wife, a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I hope you put me back into office today, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Listen, I didn't pick him because of his wavy hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his sound judgment, his vast experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Governor Bob Taft for joining us today. Mr. Governor, thank you for joining me on this bus trip. We're traveling across this great State of yours, shaking as many hands as possible, looking people in the eye, and saying, "I've got a clear vision of where I want to take this country."

I want to thank Senator Mike DeWine for being on this bus trip with me today. I appreciate working with Mike and the other Senator, George Voinovich. Put George back in there for 6 years. You need him in the State of Ohio. Mike wisely brought his wife, Fran, and daughter, Anna. I'm proud to be traveling with them as well.

I want to thank Secretary of State Ken Blackwell for joining us today.

Mr. Mayor is with us. Mr. Mayor, His Honor, Mike Beamish, is with us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your hospitality. I appreciate you letting us use this fantastic town square. Such a beautiful sight, made more beautiful by the fact that a lot of your citizens have come here today. My only advice, Mr. Mayor, is make sure you fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Don McLaurin, the mayor of Trotwood, Ohio, for being here. I want to thank all the local officials. I want to thank the Troy High Marching Band for being here today.

Today when we landed in Dayton, I met Becky Brown. [*Applause*] She brought some of her cousins with her. [*Laughter*] Becky is the one millionth person to sign up as a volunteer in the Bush-Cheney '04 effort. That means she's willing to put up signs and willing to get on the phone and willing to work and turn out the vote.

See, we have a duty in our country to vote. We have an obligation to participate in the political process. So I'm here to thank all of you all who are involved in the grassroots efforts here in Ohio. I want to thank you for going to your community centers and your places of worship and where you work and saying to your friends and neighbors, "Register to vote." It's important you do so. And then after you get them registered, remind them to vote. And as they start heading to the polls, tell them if they want an administration that's going to make this country safer, stronger, and better, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Listen, we have done a lot in this country. We've accomplished a great deal.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have been through a lot together. And we've accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you that all—we've done a lot. We have more to do. We have more to do to make this country a more secure country. We have more to do to spread the peace. We have more to do to make America a hopeful place for every single citizen.

And that starts with making sure our public schools are the centers of excellence we know they can be. John Boehner mentioned the No Child Left Behind Act. I want to take you back 3½ years ago to a system that simply moved children through, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar, because we know every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. We expect every child to learn to read and write and add and subtract. We increased Federal funding, but we increased local control of schools and accountability across America so not one child is left behind in this country.

We're making progress. We're closing the achievement gap in America, but there's more to do. We want to make sure math and sciences are emphasized in our high schools, so our youngsters can be able to participate in the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to expand the Internet in the classrooms. We're going to make sure there's early intervention programs available so kids don't slip behind. We're going to make sure that a high school diploma means something over the next 4 years. What I'm telling you is, 4 more years of this administration will help a rising generation earn the skills and confidence necessary to compete in a global world.

We have more to do to make health care available and affordable. When we came to office, you might remember all those political campaigns: "Give us a chance. We'll fix Medicare for our seniors. We'll make sure the system is strengthened and modern." But nothing ever got done. We got the job done for the seniors of America. The Medicare system gives seniors more choices. And starting in 2006, there will be prescription drugs available for those on Medicare.

We're making progress when it comes to health care. We've expanded the number of community centers that are available for low-income Americans. We provided health savings accounts to encourage families to save, tax-free, for their own needs. When it comes to making health care more affordable and available, there is more work to be done over the next 4 years. Most

people get their health care through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. Therefore, in order to help American families, it makes sense to let small businesses pool together and purchase insurance at the same discount that big businesses are able to do.

We will harness technology to reduce costs and reduce error. We will continue to expand research to seek new cures for diseases. And I'll tell you what else you need to do, not only in Ohio but around the Nation, we must stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care and driving docs out of business. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to make your choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We've got to make—we've got to do more to make this economy stronger. Listen, I understand there's places here in Ohio that are lagging behind the national recovery. We will continue to work to create an environment for jobs to grow so people can find work. But I want to remind you, we've been through a lot in this country. We've been through a recession and corporate scandals and an attack on our country. Yet, we're overcoming these obstacles. We're overcoming these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We're overcoming these obstacles because America's farmers and ranchers know what they're doing. We're coming over—we're overcoming these obstacles because we've got the greatest workers in the world in this country. And I think we're overcoming these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember that tax relief. We said, "If we're going to provide tax relief, everybody who pays taxes gets relief." We're not going to play politics with your wallet. We raised the child credit to help moms and dads with raising their children. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We're helping our small businesses, and it's working. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, which is lower than the national average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

We're headed in the right direction, but there's more work to be done. In order to keep jobs here in America, this Nation needs an energy policy. We need to encourage conservation. We need to encourage alternative uses of energy. But we need to be using Ohio coal and Ohio natural gas to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in Ohio and America, we're going to make sure countries treat us the way we treat them when it comes to trade. Our markets are open. They need to open up their markets because American workers can compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime in this world.

We need to get rid of these junk lawsuits that are threatening small businesses all across America. We need to make sure our regulatory system is reasonable and fair. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure American workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, which means we will continue to use our community college systems as a place for people to receive a lifetime of learning in America.

And finally, to make sure this economy grows and jobs stay here in America, we've

got to be wise about how we spend your money. And we've got to keep your taxes low. [*Applause*] Yes. We have a difference of opinion in this race. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And there's still September and October to go. [*Laughter*] He's got plenty of time to go out there and make more promises. They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'm going to tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? Every time they say "tax the rich," the rich dodge and you pay. But we're not going to let him. We're going to beat him in November of this year.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running because I know we have more to do to wage and win the war against the terrorists. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells around the world, including the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. You realize, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the Presidential elections coming this fall in Afghanistan. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in that country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing missiles at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region.

I saw a threat. One of the important lessons of September the 11th that this Nation must never forget is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I had looked at. They looked at the same history of Saddam Hussein and came to the same conclusion, as they authorized the use of force. Republicans and Democrats alike saw a threat, including my opponent.

I then went to the United Nations. Before a President is to commit force, we must try all means necessary to solve a threat peacefully. So I went to the United Nations. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, and as they had for over a decade, they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. The U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, he refused to comply with the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that were sent into his country.

So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Even though we did not find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. That was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, he now agrees with me that even though we did not find the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. However, I warn you that there's still a little more than 60 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

We have more to do. I'm running because I understand that we must continue to work with our friends and allies to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people, see. You cannot negotiate with them. We can't be blind to the realities of the world and hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead this world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a vast coalition of like-minded nations, who are working to secure our people and to spread the peace. We've got nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 involved in Iraq, over 60 involved in a Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict technology and supplies to potentially build weapons of mass destruction. We will continue to work and build our alliances over the next 4 years. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq so that they become peaceful, democratic societies. It's in our interests that they become peaceful and democratic societies. These countries are now governed by two strong leaders, leaders who have set their countries on the path to elections.

We have a clear goal in Afghanistan and Iraq. We want a peaceful and democratic country to emerge that are allies in the war on terror. Our military forces will help meet that goal by not only providing security for a political process to develop but by helping to train Afghans and Iraqis so they get to defeat those who want to stop the march of freedom in their own countries. We will complete this mission as quickly as possible, so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

And I'm proud of our military. They're doing the hard work of freedom and peace. I want to thank all the veterans who are here today for setting such a fine example for those who wear the uniform.

I have made a commitment to those who wear our uniform and to their loved ones that they will have the resources they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. We are meeting that commitment in Washington, DC. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided money for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, and fuel and spare parts. It was necessary. It was an important piece of legislation. We received great bipartisan support. So strong was the bipartisan support that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against this vital funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they said, "Why did you make that vote?" He said, "I actually voted for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." I suspect you don't find a lot of people right here in the town square in Troy, Ohio, who talk like that. They then pressed him, and they said, "Don't you have another explanation?" He said, well, he's proud of the vote, and then he finally said, "It's just a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In our long run—in the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Free countries make the world a more peaceful place.

By serving the cause of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're making the world a more peaceful place. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our own country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We've got more work to do to protect this homeland. I see firefighters and police officers who are here with us today. I want to thank the first-responders for their hard work. You need to know that cooperation at the Federal level and State level and local level has vastly improved since September the 11th, and it needs to be. There's an enemy that lurks and still hates us. We have more work to do. Yesterday I announced further reforms of intelligence gathering systems to make sure that we get the best information so we can respond to threat to our country. It is essential that Congress renew the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act gives our law enforcement vital tools to break and find terrorist cells before they can affect America. No, we're working hard to secure our ports and secure our borders. There's a lot of good people working on your behalf to make this homeland more secure.

But I will warn you, reform is not easy in Washington. There's a lot of entrenched interests there. There's a lot of people who have spent a lifetime in Washington, and they want to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get the job done.

And so when you're out campaigning on my behalf, when you're out there registering people to vote and then encouraging them to vote, remind them that when it comes to reforming schools so we can increase excellence in every classroom in America, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care for our seniors and for American families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to expanding our economy, defeating the recession, we're getting the job done. When it comes to defending this homeland and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, reelect somebody who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're living in a time of change. It's a time of change, and change can be unsettling. Government must recognize that and Government must stand side by side with workers and families during this time of change. See, we have a difference of philosophy in this race. I believe Government ought to help, not give orders. I believe ought to—Government ought to encourage people to realize their dreams, not dictate to people how to achieve their dreams. And there's a difference in philosophy that I intend to make and clarify across this country. And one of the ways that Government can help people during

times of change is to encourage an ownership society, is to encourage people to own their own business. There's nothing better than an America for people to know that the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and alive and well.

In order to provide security during a time of change, we ought to encourage health care accounts that people own and call their own, that they can take from job to job. I see we've got a lot of younger workers here, and I want to thank you for coming. But you need to make sure you listen carefully to the debate on Social Security. Baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to the fiscal sanity of Social Security. People just starting in the workplace better understand that we must think differently about how to strengthen Social Security. I believe the best way to do so is to make sure younger workers have the option of taking some of their own money and putting them in personal savings accounts that they can call their own.

In a changing world, when the workplace has changed, we've got to make sure our work rules are family-friendly. That includes flex-time and comp-time to allow moms and dads to spend more quality time with their children.

In a changing world, there's nothing like owning your own home to provide hope and stability. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. We will continue to promote policy that encourages that moment when somebody opens the door of their dwelling and says, "Welcome to my house." That's what we love to hear. We love to hear that phrase, "Welcome to my piece of property." When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In a time of change, there are some things that won't change: the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence, and integrity; our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. In a time of change, we will support the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe—we stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, the culture is beginning to change from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in Troy, Ohio, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The true strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. I'll continue to rally the armies of compassion over the next 4 years, call upon those loving souls who have heard the call to love a neighbor so that we can change America one heart, one conscience, and one soul at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep belief in the values that make America a great place.

None of us will ever forget that era when—that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th,

2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking the line, thanking the firefighters and rescuers who were there, and a guy with bloodshot eyes grabbed me by the arm, stared square in my eyes, and said, "Do not let me down." Moments I will never forget. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in defending this country, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have come through much together. We have been through a lot together. We have done a lot of hard work. We're moving this country forward by extending freedom around the world and opportunity here at home. During the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to spread opportunity and ownership to every corner of the country. I want every citizen to realize the great promise of our blessed land. We will continue to work to pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made a pledge to our citizens that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, with your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:42 a.m. in the Troy Public Square. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell; Mayor Michael L. Beamish of Troy, OH; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in a Discussion in Lima, Ohio
August 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. I've got a lot of work to do today. See, I'm here in Lima asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I've got a reason to seek the Presidency again. There is a reason to want to serve, and that's to keep the country safer and stronger and better. That's why I want to be your President.

And I believe you've got to get out amongst the people and ask them for the vote. So that's what we're doing here in Ohio on this Saturday. And thanks for coming. Thanks for giving me a chance to—we've got a—I've got a different way of talking about what's on my mind and talking about our agenda. I've actually asked some of your fellow citizens to join me today to talk about what it means to own a business or what it means to own a health savings account, what it means to—what tax relief meant. It's a way of explaining why we have done the things we've done and what we intend to do to make sure this country is a strong country.

I want to talk a little bit about foreign policy. I want to talk about how to spread peace. And then I'm going to answer some of your questions, if you've got some.

Before I do so, I want to tell you that I'm really proud of Laura. She is a wonderful wife. I was a lucky fellow when she said yes. [*Laughter*] She was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. She said, "I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] It's the only political promise

I've ever broken. [*Laughter*] And thankfully I broke it. What a fabulous, articulate woman she is. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. There's a lot of reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. She's working on her convention speech. I better get working on mine. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He is a really solid man. He is a—I like to tease my Vice President by saying, you know, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] But I picked him because of his sound judgment, his expertise, and the fact that he can get the job done. That's why I picked Dick Cheney.

I appreciate my friend Mike Oxley. I call him Ox. [*Laughter*] He's the Congressman from this part of the world. He's a really good man. He's a great chairman of an important committee. He's a decent American. I appreciate you coming, Mike. I'd have thought you'd have gotten a better seat, but you know—[*laughter*]. And standing with Mike is United States Senator Mike DeWine. He is doing a fine job for Ohio. He's got another fine Senator serving with him in George Voinovich. Put him back in there for 6 more years; he's a good man to work with.

Governor Taft is traveling today. Thank you for coming, Governor. Kenny Blackwell is with us. I'm honored you both are here. Appreciate you being here.

Karel Oxley—[*applause*]—yes—the superintendent of schools. Thank you for opening up this beautiful school to this dialog we're having. And more importantly, thanks for serving your community. You know I like superintendents of schools so much so that I picked a superintendent of the Harris County School System in Texas to be the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige. The reason why is I believe in local control of schools, and I wanted somebody in Washington who understood all wisdom about education is not in the bureaucracies of Washington; it's actually found in the local communities of our States and cities.

I want to thank the Lima High marching band for performing. I'm honored that you're here. I appreciate it.

I also want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. We have a duty in America to vote. One of the amazing facts about what is taking place in the world is the fact that there are over 10 million people who have registered to vote in Afghanistan. Now think about that for a minute. Ten million citizens have said, "Let me participate in democracy," after having lived under the clutches of a barbaric regime. It speaks to the power of liberty, doesn't it?

Now, we have a duty here to register to vote as well. That's—one of my purposes in taking this bus trip throughout Ohio is to remind citizens from all political parties: Register. And do your duty and vote. Now, I've got an idea who I think you ought to vote for regardless of your political party. [*Laughter*] But you ought to be participating in the system. And there are people here in this hall who are helping to register. And I want to thank you for it. I want to thank you for convincing your fellow citizens to do their duty.

We've got Becky Brown on the bus today. Becky is the one millionth volunteer for the Bush-Cheney campaign. Beck, congratulations for being the one millionth. She is from Miami County, Ohio. Our first stop was in Troy, Ohio. A little over 20,000 people came out to say hello, I want you to know, which is pretty darn heartening. It's a good way to start your morning, if you're looking for votes. [*Laughter*]

But I do want to thank you. You can get on the Internet at georgewbush.com. It's pretty easy to remember—not all that original, I must admit. [*Laughter*] But it's a way where you can figure out how to help. And we need your help, is what I'm telling you. We need your help. We're going to carry Ohio again in 2004. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Thanks. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm here to tell you I've got the energy, the desire, the vision to serve this great country for 4 more years. That's what we're here to talk about.

You know it's going to sound probably a little strange for me to tell you this but I wouldn't be asking for the vote if I wasn't comfortable in telling you that this has been a fabulous experience for my family. It probably seems counterintuitive, doesn't it? All the spotlight and the fishbowl and the pressure and the decisionmaking. But it's been great. It really has. And I am grateful and thankful that I've got a wonderful wife and two fabulous daughters who are by my side during these moments in our Nation's history. And it's been really a fascinating experience.

I have a deep desire to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of our citizens. We have a strong military. We'll keep it that way. We're the greatest economic engine in the world. And yet the true strength is the fact there are loving citizens in America who are willing to interface with somebody who hurts and says, "I love you, brother or sister. What can I do to help you?"

And this country of ours, it's very important to recognize that Government is limited in its capacity to heal and help. Government can hand out money, but Government cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. And so one of the callings for the next 4 years is to continue to call upon those soldiers in the armies of compassion to help heal those who hurt.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiative which we've started in Washington is a vital part of helping change America one heart and one soul at a time. People often say, "Well, tell me about the Faith-Based Initiative and why you've started it." Well, I'll tell you one reason why. Take, for example, a person who's hooked on drugs. Sometimes that person can get off drugs by a counselor, a kind of a psychological counseling. Sometimes it works. Sometimes, in order to get off drugs, it requires a change of heart. See if you change a heart, you change a person's habits. And so, therefore, if part of my job is to get the job done and solve problems and a problem in our country is the fact that some people are hooked on drugs and alcohol, it seems to make sense to me to call in all aspects of American society to help save lives, including those programs based upon faith which change a person's heart. And so we ought to be welcoming all faiths into the compassionate healing of broken hearts in America, so everybody can realize the great promise of America—everybody in this country. So when I'm talking about a better America, I'm talking about continuing to rally the armies of compassion.

I'm also talking about making sure everybody gets an education. I'm glad we're having this meeting in a schoolhouse. I was just with John Boehner. He's the chairman of the education committee. He's from the district right down south of here. We changed the whole attitude about schools in America. See, when I got into Washington, I was convinced that too many children were just being shuffled through the schools grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So in working with the Mikes who are here and Boehner and others I said, "Look, let's increase funding to the extent we can afford it, but for the first time why don't we ask a simple yet profound question: Can the child read? Why don't we start with that. Why don't we make sure."

I call it challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what that means? It means when you believe certain children can't read and write, guess what's happens? It's exactly what happens. Certain children just get moved through the system. And guess who we're talking about? We're

talking about inner-city kids. We're talking about children whose parents may not be able to speak English as a first language. It's so easy to quit on them.

That's not my vision or your vision of the future of this country. Our vision says every child can learn to read and we expect it. Therefore, in return for extra Federal money, you measure. You show us. You tell us whether your curriculum is working. It's your choice to choose the curriculum, but I just want to know. As the man in charge of spending Federal money along with Congress, I want to know whether or not this money we're spending is making sense. And if we're not teaching the kids early enough to read, let's correct it early, before it's too late. That's what we're talking about about a hopeful America. And it's working. This program is working. By measuring, we know. And guess what's happening? By having high standards, local control of schools, extra money to help, the achievement gap in America is closing. Because we measure—that's how we know.

And there's more to do. I want a high school diploma to mean something. I want to make sure we emphasize math and sciences so the rising generation will have the skills necessary to compete in a global economy. We've got a lot to do on education. But a better America is to have the right vision and the right focus on how to improve public education for every single child. And that's exactly what this administration has done, and that's what we'll continue to do over the next 4 years.

A stronger America is an America in which people are able to find work. And listen, I understand Ohio. I've been here a lot, and I will come back a lot. [*Laughter*] This economy of ours has recovered from recession, corporate scandal, and attacks. And yet there are parts of your State that are lagging behind the national economy. I understand that—I understand that. Which means you better have somebody in office who has a plan to continue economic growth, a plan that says here's how we're going to continue the momentum of the economy. And that's what I want to talk to you about. A stronger America is an America in which this economy continues to grow.

The role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish, in which small businesses grow to be big businesses. That's why, when we were in the recession that showed up at our doorstep after the Vice President and I got sworn in, I said to Congress, "Let's cut the taxes on the people. Let's let them have more of their own money to spend, to save, or invest." And it's working—it's working. The economy is strong and getting stronger. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. That's lower than the average in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The economy is getting stronger.

A couple of things about the tax relief plan—it will fit into some of our discussions with some of the entrepreneurs here. First of all, when it came to providing tax relief, remember how we did it. We said, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." It sounds pretty simple, but that's not always the way Washington does things. So we said, "If you're paying taxes"—so therefore we reduced all rates, which was fair.

We also did some other things inside the code. We increased the child credit. Why? We want it easier for moms and dads to raise their children. We reduced the marriage penalty. Think about the logic of a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. It's backward. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage, in the Tax Code.

We helped small businesses a lot in the tax relief for two reasons: One, most small businesses in America are what's called an S corp or limited—sole proprietorship. And they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. See, here—a small business is called an S corp, but their taxes are paid based upon the individual rates. And by far most

businesses in America are either of those two legal forms. And so when you reduce all rates, individual rates, you've got to make the connection. It's important for the American people to understand we're really reducing the rates on small-business owners. And that's important because most jobs—most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. One reason our economy is coming back is because the small-business sector is vibrant and strong.

The other thing we did is we provided incentive for small businesses to invest. And we'll talk to some small-business owners that took advantage of the incentive program that said if you invest, you get a little tax break.

There's more to do to keep the economy going, and let me tell you right quick what I think we ought to be doing. First, one way to say this is that the best way to keep jobs here in America is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. I mean, if you want jobs here, it's got to be the kind of environment in which people are willing to risk capital. So what does that mean? It means we've got to have tort reform. There's too many junk lawsuits that are making it hard for businessowners to create jobs. That's one thing it means.

It's tough to get it done in Washington. The plaintiffs bar is one of the special interests that are hard to move, to be frank about it. That's why you need to put me back in there. I'm not afraid of them. I want to continue to push for legal reform that will help our businesses.

I'll tell you another area where we need legal reform, and that is in medicine. Too many junk lawsuits and frivolous lawsuits hurt our docs and hurt our patients. And that's an important issue. By the way, this is a national issue. It's a national issue because junk lawsuits and the defensive practice of medicine as a result of junk lawsuits run up our budgets. They run up our VA budget. They run up our Medicare budget. They run up our Medicaid budgets. It's costly to the taxpayers, but more significantly, it's costly to the communities because docs are being run out of business.

Most people get their insurance through their businesses. Most—and since most new jobs are created by small businesses, it seems like to me that good health policy focuses on the small-business sector. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. It's a problem. It is an issue that we must deal with.

One way to deal with that issue is through medical liability reform. Another way to deal with that issue is to use technologies in medicine to wring out excessive cost and to cut down on medical error. A third way to do so is to allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional lines. That means a restaurant in Texas and a restaurant in Ohio can buy policy and—with other restaurants around the country and spread risk across a greater number of employees so as to reduce the cost of health care to—those are called association health plans. That's what that's called. They're being resisted in Washington, DC. But it's a mistake not to allow small businesses to be able to pool risk so they can afford insurance at the same discounts that big businesses are able to afford insurance.

Another way to keep jobs here in America is to make sure we've got an energy policy. You see, if you want workers to be here, we better have a reliable and affordable supply of energy. Two years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that said, "Let's encourage conservation. Let's encourage research into how to make sure renewable forms of energy are more cost-effective"—that means corn, for example, or soybeans. It means—look, we ought to be exploring the technology and the know-how to expand the use of ethanol.

Can you imagine someday—and I believe it's going happen—someday a President is going to walk in and the ag-type adviser is going to say, "Hey, Mr. President, the

corn crop is up, and now we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." That's what I'm telling you. We also need to be using Ohio coal. We need to be using Ohio natural gas. If we want to keep jobs here, we've got to be less dependent on energy sources from overseas.

I'm winding down here.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. No, no, I'm just getting started, excuse me—[*laughter*]—getting cranked up. When people start dropping out on the front row, I'll quit. Anyway—[*laughter*].

Let me talk about trade. That's a vital issue, and if we get it wrong, it's going to hurt jobs in America. My position on trade is this: First, we have opened up our markets for goods from overseas for a reason. It's not just me. Other Presidents have done so as well. The way the economy works is that if you have more products to choose from, you're more likely to get a better quality product at a better price. That's the way the economy works. And so therefore, when you open up your markets to foreign goods, it's good for U.S. consumers.

Now, all I'm telling you on trade is that the policy ought to be saying, "We've opened up our markets. You open up yours." See, that's the best trade policy. We treat you one way; you treat us the same way. And that's—and we're making progress there.

Now, I've got tools at my disposal to call to account unfair trading practices, and I'm using them—I'm using them without creating a climate of economic isolationism. See, it's so easy to say, "We'll just isolate ourselves from the world. That's how we'll deal with unfair trade." That's a mistake. That's a big mistake. A lot of capital comes into the State of Ohio from overseas that employs people. But as importantly, a lot of people in Ohio are selling goods overseas.

I'm going to tell you something. The farm economy is good here in this State. You might remember what it was like before I came in. Any farmers here? Yes, okay. You remember, it wasn't so good. Well, one reason the farm economy around this country is strong is because we're selling soybeans to China; we're selling corn around the world. We've opened up markets. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair.

Let me talk about one other thing—aspect about keeping jobs here in America. It's a very important aspect, and that is I believe we ought to have this concept of a lifetime of learning for all citizens. And let me tell you what that means. It means, first, get it right early. It means make sure the high school diploma means something. We're expanding Pell grants, by the way, to help low-income families afford college. We've added a million—a million students on Pell grants since I've been the President, so we can get people going to college. But what I'm talking about, a lifetime of learning, is to help workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'm a big believer of community colleges, and I'll tell you why. Community colleges are available around the State of Ohio and America; they're accessible. In other words, if you've got a desire to go, you can go. And they're affordable. Plus we're spending your Federal money to help make it even more affordable. I mean, there's a lot of trade adjustment money that helps workers that might have lost a job as a result of trade policy. There is displaced worker money. In other words, we have made money at the Federal level—and I think it's money well spent, by the way—to say to a worker, "If you've lost your job, here is some help to go to a community college to gain new skills."

See, what's happening in a lot of parts of our country is that old jobs are leaving and there's new jobs being created, new higher-paying, better jobs, but there's a skills gap. And we've got to help people

fill the skills gap. Let me be specific, what I'm talking about.

The textile industry has lost jobs over the last couple of decades, particularly in the South. And yet, the health care industry is vibrant and strong. And so one of the programs that we put in place is to take—is to help textile workers become nurses or textile workers to become health care technologists.

I remember going to Mesa Community College in Arizona. And a lady stood up, and she said, "I was a graphic design artist for 12 years making X. And I went back to my Mesa Community College." She got a little help—I think it was a Pell grant—she got a little help from the Government. She went back and got an associate's degree. And she made more money in her new job in her first year than she made in her old job in the 12th year. See, when you go back and gain new skills, it makes you a more productive worker. And when you increase your productivity as a worker, not only does it help you meet the jobs that require new skill sets but you make more money.

And so the challenge in this economy of ours is to grow it, but to make sure the workers have got the necessary skills. We can't make somebody go back to school. We can't say, "We'll pass a law that says you're ambitious." But we darn sure can help with Federal funding, and we will—and we will. To keep jobs in America, we must provide workers with a lifetime of learning opportunity.

We've got Pat O'Connor with us. Ready? Give the man his mike. Pat O'Connor is the president of a small business. Named?

Pat O'Connor. Range Clean Manufacturing. [*Applause*] I've got a couple of associates up there.

The President. Yes, you've got a couple associates up there. Now is your chance to tell him you need a pay raise—[*laughter*]—anyway.

First, let me start by telling you how he's organized. Or you can tell me how you're organized. S corp?

Mr. O'Connor. We're an S Corp. In fact, talk about the tax break, it was actually 2½ years ago I actually bought my father out from the company. He started the company 33 years ago.

The President. I followed my father too—[*laughter*]—just cost me a little time. But other than that—[*laughter*]. Go ahead.

Mr. O'Connor. An S corp, and any of the profits flow directly down to the owner.

The President. See, S corp means that when he has profit, he pays at the individual income-tax rate. So when we're cutting tax on individuals, guess what? He got tax relief. I think it's important. You know why? How many people did you hire this year?

Mr. O'Connor. We brought back six jobs from the Orient. We had a couple items that we're selling to Wal-Mart stores, and we worked with our friends down in Bentonville to create a product that had better quality and better pricing and bring those jobs back to the United States. And we brought six jobs back to the United States.

The President. Yes. How many did you hire? I mean, how many people have you hired this year?

Mr. O'Connor. We've hired 30 so far.

The President. Thirty new workers. Look, part of the economic recovery is taking place right here in companies like this. It's—again, 70 percent of new jobs are created because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and people like Pat are hiring 30 here, 10 here, and that's what's happening. The small-business sector of this economy, of this country, is leading the economic recovery.

Outlook? Surely it's not going to be dismal.

Mr. O'Connor. I just sat down—actually, funny you say that—yesterday with our CFO looking at our pro forma for 2005. And we've got an aggressive, double-digit

projection for sales increases. So we're looking at reinvesting more money in plant, equipment, people.

The President. Yes, good. Let me ask you a question. Investing—that's a word that you hear a lot of. What are you investing in? What are you buying? When you hear investing, they're investing in, generally, equipment—is that right?

Mr. O'Connor. A great example is we bought a pretty substantial piece of equipment called a pick module.

The President. Pick module, yes. [*Laughter*] It sounds like dental equipment. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. O'Connor made further remarks.*]

The President. And so who—somebody has to make the pick module. So the tax relief says to him, "You invest, you get a little extra kicker on your tax relief." Right?

Mr. O'Connor. You got it.

The President. So, in other words, we're trying to make—we're trying to help influence his decisionmaking through good tax policy. So he says, "Okay, I'm going to buy a pick module." He's got to pick up the phone and order a pick module. Somebody has got to make it. And so when he makes the decision, "I'm going to increase demand for capital goods because of the Tax Code," it helps somebody else find work. So that's what I want people to understand.

When we say tax relief makes a difference, we're affecting past decisionmaking. The Tax Code says, "Do something wise, because there's incentive to do so. Buy something." And he decided to do a pick module. More importantly, though, it makes his business more productive, I guess.

Mr. O'Connor. You got it. Your tax breaks 2 years ago—our CFO, Dave Link, and I looked at the numbers. Since you and Cheney have taken the administration in office, we've made more money, more sales, paid more in wages, have paid more in taxes, and have pushed more dollars back into the company under this administration versus previous.

The President. I appreciate that.

One other thing that's important to know, and Pat may explain this as well, but if he invests in new equipment, it makes his own workforce more productive. The newer the equipment that he's got in his plant, not only the more efficient his company becomes but the more productive his workforce is. And I just told you that if you're a more productive worker, you make more money. So you read about productivity increases in America, a lot of it has to do with encouraging investment. A lot of it has to do with education, and a lot of it has to do with the modernization of plant floors, like Pat has done.

I appreciate you coming. I love the entrepreneurial spirit of America, don't you? Good job. There's nothing better. There is nothing better, is it, to be in an ownership society. Don't you love the idea of somebody saying, "This is my business." How about the fact that homeownership rates in America are at an alltime high. More people—and it's a fantastic statistic. It is a fantastic statistic of our society. It means more people are opening up that front door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Come into my piece of property."

See, I love an ownership society. It's a hopeful society. It's a society that provides stability in times of change. An ownership society is one where people have a vital stake in the future of this country. And that's important. It's important for people to buy into the future of America. And when you own something, you have a—you have this vital stake on how this country grows and develops.

We've got another owner with us, Rich Rudolph. Welcome. Appreciate you coming, buddy. Thanks for being here. You're not going to believe what this guy makes.

Audience member. Pork rinds.

The President. They know—they know you. [*Laughter*] So does my old man. He knows you. Pork rinds.

Go ahead. Welcome.

Rich Rudolph. Thank you. Welcome here as well.

The President. I'm proud you're here. Tell us about your—everybody knows your business. What a great marketer you are.

Mr. Rudolph. Well, we make the best tasting pork rinds in the world, my mother's recipe.

The President. Fantastic. Are you listening to your mother?

Mr. Rudolph. Well, most of the time.

The President. Yes, see, you and I do the same way. [*Laughter*] My mother tells me; your mother tells you, and we listen most of the time. [*Laughter*] How's your business?

Mr. Rudolph. We've been booming. The high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are helping. [*Laughter*] Your dad helped a lot in '87, '88.

The President. He's a pork rind man.

Mr. Rudolph. Since your administration, we've added over 50 jobs.

The President. Really? How about this year?

Mr. Rudolph. We're right at above 30 this year.

The President. You added 30 people. You heard one small-business guy add 30. He's added 30. So when you hear these statistics, a lot of times the small-business add-ons aren't showing up. But what you're seeing is the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. That's what people ought to be looking at when it comes to electing the President. How do you make sure the small-business sector is growing? Are you investing at all?

Mr. Rudolph. Absolutely. We invested last year over 3 million; this year, again, over 3 million——

The President. That's great.

Mr. Rudolph. ——and are putting that in to equipment to become more efficient, more competitive, and keep being the largest producer of pork rinds in the world.

The President. Good. Yes, see, what he's telling you is—what did you buy, by the way? Pork scrapers. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Rudolph. We bought cooking equipment, packaging equipment, things that will make us more effective and look down in the future.

The President. See, what he's telling you is, is that he wants to stay in business. If I'm working for that company, I'm saying, "I want the person making decisions for this company to be making decisions necessary so I can keep my job." And so what he just said is, he said he's buying equipment so he can be more competitive. That's the kind of environment we want in America, an America where there's competition that—and a Tax Code that encourages people to make the right decisions like they have in this important company, so that people have job stability.

And one of the reasons I've asked these small-business owners to come is because they are—it's just important to realize there are millions of people making decisions that affect how this economy grows. It's not the Government that makes decisions. It's the individuals in the society making the decisions. And the Government's job is to encourage decisionmaking that leads to job creation, and that's what we're here to talk about.

You know, I'll tell you, looking at these two owners and knowing that they had purchased their businesses from family members reminds me of another part of the Tax Code that we have got to change, in my judgment, to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit. And that is, we've got to get rid of the death tax in America. You for that?

Audience member. All these kids are for that.

The President. The whole family is for it. That's good.

You know, think about this. It's an old tax system. More and more wealth is being spread throughout our society. And now the Government is saying they're going to tax you twice, while you live and pay your taxes, and then they're going to tax you after, when you die. We did pretty good

about getting rid of the death tax. We got it on the way to extinction. Unfortunately, it pops back up to life in the year 2011. Another reason to put me in the office is because I'm going to continue trying to get rid of the death tax forever, for the sake of our farmers, ranchers, and small-business owners.

Appreciate you coming. Good job.

One of the interesting opportunities we have is through what I call health savings accounts. And we've actually got a health savings account owner here. One of the things I'll tell the American people is that whatever happens on health care reform, I will make sure that the patient and doctor are central to the decisionmaking process in health care, not bureaucrats in Washington, DC. It's an important philosophical difference in this campaign.

And one way to encourage that is to encourage new products. And we've got an interesting product called a health savings account. These accounts will be very good for individuals and very good for small businesses. Many of the working uninsured work for small businesses. I would strongly suggest small businesses look at this product.

Scott Williams, with us right here today, in Lima, Ohio, is an owner of a health savings account. You want to try to explain how it works?

Scott Williams. It's pretty simple. It's a high-deductible health insurance program that I'm able to put savings away, pretax, to use for that deductible and keeps my premiums extremely low.

The President. Okay, yes, let me see if I can help him here. He buys an insurance policy for catastrophic health care. In other words, the first $2,000, say, he is responsible for. Any health care costs above the deductible, or this, maybe 2,000, whatever your deductible is, the insurance company pays, which means your premiums you pay are really low compared to traditional health care plan.

Tell us what your premiums were before you bought a health savings account.

Mr. Williams. Right before I moved to Ohio, I was out in Kansas City. My wife had been a nurse. We'd just had a daughter. And she decided to go part-time as a nurse, and so we came off of her health program, and we—right before we came here, we got our statement that said our insurance for the three of us was going to be about $1,100 a month.

The President. Yes, 1,100 a month. Now what do you pay?

Mr. Williams. I pay 270.

The President. So what he's done is—we're not quite sure—we're not quite through filling up his health care plan. We've got—so far, we've got the insurance aspect. The cost per month has gone from 1,100 to 279. But he's obviously got to worry about the zero to 2,000. If the insurance kicks in at 2,000 and above, something has got to happen between zero and 2,000, which means you, essentially, self-insure, or your employer puts money tax-free into what they call a health savings account that you then earn money tax-free inside, and you spend it tax-free. But it's your money, see.

And so—go ahead. Does your employer put the money, or do you put it in?

Mr. Williams. I work for a church, Church of the Nazarene in Defiance. I'm the youth pastor. I've got a couple of my kids here.

The President. Good. Thanks for coming, guys. It's pretty cool.

Mr. Williams. And it's great because——

The President. Right in front of national TV. There he is. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Williams. ——they add an additional $600 a quarter in there for me, which covers everything if I want to get over-the-counter medications, to going to the dentist, to doctors' visits. They will—I just send my receipt—my bills into them, and they write them a check out of that savings account. And it's all pretax dollars.

The President. If he doesn't spend the money in his savings account, it's his. And it rolls over the next year, tax-free. And so what this does is—think about what—think about the different kind of system this is. It's an interesting system, isn't it? It says, first of all, it's up to you to make good choices with your body, because if you do, if you make good choices, if you live a healthy life, you save money. It's your money. You see it grow.

Secondly, as you make decisions, you're making the decisions, not a bureaucrat somewhere else. It's your decision to make. You just heard him. He said, he's going to go and try to buy—he gets the price, all of a sudden. It matters. It starts to matter whether somebody is going to charge him more money. If you've got somebody who's writing the check, like the old insurance system, who cares what the price is, right? Just as long as your premiums seem to seem reasonable, but they keep creeping up year after year.

What I'm telling you is, here's a product that enables the doctor and the patient to be central to the decisionmaking process, a product he calls his own, see. He takes this with him wherever he goes. It's his for life. And it's earning money tax-free, plus it covers major medical expenses for him. Listen, I'm telling you to look into these things. And I want our small-business owners who are out there to take a look, to take a look at this kind of system to help you provide your employees insurance. Plus, guess what happened when we had the tax cut? His family saved $1,100 in tax relief. Isn't that right?

Mr. Williams. Yes. I didn't mention it a second ago, but my premium is that much lower, and I've added a son. And so——

The President. Yes, congratulations.

Mr. Williams. Well, yes. Thank you.

The President. Child credit—raising that child credit helps. [*Laughter*] So look, he's got $1,100. You know what my theory on Government is? We meet priorities and then let the people spend their own money. They can spend it far wiser than the Federal Government can.

What did you do with your tax relief?

Mr. Williams. Because my wife stays home, it allowed us to keep her home more. It just, literally, let her stay home with our kids.

The President. Made you—let's you make more choices. See, part of Government has got to empower people to make more choices, to give people—stand beside, side by side with people, not be so onerous with people that it makes it difficult to realize dreams. The tax relief was a vital part of not only helping this economy recover, but the reason I asked Scott here, it's a part of a philosophy that says, "We trust people with their own money." We think Scott can spend that money better than the Federal Government can spend his money.

Thanks for coming.

Mr. Williams. Thank you.

The President. Jodie Arnold. Jodie Arnold is a physical therapist. I said, "I kind of feel a little stiff here, you know?" [*Laughter*] After all, I am 58. She works part-time. Her husband, Brian, is the varsity football coach.

Jodie Arnold. Yes, in Bryant, Ohio, and unfortunately, they had a rain-out last night, and he had to play today.

The President. Thanks for coming.

Ms. Arnold. Thank you.

The President. Let's hope he wins.

Ms. Arnold. Yes, me too.

The President. The reason I asked Jodie to come is—in representing Brian, is that, see, it's important to put tax relief in the context of individuals. She and her husband saved $1,700 in tax relief—because of the tax relief, in 2003 and 2004. That's like 1,700 more dollars in their pocket on an annual basis. I know in Washington, that may not sound like a lot. I'm not a lawyer, so you'll probably accuse me of leading the witness, but did it matter to you?

Ms. Arnold. The money made a huge difference. We got that money back right after I had my second child, Addison. I was home a week on maternity leave, and we were able to use that money to put a new roof on our home.

The President. Yes. And I asked her, I said, "Did you hire a roofer?" And she said, "Only after I figured out Brian couldn't get the job done." [*Laughter*] But somebody had to show up to do the work. That's how the economy works. There's an additional amount of demand in our economy in their household because they had a little extra money in their pocket. And so she calls, "Send me a roofer." The roofer is working. The roofer has now got a better future. That's how the economy works.

People have got to understand that. When we're talking—you hear all the rhetoric, you know, in the campaign. "Oh, they're taxing the rich"—I mean, "They're giving breaks to the rich." Here's who is getting the tax breaks, folks—$1,700 is making a big difference in her life.

Now that you've got the floor, you need to say anything? Guess what? She refinanced her home too. That was positive. Things are looking up for the American consumers. And here's the issue—want to say something?

Ms. Arnold. I just want to say that with refinancing our house, we were able to drop our payments $150 a month and also take 10 years off of our loan as well, and that's a big difference.

The President. That's great. Thanks, you did great. Makes it affordable for her home.

And here's the issue, is that if we don't act, taxes are going to go up on the people, because much of the Tax Code we passed—much of the tax relief we passed was done on a temporary basis. The child credit goes down; the marriage penalty goes up; the 10-percent bracket we created goes away. And so the fundamental question is, do we raise taxes on the American people, or do we keep them low? I believe we ought to keep taxes low. Congress needs to hear from you, and the way you keep taxes low is you make all the tax relief we passed permanent. You don't let it go away. You're not raising the money on the people.

See, I'm going to go walking around the country—riding around the country in a bus. I'm going to remember Jodie, and I'm going to remind the people in—I don't need to remind those Members of Congress; there are some others we need to remind, "If we don't act, you're running up her taxes." You heard what she said. She said, "We're able to refinance the home. I'm more comfortable owning my home. I made some home improvements." If her taxes go up, it's less like she's going to make those decisions. If we start running up the taxes on these small-business owners, it's less likely they're going to be making investment decisions. So when you hear me talking about keeping taxes low, I hope you're getting a better feel for why I am. And it's a campaign issue.

We're out there—we've got 2 months to go, and my opponent has already put out about $2 trillion worth of new promises. And we haven't come down to the big promise period in politics yet. That's 2 trillion. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, I'm going to tax the rich." And we've heard that before in politics. The rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win the election in November of '04.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Okay, hold on.

I need to talk about peace. I need to talk about how to make this world a peaceful place. I never thought I was going to be a war President, when I campaigned in 2000 in Ohio and around the country. I never—you know, it's just something that I never thought about. And then all of a

sudden, I became one because of one day. And I want to share with you some lessons of September the 11th. And they are vital lessons, and they're lessons that I believe this country should never forget, because the most solemn duty of Government is to protect the people.

First, we are in a war. It's a different kind of war. It's a war that—it's a war in which the enemy is an enemy that has a dark ideology that is in opposite of what we believe in America, is the best way to put it. If you don't agree with them, you get whipped in public squares. If you don't agree with them, you'll be killed. They don't believe in human freedoms. They don't believe you can worship freely the way you see fit. They have a single point of view. I believe they've hijacked a great religion. I don't believe they are religious people, because religious people don't kill the innocent. Religious people don't behead people.

The nature of this enemy—it's important to understand the nature of the enemy—they are coldblooded. You cannot negotiate with these kind of people. It doesn't do any good to try to hope for the best with them. They are patient. They are determined, and they must be defeated by being resolute and strong and never wavering. Our strategy is clear. We will stay on the offense. We will defeat them elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

Secondly, we will work to spread liberty around the world. And I'll talk to you about that in a minute. So the first lesson is, know your enemy. And once you fully understand the enemy, it drives policy. And these are people that will behead somebody and get on TV and brag about it, hoping to shake our will, because we're decent people. We're loving people. We've got a conscience. They don't, and therefore, there must be a steadfast resolve.

Secondly, any time America says something, we better mean it, for the sake of peace. And when we speak—when this country speaks, we better mean what we say, in order to make sure that there is a firm resolve.

By the way, I forgot to mention one other aspect. Once you figure out the nature of the enemy and know that they hide in caves and dark resorts of the city, it requires a universal effort to find them. And we put together a universal effort. I mean, we've got intelligence sharing which is strong and good. We've got people trying to cut off their money. We've got law enforcement looking for them, and we're using our military to find them too. We're going to use all assets to run these people down. There's no need to hold back. We will chase them down.

The second aspect of the war on terror is, because they can lurk and hide, it's important to say to those who might provide them safe harbor, if you harbor them, if you provide them safe haven, you're just as guilty as they are. That was—I said that, and I meant that. I first said that when I was talking about Afghanistan. You might remember that Afghanistan was the safe haven for these people. They went in there, and the Taliban was running the country. This is a group of people that didn't even let young girls go to school. They'd take their mothers out in the public square and whip them if they thought they were kind of out of line. They were barbarians, as far as I was concerned. And Al Qaida came in there and became a parasite. They kind of got inside their country, and they trained thousands of people.

And right after we got attacked, I said, "Listen, you're harboring them. Give them up, or face serious consequences." I meant every word I said. And they didn't, and we have removed the Taliban from power.

America and the world are safer because Afghanistan is a rising democracy. I told you there's 10 million people have registered to vote. That's amazing. Do you remember 4 months ago—I'm telling you about the power of liberty—4 months ago, they pulled those poor ladies off the bus, the voter registrars, the Taliban did, and

killed them because they were working on the vote. A lot of people said, "Gosh, this is going to be a dim day for democracy. It's going to intimidate people." The power of liberty cannot be stopped. It is a powerful, powerful part of the soul of every citizen. Ten million people have registered to vote for their Presidential elections coming this October. Think about the change.

I was in Cleveland at the Children's International Games. I'm giving a speech to welcome them there, the children from around the world, and there's the Afghan girls soccer team. Man, I nearly broke down in tears, taking a look at those young girls there.

Liberty is important. It's important to be proud of the fact that we have freed them, but in so doing, we've made ourself more secure. That's what the American citizens must understand. By securing ourself, we're helping others realize the great freedoms of the world, and freedom is peace. Free societies aren't going to harbor Al Qaida. Free societies aren't going to breed resentment. Free societies are peaceful societies.

The third lesson of September the 11th is we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. When we see a threat overseas—you know, prior to September the 11th an American President wouldn't say that, necessarily, because we thought oceans protected us. We were—we've lived for a long time before there was an attack on America the likes of which we saw. Pearl Harbor, I guess, was the last significant attack like that. And we felt, gosh, we're pretty well immune from threats. And sure enough, we aren't. And it's a vital lesson. It's a tough lesson for a country that felt protected for a long period of time, but it's a lesson we cannot forget. So when we see a threat, we must deal with it.

The last option for the President must always be the military option. The last option before a President makes the difficult decision to put somebody in harm's way is the military. And so, therefore, I tried diplomacy. I wanted to solve this threat diplomatically. I felt like we could, maybe, pull the world together and convince Saddam Hussein to disarm.

I saw a threat—let me tell you why I saw the threat. Let me just review the history right quick. This guy had actually used weapons of mass destruction before. Secondly, he was a sworn enemy of America. You might remember, during that period of time, he was shooting at American airplanes that were enforcing sanctions. Thirdly, he harbored terrorists. Zarqawi was in and out of his country. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer because he was Jewish? He found safe haven in Iraq. In other words, terrorist groups were in this guy's country. He paid the families—he subsidized the families of suiciders who may go blow somebody up, generally, an American or a Jewish person, Israeli. He'd pay them. That's terror. He killed thousands of his own citizens. I mean, this guy was a threat.

And so I went to the United Nations, and I remember standing up there in New York City, and I said, "This guy's a threat. And you've passed a lot of resolutions before. Why don't we pass one that means something to make the world a safer place and to protect us. In the post-9/11 environment, we have to take the man seriously."

And so we went to the U.N. and I—we also went to the Congress, by the way. Members from both political parties looked at the same intelligence I was looking at. They had the same memory I had of Saddam Hussein. They voted overwhelmingly to say that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force—including the man I'm running against for President. He voted "aye" when it came to say, "I see a threat. You can use force." He looked at that same intelligence, and so did the U.N., and they voted 15 to nothing in the U.N. Security Council. And here's what they said. They said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the—basically the resolution said. The

United States of America, under my instruction, voted "aye." We said, "You bet. Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

He refused to disclose. He basically ignored the demands of the free world. He had done this, by the way, for over a decade. We had tried diplomacy long before I arrived. And he said, "I'm not interested." He was hoping the world would turn a blind eye. He was hoping we would look the other direction.

And then when we sent inspectors in—I agreed; I thought the inspectors made sense to go in there. I want to try to solve things peacefully before we ever commit troops. He systematically deceived the inspectors. And that was clear, and that's been documented. In other words, all we're saying is, "Show us what you've got." And he said, "No way."

So I had a choice to make, a choice that only comes to the Oval Office. The choice was whether to trust a madman who hated America and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action necessary to do my duty and defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

A couple other points. We did not find stockpiles of weapons we all thought we would. Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction. He could have passed that capability on to an enemy. It is a risk that we could not afforded to have taken after 9/11. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. The world is a safer place. The world is a safer place with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

And now we're doing the hard work of helping Iraq and Afghanistan become democracies. And that's one of the interesting parts of this debate, is can they become democracies. I believe they can. I believe that liberty and the desire for liberty has the power of transforming societies.

Tell you one reason I believe that. I've—I was sitting down with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the big scheme of things, in the long lineage of—in the long timeframe of history, that my dad and your dads were fighting the Japanese as a mortal enemy. It wasn't all that long ago. And here I am having dinner with this fellow, and we're talking peace. We're talking about how to work together to make the world a more peaceful place.

See, what happened after World War II is my predecessor and others said that liberty can transform an enemy into a friend, that freedom has got the capacity to take a group of people with whom we have fought, viciously fought, and transform an attitude into one that was hostile to peaceful. It's a part of history we must never forget in this country. And so here I am, sitting with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to deal with Kim Chong-il, the North Korean tyrant, how best to surround him with nations saying the same message, to get rid of his nuclear weapons programs.

Now, I'm telling you something. I believe that liberty can transform lives, and I believe people want to be free. And I believe, if given a chance, people long for freedom. That's what I believe. It's a core of my belief system. I'll tell you why I believe it. I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman on this Earth.

So our policy in Afghanistan and Iraq is to provide enough security so the political process can get going, so they can have the 10 million people vote in Afghanistan. It's been 3 years since they were run by the barbaric people called the Taliban. Iraq is going to have elections next January. Imagine the transformation of a society.

I'll tell you another story real quick, now that I've got you here. [*Laughter*] I may just say this next week. It's a powerful story. So I'm in the Oval Office. The Oval Office is the kind of place where people stand outside the door saying, "I can't wait to get in and tell him what for." And they

walk in, open up, and they go, "Man, you're looking pretty, Mr. President." [*Laughter*] It's a powerful place. The only person not affected that way has been my mother. [*Laughter*]

The door opens up and in walks seven Iraqi men, all of whom had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein and an X carved into their foreheads because the dinar, the Saddam dinar, had devalued and he was looking for scapegoats. I asked the one guy, "Why you?" He said, "I was a small-business guy, small-business man." He wasn't making pork rinds. He was making jewelry. He needed to sell dinars in order to buy another currency to be able to buy the gold to make his jewelry. And he did so, unfortunately, when the dinar started to devalue, and this thug was looking for a scapegoat. And they pulled these seven guys out—in order to justify his currency devaluation, I guess, in his own mind—they chopped these guys' hands off.

And so they walk into the Oval Office. The good news was, is that Marvin Zindler, a Houston newsman, and others provided money for them to get new hands. And they're coming to see me. And it was unbelievable, incredibly emotional moment, because the contrast between a society in which somebody can summarily cut off a hand and a society in which people are willing to restore hands was vivid and real. These guys understand the stakes about what it means to live in a free society. They told me, they said, "We long for freedom." And if given a chance, they will—our strategy is to help Iraq move toward a free society. Our strategy is to train Iraqis so that they can stand up and defend themselves against the few, the tyrants, the terrorists, those with dark vision, so that they can stand up against them and defend themselves, and that's what you're seeing.

What you're seeing is a strategy that's working, a strategy that recognizes the power of liberty to transform societies, a strategy that says people do want to be free, and a strategy that says people are willing to stand up and defend their freedom.

Prime Minister Allawi, who is now running Iraq, is a tough, strong guy who believes in the aspirations of the Iraqi people. He's a guy who one night woke up in London and saw a—people with an ax try to ax him to death, and Saddam had sent them. And the ax hit his wife, and it really severely affected her. But he's a guy who saw firsthand what it means. And now he's in the midst of that country saying, "Follow me. We're headed to democracy."

A free and peaceful Iraq is going to be the kind of place where a tyrant can't summarily cut somebody's hand off. And some day an American President is going to sit down and talk to a duly elected official from Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace in a volatile part of the world. And he or she as President is going to say, "Thank God my predecessor and the American people had great belief in liberty to transform the world."

I want to make two other points, and then I'll answer questions. Then I've got to get on the bus.

Audience member. God bless you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you. He has.

Two other points. I want to emphasize again, free societies are peaceful societies and freedom in the heart of the Middle East is going to serve a powerful example for Palestinians who are wondering whether or not there's a—a free state can emerge. And that's important. That's important, especially for our ally and friend Israel, that there be a peaceful state grow up. A peaceful Iraq and Afghanistan serve as powerful examples. There's a lot of people in that part of the world who are watching us like hawks. They want to know whether or not we're willing to live out our beliefs. There are reformers—there are women in the Middle East who want to hear their—have their voices heard and to realize their potential. No, it's important for America to lead and to lead with our values.

The second thing I want to tell you is I want to thank the military people who are here. I want to thank the military families, and I want to thank our veterans who have served as such a great example. Thank you all. The loved ones need to hear from the Commander in Chief. We will continue to work to make sure your loved one has all the resources necessary to do his or her job.

That's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue in this campaign. By the way, I have fulfilled my pledge. We have the largest defense increase since Ronald Reagan was the President. Military pay has gone up 21 percent over the last 3 years. Military housing is improving. When we had our troops in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, I went to the Congress and said, "Look, we need 87 billion additional dollars to support them in their mission." This is important money. It was body armor and spare parts and fuel and ammunition, that which you expect to maintain a military operation. It was necessary, and we got great bipartisan support. I was very impressed by both Republicans and Democrats who strongly supported it. As a matter of fact, the bipartisan support was so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. It's a difference in the campaign.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, I think it's important to remind people of the facts. So they pressed him. They said, "Why did you do it?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That's not the way they talk here in this part of Ohio, I don't think.

I'll support our troops. I met with a lot of moms and dads and wives and husbands of people who have lost their life in Iraq. And I told them this, I said, "I want you to know that history will look back upon the actions that your loved one has taken in a way that will be powerful for your family members because we're changing the world. The sacrifices that they made not only helped make America more secure, but it helped spread the peace." And the best way to honor the memory of those loved ones is to complete the mission, is to not grow weary; it's to not tire; it's to be resolute and strong in our belief that we will succeed.

I'm here to tell you, I want to be your President. I know where I want to lead the country. I have the energy to lead the country. And I want to thank you for your help in helping me win 4 more years. God bless.

Let me answer some questions. All right, we've got a little more work to do. Then I'm going to get on the bus. I'll be glad to answer some questions. We've got 5 or 6 more minutes.

Yes, sir. Yell her out.

National Guard Service/Leadership/Gun Ownership

Q. I would very much like to thank you on behalf of all of the people from the Right to Life.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. I also want—that people would like to know I'm a lifetime member of the National Rifle Association. And Mr. Kerry and Edwards have got F minuses, and they said, "You're the only man."

The President. Well, thank you.

Q. And also, too, that I'm really sorry, on your behalf, of the fact that they're trying to bring this issue up about the National Guard. I have many, many good friends that served in the Guard during the highlight of the Vietnam war. And they—there is eight of them that are changing parties because they've had it with the Democrats, and they said that they owe us an apology. And Mr. President, what military branch did Mr. Clinton serve in? [*Laughter*] Exactly.

The President. Okay, never mind. Okay. Look, thank you. I appreciate your strong defense. I'm proud of my service. The question is who best to be the Commander

in Chief to lead us to peace. That's the question. The question in this campaign is who understands what it takes to defend America during these troubling times. That's the real issue. I've just explained to you my position. I hope everybody is listening out there. They'll be able to make up their mind about who best.

Let me talk about guns right quick. I believe law-abiding citizens should be allowed to own weapons. And I believe the best way to protect society is to find people who commit crimes with guns and bring them to justice, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Got a question? Sure. Thank you, sir.

Health Care Reform

Q. Mr. President, I'm here representing 44,000 brethren who are praying for you——

The President. Thank you.

Q. ——urgently. And we appreciate very much the stand that you've taken on many, many moral issues. We appreciate it very much. And we just would love to ask you if you're prepared to take on health care the same way you've taken on Iraq? We really appreciate the stand you've taken. You've done marvelously in Iraq, and we feel that there's an urgent need in relation to health care.

The President. Okay, good. Good question.

First, thank you for your prayers. It's an amazing country that prays for the President, and I am grateful. And I thank you for that.

You bet I'm going to take on health care and have, starting with taking care of people who can't help themselves. We've expanded community health centers all across America, and we will continue to do so over the next 4 years. These are places where low-income citizens can get primary care. And that's important. You know why? It takes the pressure off your emergency rooms. We want people who cannot afford to get help to be able to find a place to do so, and the Federal Government has stepped up and done that. And we'll expand—we'll expand them.

Secondly, Medicare—it's a huge part of the Federal budget. And campaign after campaign after campaign, people around the country say, "Oh, we're going to fix Medicare," and never did anything get done. It used to be called "Medi-scare." You know, you'd talk about it, and they would bash you over the head with the issue.

I went to Washington for a reason, and that was to strengthen systems that needed to be helped, was to transform parts of the Government to recognize the realities of the modern era. And one of the key issues I focused on in my first term was Medicare. And we brought Democrats and Republicans together, and we got the job done in Medicare. We're strengthening Medicare. Let me tell you how. First, seniors get drug discount cards for the year 2004, which will provide savings. Secondly, there's going to be preventative care in Medicare for the first time. Seniors will now get preventative screenings. It's basic logic, isn't it? Let's screen for disease before it's too late. Let's solve seniors' problems in Medicare now.

Thirdly, for the first time Medicare will provide prescription drugs in the year 2006. And that's important. It's really important. I'll tell you why. The old system would pay for our heart operation, but it wouldn't pay for the drugs that would prevent the heart operation from needing to be in the first place. Now, what kind of system is that? It's a system that would pay the 100,000 for the operation but not the $2,000 to prevent the $100,000 operation from having to occur. And so we said, "Why don't we strengthen the system and give seniors in Medicare prescription drug coverage." So that starts in '06.

Fourthly, if you have a plan you like, nothing changes. This doesn't force anybody, anywhere. As a matter of fact, it provides additional choices. I happen to

believe the more choices people have, the more likely it is the system will be responsive to the people. If you can make choice in the marketplace, the marketplace will respond. So this new Medicare, strengthening of Medicare, has got an additional feature in that it helps seniors select a plan that fits their needs as opposed to kind of a one-size-fits-all plan out of Washington, DC.

Thirdly, I told you about HSAs—I didn't tell you about it; one of our guests told you about HSAs. I told you about AHPs. Those are ways to make sure that a system is more affordable and more available but keeping the patient/doctor relationship central to the decisionmaking process.

That, by the way, is a key component of this debate. You listen to my opponent talk about it, and you can put it all together—basically what he's advocating is a federalization of the health care system, which I think is wrong for the country, and I think it's bad for the country. And I don't think it's responsive to consumers and to patients if the Federal Government is making drug pricing decisions, if the Federal Government is making all these different decisions on behalf of the consumers.

Thirdly—fourthly, I talked about medical liability reform. It is a necessary part of making sure health care is affordable. One of the reasons why there's working uninsured is because of the cost of health care. And if we can deal with the root causes of the cost of increasing health care, more people will get insurance.

I think there needs to be tax credits for working uninsured. I think we need to help small businesses with HSAs. I'll talk about that a little later on here during the course of the campaign.

I talked to you about—you got me going here. [*Laughter*] I talked to you about technology. This is—health care is an industry where somebody takes a file and puts it under his or her arm—I'm exaggerating a little bit, but I'm pretty accurate—and goes from one office to the next. And the files are handwritten, and doctors don't write very well. [*Laughter*] What I'm telling you is, is that unlike a lot of other industry, the technology hasn't changed how health care is delivered and how the administrative costs of health care are—they haven't helped reduce the costs of health care like it has in a lot of other industry.

And so this administration started a plan to encourage the development of an electronic medical record for every citizen in the country, with privacy rights. That will help streamline and reduce costs in medicine. They estimate 30 percent cost reduction in medicine when we get technology introduced into the health care industry.

And you say, "Why can't you do that tomorrow?" Well, there's got to be common language. I mean, there's a lot of issues that have to be dealt with, and the Federal Government can help.

Finally, let me talk about drug costs right quick. I think the best way to deal with drug costs is to ensure—is to encourage generic drugs getting to the market faster. One of the things it seems like makes sense to me is to make sure that we continue to have incentives for research and development in the pharmaceutical industry to keep looking at new horizons of how to save lives and how to improve people's lives with new medicines. But this business about stalling the advent of generic drugs, which are much cheaper than brand-name drugs, has been stopped by administration—this administration, which will encourage a much cheaper drug to be available for consumers on the market but yet able to do the same thing the brand drugs do.

That's a long answer. As you can tell, we're on it. [*Laughter*] But what I won't allow happen so long as I'm the President is for the Federal Government to run your health care system. I think that would be a mistake.

Okay, last question. There he is right there. Yes, sir, soon-to-be-voter.

President's Reading Habits/Freedom of Religion

Q. Thanks for coming. I was just wondering what your favorite book is, because I'd like to read it.

The President. Book—that's a great question. Well, I—the Bible. [*Applause*] Hold on. Hold on. I read the Bible. I like history. I read a lot of history. I'm not so sure this one will be appropriate for you, but I just read the—a very thick biography on Alexander Hamilton.

But I would suggest reading history, because history is a—I think it's important to understand the past so you can better see the future. Like I just told you something about the past that gives me confidence about the future, and that was when Japan and the United States were at war, and then we worked to encourage Japan to be a self-governing, free nation based upon democratic institutions. And out of that came a country that is now a friend and an ally as opposed to an enemy.

See, enemies—liberty can turn enemies into friends because we have shared values. When we—when we're free nations, we share values. Human rights is a shared value of a free nation; human dignity is a shared value of a free nation; the right to worship the way you see fit.

Let me say one thing about religion real quick. It is very important that this Nation always hold—always maintain this vital tradition: You can worship any way you see fit. If you choose not to worship, and worship, you're equally American. It's important for people to understand that. We must never lose that vital aspect of the freedom to worship the way you choose. Now, if you choose to worship an Almighty God, you're equally American if you're Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu. It's the great tradition of America, and it's a tradition that must be maintained. It's a part of, when I say "shared values," that's a shared value of a truly free society, isn't it—the freedom for—in somebody, that personal freedom to choose or not to choose to worship an Almighty is a vital aspect of the integrity and vibrancy of this great society of ours. And it's important—that's an important lesson, little guy, for you to remember when you get to be the President. [*Laughter*]

At any rate, I want to—I hope you've enjoyed this as much as I have. I'm excited about this election. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will be back in the White House for 4 more years.

God bless, and God bless our great country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:36 p.m. at Lima Senior High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell; Karel Oxley, superintendent, Lima City Schools; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Remarks in Perrysburg, Ohio
August 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for inviting me here to Perrysburg. It is an honor to be here. I appreciate you taking time out of your Saturday afternoon to come and say hello. I'm sorry we were running a little late; there was a slight weather condition. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm traveling

your State asking for the vote and asking for your help. I'll tell you what I think. From the crowds we've seen, there's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Ohio and win a great victory in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's a fabulous mom, a great wife. She's a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I picked him because he's got sound judgment, he's got great experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I've been traveling all across your important State today with a really fine United States Senator in Mike DeWine. I'm proud to be calling Mike friend. And I hope you put old George Voinovich back in office. He's a great United States Senator. He's doing a fine job. I appreciate Congressman Mike Oxley joining us today. Larry Kaczala is running for the United States Congress next to this district. He's a fine guy.

I want to thank the members of the statehouse who are here, Ken Blackwell and Betty Montgomery and Randy Gardner and Bob Latta. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here.

I want to thank my friend Lee Ann Womack. I hope she did a good job for you. I can't tell you how much I appreciate her coming.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate you. I appreciate your hard work. See, I believe we have a duty in this country to vote. And therefore, I'm asking you to help register people to vote. See your friends and neighbors and say, "In a democracy, we've got to participate." And ask them to register, and reach out. And when you get them headed toward the polls come November, tell them if they want a safer country, a stronger country, a better country, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

In the past few years, Americans have been through a lot together—been through a lot. We have accomplished a lot. But there's only one reason to look back at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to tell you, there is more to do to make this country a safer place. There is more to do to make this country a hopeful place. I'm here to tell you, I've got the energy, the vision, and the willingness to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

We have more to do to make sure our schools are the centers of excellence we know they can be. You might remember, when we first got up there to Washington, the school system was shuffling too many children through our schools, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the standards because we believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. We increased Federal help for States and local districts. But we started to ask a simple question: Are you achieving results? Can our children read and write? And, if so, we'll praise the teachers. But if not, we have the courage and willingness to challenge the status quo. No child should be left behind in America.

There's more work to be done. We've got to insist upon science and math programs in our high schools to prepare our kids for the jobs of the 21st century. We've got to make sure the Internet is available in classrooms. We want a high school diploma to mean something. After 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to compete in our global world.

I'm running because I understand we've got to work to make health care more affordable and more available. You might remember the old debates on Medicare. They used to call it "Medi-scare." People were afraid to touch the issue, but the system

needed to be strengthened for our seniors. I went to Washington for a reason. I wanted to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. But working with Republicans and Democrats, we got the job done. Now our Medicare system will provide preventative care for our seniors and provide prescription drugs for our seniors.

There is more work to be done when it comes to health care. We want to make sure that we continue to expand community health centers for our low-income citizens. We want to keep people out of the emergency rooms when it comes to primary care. We want to make sure we continue to work with our small businesses. Most people get their insurance small—through their employer, and most new jobs are created by small businesses. Yet, small businesses are having trouble with health care. We must allow small businesses to pool risk so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses do.

In order to make sure your health care system is viable and in order to make sure there's docs available, we've got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs, and I'm standing with the hospitals, and more importantly, I'm standing with the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We've got to do more to keep this economy growing. Listen, we have been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through a stock market decline. We've been through corporate scandals, and of course, we've been through a horrible attack on our country, all of which affected ability for people to find work.

But we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because the entrepreneurial spirit in this country is strong. We've overcome it because the small-business sector is alive and well. We've overcome it because we've got great farmers and ranchers. We've overcome it because we've got the best workers in the world. And I think we've overcome those obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

You might remember the tax relief plan. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." We did it the fair way. We also raised the child credit to help families. We reduced the marriage penalty. Our Tax Code has got it backwards. We ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage in the Tax Code.

We're helping our small businesses, and it's paying off. Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.5 million new jobs over the past 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. That's well below the national average in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Our economy is strong and is getting stronger. I fully understand there are places here in Ohio where people are still looking for work. And so long as anybody is looking for work, this administration will create the conditions for job growth.

We have more to do to make sure this economy remains strong. Congress needs to pass my energy plan. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs in America, we need tort reform, tort reform so our small-business owners are not threatened by these junk lawsuits. In order to keep jobs in America, I will insist that countries treat us the way we treat them when it comes to trade. You see, our markets are open. They ought to open their markets. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here in America, we need to make sure there's a lifetime of learning available for our workers. It's a changing economy. There are new jobs available. But a lot of times, our workers don't have the skills necessary to meet those jobs. And that's why I'm such a strong backer in the community college system. We've got Federal monies available to help people get the skills necessary to realize their dreams. We will continue to work to make sure the American worker has the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure this economy grows, in order to make sure people are able to realize their dreams, we need to be wise about how we spend your money, and we need to keep your taxes low.

This is an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion in new programs.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We've still got 60 days to go. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you? "All we're going to do is tax the rich." Well, the rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But guess what? We're not going to let him get there. We're going to win in November.

We've got more to do to wage and win this war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers around the world and in the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million citizens in Afghanistan have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, we now have an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. And I saw a threat. I looked at his history, and I saw a threat. I looked at intelligence and saw a threat. I also remembered one of the most important lessons of September the 11th. It's a lesson this country must never forget. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize, before they come to hurt us.

So I went to the United States Congress and said, "I see a threat. What about you?" Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence, remembered his history, and voted overwhelmingly for the use of force if need be, including my opponent.

Because military action is the last option of the Commander in Chief, because the very last option ought to be the commitment of our youngsters into harm's way, I went to the United Nations and tried the diplomatic route. I said, "We see a threat. How about you?" They looked at

the intelligence, and they voted overwhelmingly in the United Nations Security Council to say—to pass this resolution, "Disarm—disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the free world said.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. They sent inspectors in there. He systematically deceived the inspectors. I had a choice to make, a choice that only comes to the Oval Office, whether I ignore the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend America. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you very much. Even though we did not find the stockpiles we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons and could have passed that capability on to our enemies. After September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go in Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] However, I want to warn you, there's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind.

I'm asking for your vote because I know there is more to do, more to do to continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In this post-9/11 world, you cannot hope for the best with these killers. We must aggressively pursue them elsewhere so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat these terrorists, nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq, about 60 countries involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. That's an initiative that we put together to hunt down people who might be transporting weapons of mass destruction materials and technology. No, the world is working together, and I'll continue to build our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll keep our commitments to help them become peaceful and democratic societies. It's in our interests that they become peaceful societies. It's in our short-term interests and it's in our long-term interests that peace and freedom prevail in those countries. We've given our word, and when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

There are strong leaders now in those countries, strong leaders who believe in freedom and believe in the aspirations of their people. Our troops are there to help the political process move forward. And we're there to help train the Afghans and the Iraqis so they can defend their own freedom, so they can do the hard work that's needed for democracy. Our troops will complete this mission as quickly as possible so they do not have to stay a day longer than necessary.

We have got a fantastic United States military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a good example for those who wear the uniform. I have made a commitment to our troops and the commitment to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources

they need to fight and win the war against the terrorists. It's a solemn commitment by our Government. We are meeting that commitment.

We've had the largest defense increases since Ronald Reagan was the President. We've increased military pay by 21 percent since I've been the President. We got better housing, since I've been the President, for our troops. And last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided money for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was necessary legislation. And the Congress responded in a very strong bipartisan fashion. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him. They said, "How can you not support our troops in combat?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." I don't think many people talk that way here in Ohio. [*Laughter*] And so they pressed him. And he said, well, he was proud of the vote. And then they pressed him even further, and he said, "Well, the whole thing is just a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood which is desperate for freedom. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. By serving the cause of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're bringing peace to the world. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American soul and the American spirit. See, we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running because I want to help spread the peace. I'm running so these youngsters can grow up in a more secure America, in a more hopeful and peaceful world. I strongly believe in the power of liberty to transform lives.

You know, I was recently meeting with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We were having a discussion about the peace. It's an amazing conversation, when you think about it. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the course of history that my dad and your dads were fighting an enemy called the Japanese in a tough and brutal war. Yet because we believed in liberty, because we believed in the transforming power of liberty to change an enemy into an ally, because we didn't waver in our belief in liberty, after World War II, we helped our enemy become a self-governing, democratic nation. And here I was talking to the leader of a former enemy about peace in the Korean Peninsula. Some day, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader from Iraq talking about keeping the peace.

We have more to do to protect our country. There are enemies out there that hate us. You know, we have a difference of opinion on this subject. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside down. I think it shows the misunderstanding of the nature of these people. During the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. See, you don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We've got work to do to continue to defend our homeland. I've been working

hard to make sure our intelligence services gather the best intelligence so those of us in Government can make the best decisions to defend you. There's good cooperation between the Federal, State, and local levels now, good conversation going on. We've created the Department of Homeland Security, and it was tough reforms in Washington to get it done. We need to renew the PATRIOT Act so our law enforcement officials have the tools necessary to disrupt terror cells. We're working hard to better protect our borders and our ports. You just got to know there's a lot of really decent people working long hours on your behalf to do everything we can to protect our country.

I'll continue to push for reform in Washington, but it's hard. There's a lot of entrenched interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of special interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of people willing to defend the status quo in Washington, DC. See, it's not enough to advocate reform; you have to show the people you can get it done.

So when you're out there lining up the vote, remind them that when it comes to reforming our schools and raising the standards and expecting the best, we're getting the job done. Tell them, when it comes to improving this farm economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving the overall economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms for our seniors and our families, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and fighting the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And remind them, when it comes to choosing the President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. You know, we live in interesting times here in America. These are times of change. And change can be unsettling; I understand that. See, I think the role of Government is to help people during times of change, to provide people with the tools necessary to adapt to times of change. That's why I'm a strong supporter of flex-time and comp-time. I know a lot of moms are now working, and I think we need to have work rules that enable people to be flexible with their schedule so that they can spend time with their families. I know people are changing jobs and, therefore, that's why I support health savings accounts, so people can take their insurance with them from job to job and know they've got coverage for their families.

I see a lot of younger workers here today. Baby boomers like me are in good shape when it comes to Social Security. But you better be asking which candidate understands the fiscal dangers for young workers in Social Security. In order to make sure Social Security exists for future generations, I believe younger workers ought to have the option of taking some of their own money out of Social Security and setting up personal savings accounts. Those accounts will be yours that you can pass on from one generation to the next.

See, what I'm telling you is, in a changing world, it's important to promote ownership in America. Ownership will help. Ownership means Government is standing side by side with people, not dictating to people. That's why I want to create the conditions so more people can own their own small business. And that's why one of the greatest statistics, I think, in the American scene today is that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high.

We'll continue to press for homeownership in America. I think the idea of somebody opening up that door, saying, "Welcome to my home," is an important part of the American experience and the American future. This administration understands if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In this changing times, there are some things that won't change: the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; our beliefs in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. In changing times, we will honor our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. You know, the culture is shifting from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're 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 worried about the quality of the education in this wonderful community, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion, those loving souls who have heard a call to help somebody who hurts. See, I know Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart, a sense of purpose in a person's life. We need to rally the strength of the country, which is the hearts and souls of our citizens. We can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, by encouraging loving souls to love their neighbor.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, an unshakable belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that era—that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats shouting at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the line and a fellow looked at me with his bloodshot eyes, and he grabbed me by the arm and he said, "You don't let me down."

He took that day personally. Everybody there took it personally. You took it personally, and so do I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to defend America. I will never relent in defending this great country, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've come through much together, and we've done a lot of hard work. We're moving forward by extending freedom around the world and expanding opportunity in this country. And there's more to do. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State. When I was asking for the vote, I said if you gave me the high honor of being your President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of that office. With your help, with your support, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless you. Thank you for coming. Thank you all for coming. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at Fort Meigs State Memorial Park. In his remarks, he referred to Ohio Secretary of State

J. Kenneth Blackwell; Ohio Auditor of State Betty Montgomery; Ohio State Senator Randy Gardner; Ohio State Representative Bob Latta; entertainer Lee Ann Womack; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Husein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Wheeling, West Virginia
August 29, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. And thanks for having me. I am thrilled to be back here in the Mountain State. You may have noticed I'm spending some quality time here. You know why? Because we're going to carry West Virginia again.

I'm here to thank you for your help. I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm here to encourage you to go the extra mile to get people to show up at the polls. Most of all, I want to thank you for coming out on a Sunday afternoon. I appreciate you all coming out and taking time away—or bringing your families here. It means a lot to me. I really appreciate it.

You know, I was in your neighborhood a while ago. I was at the new Cabela's. The place has hired over a couple thousand jobs, creating a couple thousand jobs there. I'm there because I'm a hunter and I like to fish. I understand a lot of people in these parts like to fish. A couple of you like to hunt. I just don't get to do enough of it. I'm hunting for votes.

There's a lot of differences in this campaign. You know, one of the most notable differences came up the other day when my opponent said, "Well, you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. I think you find the heart and soul of America right here in Wheeling, West Virginia.

I gave Laura a kiss goodbye today and said, "I'm heading to Wheeling." She said, "Well, I'm working on my speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Well, make it a good one, will you?" [*Laughter*] I didn't need to say that. Of course it's going to be a good one. Laura is a great First Lady, a wonderful mom, and a great wife. I'm really proud of her—I'm really proud of her. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office. Perhaps the most important one of all is for Laura to be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Rick mentioned my runningmate. I'm real proud of Dick Cheney. He's a great, solid man. I admit he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and his ability to get the job done.

I thank Rick, Rick Casini, for being here. I'm proud of his leadership. As he told you, he's a union shop steward, he's a leader of men and women. He's—he represents the hard-working people of the steel industry here in this part of the country. It means a lot to me that he stands up and endorses my candidacy. See, I believe our message is good for Republicans. I believe our message is good for Democrats, and I believe our message is good for independents.

I appreciate the steelworkers who are standing behind me, standing with me. When I make up my mind on issues, I don't say, "Well, you know, oh, so-and-so might benefit, but they didn't vote for me." That's not how I do things. I make up my mind based upon what I think is right.

And I appreciate—I want to thank my friend Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito for joining us today, a fine Member

of the United States Congress. I want to thank the Wheeling Park High School Marching Band for being here today. I'll try to keep my speech short, so you can get back home and do your homework for tomorrow. [*Laughter*] No? Okay.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Kathy Fortunato is with us today. And I want to thank all of—here's what a grassroots activist does: You put up signs; you make the phone calls; you register people to vote. See, we have a duty in our country to register people to vote and to vote. And therefore, I'm asking you, as a supporter, to go out amongst your friends and neighbors and remind your friends and neighbors to register. Tell them that in America our system functions because people participate. You might remind them of this amazing statistic, that in Afghanistan, after 3 short years of their liberation, over 10 million people have registered to vote. They're getting a whiff of liberty in Afghanistan, that sweet smell of freedom. And here in America, we must remind people to participate. See, that liberty functions because people show up. And when you get them registered, don't ignore Democrats. You heard Rick—[*laughter*]—don't worry about—don't overlook discerning independents. And then, when you get them registered and you get them headed to the poll, remind them, if they want a safer country, a stronger country, a better country, put us back into office.

We have been through a lot together in the last few years, and we have accomplished a lot. We have done a lot. But there's only one reason to look back at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm traveling your important State to let you know that even though we have done a lot, there's more work to do, that I've got more to accomplish with your help, that I want to make sure our schools realize their full potential so every child—every child—has a chance to realize the great promise of America.

We're working with our local folks to make sure that excellence is in every classroom. See, I believe in local control of schools. We're spending more money at the Federal level to help you out here. But we're changing things, because now we're beginning to ask the question, can a child read and write and add and subtract, see. That's what we're beginning to ask, because we believe every child can learn to read, and we expect every child to read. And when we find the schools that are teaching, we'll praise their teachers. But this administration will challenge the status quo. We will make sure that schools that do not teach and will not change get the message that every child should learn to read in America.

There's more work to be done. I believe in intervention programs to make sure children have the skills necessary to learn. I know we've got to raise the standards in our high schools by working on math and science curricula. We want more Internet in our classrooms. We want a high school diploma to mean something. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the skills and confidence necessary to realize the American Dream.

We've got more work to do on health care. We're making good progress on health care. We've created community health centers all around the country, so low-income people can get primary care. It seems like a legitimate function of your Government is to help people with their health care needs, if they can't afford it. You might remember the old Medicare debate. That's a program, of course, that our seniors count on. Many seniors will tell you the program needed to be modernized and strengthened. See, you couldn't get prescription drugs through Medicare, not until old George W. came along.

We worked with Republicans and Democrats to say, "Let's keep our commitment to our seniors." Beginning in the year 2006,

seniors are going to have choices in Medicare. Seniors will be able to design a program that meets their needs. Plus, Medicare will include prescription drugs.

We created health savings accounts for American families, so you can save tax-free for your own health care needs. I fully recognize most people get their health care through their businesses. Most small—most new jobs are created by small businesses. A lot of small businesses are having trouble affording health care these days. One way to address that problem is to allow small employers to join together to pool risk, so they can buy insurance at the same discount big businesses get to do.

We will continue to spend dollars on research, so we can help find cures for terrible diseases. We'll work to modernize the health care industry. But I'll tell you one thing we need to do to make sure you've got health care that's available and affordable: We need to stop these junk lawsuits that are threatening our docs. This is an issue in this campaign. You see, I don't think you can be pro-plaintiff-attorney and pro-doctor and patient at the same time. See, I don't think you can be pro-small-business and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the health care decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'm running again because I want to continue the economic growth we're seeing now. We've been through a lot in this economy. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and we've been through those—a terror attack. And yet we've overcome these obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got great workers in America. We've overcome them because we've got great farmers in America. We've overcome them because the small-business sector is alive and well in America. We've overcome these obstacles because of two well-timed tax cuts.

We didn't try to pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We did it the fair way. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." We increased the child credit. We reduced the effects of the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We helped our small businesses, and the plan is working. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Over the last 12 months, we've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate, the national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, which is well below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in West Virginia is 5.2 percent.

The economic plan we put in place to overcome the obstacles this country faced is working, and there's more to do. That's why I've come here to Wheeling, West Virginia, to let you know there is more work to be done to make sure this economy continues to grow, to make sure anybody who's looking for work is able to find a job. To keep jobs here in America, we must have reasonable and fair regulations. You see, you ask your small-business owner here what it's like to fill out paperwork, and a lot of them will tell you it's too much. My problem is I can't guarantee you whether anybody in Washington has ever read the paperwork you fill out. We need tort reform in America to keep jobs here in America.

Listen, to keep these folks working, to keep people working around the country, we need a sound energy policy in America. I submitted a plan to the Congress, and a vital part of that plan is a strategy based upon clean coal technology. As a matter of fact, my budgets for clean technology have increased 160 percent since I came to office. The budget next year for clean coal technology is $447 million. The reason

why I'm telling you this is, an integral part of making sure we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy is coal.

And I remember campaigning in this State in 2000 and telling you that was my position then. And I'm running against a fellow who is kind of shifting. [*Laughter*] A while ago, he said coal is a dirty source of energy. Then he decided he wanted to come to your State and knock on your door. And then he said, "Now, well, I am for legislation that is supporting clean coal technology." In other words, he shifted. He's out there mining for votes. [*Laughter*] All I'm asking you to do is tell your friends and neighbors, be careful of somebody whose position shifts in the wind.

Trade policy is important to make sure that jobs stay here. See, our markets are open for other folks. It's good for you that they're open. When you have more choices, you're liable to get a better product at a better price. That's how the economy works. So what I'm telling other countries is, "We're treating you this way. You treat us the same way."

And we'll enforce law in this administration. We think an industry is being treated unfairly, we'll enforce the law, and that's exactly what I did when it came to the U.S. steel industry. See, I thought there was a—I thought I needed to stand up for steel, and I did stand up for steel. I put in place safeguards to restore fairness to the market to help our steel folks adjust, and it worked. The plan worked. These folks back here are working in good jobs, good, high-paying jobs. See, if the rules are fair, if the playing field is level, our workers, our small-business owners, our farmers, can compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime, anywhere.

We need to provide our workers with a lifetime of learning to keep jobs here in America. The economy is changing. New high-paying jobs are being created. But sometimes, there's a skills gap. Sometimes somebody needs a little help going back to the community college to be able to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. I'm committed to making sure our workers have got an opportunity to go back to get an associate degree, so they have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And finally, in order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low. It's an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already put out there about $2 trillion worth of new spending promises. That's $2 trillion. That's a lot—with a T. [*Laughter*] And we've got 60 days left. No telling what's going to happen coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] So they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well," he said, "we're just going to tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. Oh, you're just going to tax the rich. You know how it works: The rich dodge, and you pay. But we're not going to let him. We're going to beat him in November of 2004.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running again because I know we have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. They're going to have Presidential elections in October of this year. Because we acted, many young girls

go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He and his henchmen murdered tens of thousands of his own people. He was a great source of instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, this country must remember the new lessons. And a new lesson is, is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. That is the new reality of the world in which we live. And it's really important we never forget that reality. So I saw a threat, and I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam Hussein, and they said he was a threat and authorized the use of force—they being Republicans; they being Democrats; they being my opponent and his runningmate.

Because the use of force should be the last option of the Commander in Chief, the very last option, I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would solve the threat. You might remember, the debate went on, and after consideration, the U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." So the world spoke.

As he had for over a decade, he defied the demands of the free world. This wasn't the only U.N. resolution he ignored. We then sent inspectors in—or the world sent inspectors in, and he systematically deceived the inspectors. And so I had a choice to make: Whether or not to trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend our country.

You know, we did not find the stockpiles that we thought would be there. I want to remind you that Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to others. And after September the 11th, that is not a risk this country could afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, he now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the weapons we thought would be there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] However, there's still a little over 60 days for him to change his mind again. [*Laughter*]

I'm running for 4 more years because I know we have more to do. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. In the post-9/11 era we live in, you just simply cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world

so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition. We're working with some great allies. There's over 40 nations involved in—nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to work with friends to help secure our country, their country, and spread the peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We're going to keep our commitments to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. It's in our interest we keep our commitment. It's in our interest they become peaceful and democratic societies. The two nations are now governed by strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. These nations are now headed for elections. Our strategy is clear, and our goal is clear. The goal is to have peaceful, democratic countries in the heart of the Middle East who are allies in the war on terror. That's our goal. It's in our interest we achieve that goal.

We are meeting that goal by providing security so that the political process develops. We will meet that goal by training Afghan and Iraqi forces so they can defend their country against these terrorists, so they get to take—do the necessary hard work for democracy to survive. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible, so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

In these crucial times, the men and women of our military keep our commitments. We've got a great military. The people who wear our uniform—I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for setting such a great example to the modern military.

I made a commitment to our troops, and I made a commitment to their families as well that this Government will support them in their missions. That's why, last September, I went to the Congress and said, "We need supplemental funding—support the people over there in Afghanistan and Iraq." This funding was for body armor, vital equipment, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, hazard pay, health benefits. This is important legislation. And I was really pleased that we got great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my runningmate and his—my opponent and his runningmate. See, they voted against it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "Why did you vote against the funding?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." That was his explanation. I don't think a lot of people in Wheeling talk like that. [*Laughter*] So they pressed him even further. He said, well, he was proud of his vote. And then they said, "Well, you know, what else?" And he finally said, "Well, it's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] His words. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not going to be guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

We've done this kind of work before. One of my closest collaborators in peace is the Prime Minister of Japan. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads were fighting the Japanese. And yet here we are, because we insisted upon the transforming qualities of liberty, we insisted that Japan be given

a chance to self-govern and be a democratic nation. We believe that even an enemy could accept liberty as a way of life. Fortunately, my predecessor, Harry Truman, stuck with that point of view. Fortunately, America stuck with that point of view, and now Japan is an ally and a friend.

We believe in liberty in America. We believe that liberty can transform nations from tyranny to hope. We have seen it in our past. We not only believe that liberty will bring peace; we know that liberty answers to the deepest needs of the American soul. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect this country. I'm running because I understand that we've got to work hard to protect America. See, there's an enemy out there that still hates us. It's the reality of the world in which we live, and we'll deal with that. It's very important that we view these people as who they are. There's a difference of opinion in this race. I want to address a subject that I'm sure you're going to be asked about. See, my opponent said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. You see, during the nineties—remind somebody who asks you that, that during the nineties the terrorists were recruiting and training and plotting for war with us, long before we went to war with them. I think it's wrong to provide excuses for their hatred. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

A lot of good folks working hard to protect the homeland, good folks at the Federal level, State level, and right here in Wheeling, West Virginia. You've got a great—a lot of really great first-responders who are responding. There's more to do. We've got a lot to do. We're beginning to implement some of the intelligence reforms that are necessary to make sure we've got the best intelligence. I've got to have the best intelligence to make decisions; our planners and everybody involved with the Government needs to have the best intelligence. That's why we're implementing a lot of the 9/11 Commission reforms. We want to make sure there's still good, close cooperation between the different agencies in Washington. We're working on doing that. We need to renew the PATRIOT Act, so our law enforcement have the tools necessary to protect you against terrorist attack. We'll continue to work to make sure the Homeland Security Department does its job.

I'll push for reforms. I've got to warn you, it's hard to get reform in Washington. See, there's a lot of entrenched interest there, a lot of people willing to defend the status quo. When you're out there campaigning, remind them it's not enough to advocate reform. You need somebody in Washington who can get the job done.

When it comes to reforming our schools, to raise standards, and close the achievement gap, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving health care for our seniors and giving Americans more opportunities and more choices in health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to a strong and vibrant steel industry, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our overall economy, we're getting the job done. When it comes to finding the terrorists, securing the homeland, and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes—and tell your friends and neighbors, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

We live in a time of change, and change can be very unsettling. It's really a different time, when you think about it. Not all that long ago, moms stayed at home. Now, moms are working. Not all that long ago, a person would work for one company and retire with that company, and that company provided the health care and retirement. That's changing. These are changing times, and I fully understand that. And they can

be unsettling times. And therefore, Government has a role not to dictate to people but to help people, to stand side by side with people.

And one way to do that is to promote an ownership society in America. One way to help people through times of change is to encourage ownership. That's why I support health care policies that people can call their own, manage their own, so they can take them from job to job. That's why I believe it's very important in the Social Security system to say to boomers like me, nothing's going to change. We're in good shape. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen very carefully to the Presidential debates on Social Security. The fiscal solvency of Social Security is in doubt for the young workers coming up. Therefore, I think young workers ought to be able to own a personal retirement account, a personal savings account, in order for Social Security to work.

In times of change, it's really helpful for people to own their own home. There's nothing better than people opening that door up and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." Today, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We want more people owning their own home. We want more people owning their own business. If you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

Changing times—there are some things that won't change: the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity; our beliefs in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. During changing times, we will support the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe—and we stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. See, the culture is changing 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're a mother or a father, if you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. That's your responsibility. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Today when I landed, I met Nancy Weeks. Nancy works with the 4–H National Youth Development Program. She takes time out of her life to teach values to kids. I'm sure there's Scout leaders here, Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders here. I know there's Little League scouts here—I mean, Little League coaches here. I know there's people working with kids. I know there's people here feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, loving those whose souls need love. See, the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. That's our strength. I'm running again to rally the armies of compassion, which are changing this country one heart and one soul at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and an unshakeable belief in the values that makes us a great nation.

You know—and you'll never forget, either, the week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of those Twin Towers on September the 14, 2001. It's a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I was coming down through there and shaking hands, a fellow looked me right in the eye, and he said, "You don't let me down." See, he took the day personally. Everybody there—you took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day trying to figure out how best to defend this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. But there's more work to be done. That's why I've come to Wheeling, West Virginia. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. During the next 4 years, we will pass the enduring values of this Nation on to another generation. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to spread freedom and peace, and we will prevail. You know, with your support and your prayers, I will be a leader that America can count on during a time of change.

Four years ago, I came to your State a lot. I'll do so again now. I said if you gave me a chance, if you voted for me and if I was fortunate enough to hold this office, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at the WesBanco Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Richard Casini, steelworker, ISG Weirton Inc.; Katherine Fortunato, West Virginia State chair, W Stands for Women Steering Committee; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in a Discussion in Nashua, New Hampshire
August 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. Go ahead and take a seat. I've got some work to do. So I see your senior Senator—that would be Judd Gregg. He says, "When you get up to New Hampshire, come up there and tell them what's on your mind and answer some of their questions." So I'm here to tell you what's on my mind, and I'm here to answer some of your questions. I'll tell you what's on my mind, first and foremost. With your help, we will carry New Hampshire again and we're going to win a great victory in November. [*Applause*] Thank you.

So I'm here asking for the vote, see. That's what you've got to do. I think you've got to get out amongst the people and say, "I want your vote. And I'm going to talk about how to make this a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm asking for your vote because there's more work to be done to make America a safer place and America a more hopeful country for every citizen who lives here. I'm also here to ask for your help. See, I don't think you can win elections alone. I think it requires citizens who are willing to register people to vote, to put up the signs, to turn out the vote. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do. I'd like your help as we're coming down the stretch. There's no doubt

in my mind that with your help, we're going to win.

I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in. Perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. [*Applause*] All right. I love her dearly. She is a great mom. She is a really good First Lady. She's been a calm in the midst of storm. She has got a clear vision about a better America. I'll never forget the day she took on the Presidential radio address—for that morning, it became the First Lady's radio address—and she spoke to the women of Afghanistan. And because of her gentle and her strong words of support, she lifted the spirits of thousands of women in a country that had been brutalized by tyranny. And Laura has got that ability to do so, and I—thanks for coming—she is a—I can't wait for the country to hear her speech. She's giving a speech tomorrow night.

Tonight, by the way, at our convention, we've got America's mayor, Rudy Giuliani, speaking. And a true American hero, John McCain, is speaking tonight too. They're kicking off the convention with positive speeches. This is going to be a positive experience for the people of this country to see what we believe.

I talked to the Vice President this morning. He's getting ready to crank it up. I admit it, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, and because he can get the job done.

I want to thank your Governor. I appreciate your Governor, Craig Benson. See, he's like the Governor of Massachusetts. These are people that did not have to run. They're not full-time politicians. They were successful entrepreneurs. Craig decided to leave a comfortable life and serve. I think it's a great and noble example. I hope you put him back into office as the Governor. And like me, he married well. The first lady, Denise, is doing a great job in this State as well. Thank you, Denise.

I appreciate old Governor Romney sliding across the border. I'm proud of his leadership. Here is an example of strong, steady leadership. He stands for what he believes. And I want to thank his sweet wife, Ann, for joining us. Ann, thank you for being here. The mom of four—the mom of five—now, that's one first family, isn't it?

I've already mentioned old Judd. He's a great United States Senator, I'm telling you. He is steady. He's strong. He's making a big, big difference in the Senate. He's fun to work with—most of the time. [*Laughter*] He's plenty capable, and he knows what he's doing, and he married well. We love Kathy a lot.

It turns out when the President comes, a lot of people show up that you have to recognize. I'm working my way through. I can't wait to tell you why I'm running again. [*Laughter*] Before I do, I've got to talk about two Members of the United States Congress, as a matter of fact, the only Members of the United States Congress from New Hampshire but really fine people. First, Charlie Bass is with us today. Where are you, Bass? There he is, yes. I don't know what you did, but you deserve a better seat than that. [*Laughter*] Yes, okay, well—and Jeb Bradley. Thanks for coming, Congressman. I appreciate it.

We've got the mayor, my friend Bernie Streeter, who is here. I appreciate you coming, Bernie. You know, people don't like advice from one politician to another, but here's my advice: Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] You don't have to take it if you don't want to.

Where's Cheryl? Cheryl McGuinness, sweet Cheryl McGuinness, the widow of American Airline Flight 11 pilot Tom McGuinness, one of the strongest characters of our country. I'm proud of you. Thanks for coming. God bless you. Thank you. You're a sweet girl. Thank you all for coming—a woman of enormous strength.

You know, I talk about a more hopeful America. Part of a more hopeful America is a better America. That's why we've got to make sure our education system is right. We worked hard in Washington, DC, to change an attitude of the Federal Government, an attitude that used to be, "Here, we'll just give you some money and hope everything turns out right." And it hasn't worked. So when I went to Washington, I said, "Why don't we challenge what I've called the soft bigotry of low expectations, raise the bar, expect results."

We've increased Federal funding, but in return for increase of Federal funding, we're finally asking the question, "Can a child read?" See, that's what we're asking. And we want to know. We want to know whether or not we're accomplishing the mission. And if a child can't read early, there's money in the budget to correct the problem before it is too late. We're challenging this notion that simply said, "There's some kids you just can't educate, so move them through." That's not good enough for a better America. That's not good enough for a hopeful America.

And it's working. The system is working. There's an achievement gap in America, and it's beginning to close. You know how we know? Because we measure. It's working because school districts have found that certain curriculum can't work, and they're changing. You see, accountability is necessary to diagnose and solve a problem. You'll hear the critics say, "Oh, measurement, all that does is punish." No, measurement saves lives. How can you correct a problem unless you measure?

And there's more work to be done. We got to make sure there's math and science in our high school classrooms so our kids have the skills necessary to compete in this global economy. We need serious intervention programs for eighth and ninth graders who have been shuffled through the system so they've got at least the foundation necessary to learn and think. We need to make sure a high school diploma means something. There's more work to be done to make sure this education system raises expectations and meets expectations across the country. I believe strongly in local control of schools. I believe strongly in empowering parents. I believe strongly in challenging the status quo when schools will not teach.

A better tomorrow is one where Government recognizes its limitations. See, I don't think Government can love. I think Government should dispense justice, but Government is not a loving organization. The strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. And a President and a Governors ought to rally that great compassion found in the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's why the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative is so vital for an optimistic future.

I'll give you example of what I'm talking about. Sometimes a Government program can help heal an addict, and we ought to herald those programs. But sometimes an addict needs a change of heart before he or she changes behavior. And therefore, we ought to welcome those programs which have the capacity to change a person's heart into the social fabric of the American system. Government ought not to fear programs based on faith. We ought not to discriminate against faith—programs based on faith. We ought to welcome faith-based programs to help heal broken hearts in society.

Today—where's Alison? Okay, hold on. We got too much work to do. We got too much work to do—too many interruptions here. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I love New Hampshire.

Okay, one of the interesting ways that I try to make points is to have others make them for me. And Alison Brackett is with us today. She runs a program called Bridges of Learning. And where are you based?

Alison Brackett. Out of Greenland, New Hampshire.

The President. Well, she's clearly from New Hampshire. [*Laughter*] So you probably never heard of Bridges of Learning nor Alison. She's here because she is a social entrepreneur. Tell us what you did.

Ms. Brackett. We are a organization that collects and then distributes school materials, supplies, and needs throughout the world.

The President. Right, okay. Isn't that amazing? Think about this. And so when did you start? Who told you to start this?

Ms. Brackett. My children. [*Laughter*]

The President. You've got some good kids. So it wasn't a Government program. The President didn't say, "Start this." The Governor didn't say, "We're going to pass a resolution in the New Hampshire House for you to do it." She heard a call.

And so what do you do? I know you distribute school supplies. Give us a little—some details.

Ms. Brackett. Well, my children and an army of volunteers go around to various schools and supply houses and families and churches and organizations, like the Seacoast Republican Women, and they collect the supplies we need. We box them up, and we ship them around the world. And currently, we ship them to our Army that is stationed in Afghanistan.

The President. Yes, okay, wait a minute—yes. I think you're beginning to get the picture of what I'm talking about when I say, "We're going to call upon the army of compassion in America to respond." See, this isn't a Government program. This is a program based upon the hearts of a family who said, "What can we do to make a contribution in our society? How can we make America and the world a better place?"

So think about this. They've collected school supplies. They're shipping them to Afghanistan. Some soldier is going to hand a school supply to a young girl who, by the way, now goes to school for the first time thanks to the United States of America.

One other question. It says here that you ship 45 boxes every 2 weeks.

Ms. Brackett. Yes. Yes, sir.

The President. Yes, fantastic. Listen, thanks for coming.

Ms. Brackett. Thank you.

The President. Here's why I've asked her to come. I know many of you here and people around New Hampshire also hear a call to help. But see, societies can change because the Alisons of the world take it upon themselves to change society. And the role of a President is to call upon and herald and thank the soldiers in the armies of compassion that will change this country one heart at a time.

Thanks for coming.

Ms. Brackett. Thank you.

The President. A more hopeful America is one in which people can work. It's hard to be a hopeful society if you're not working and you want to work. So one of the most important parts of my job during the next 4 years will be to continue to create an environment that is conducive to job growth. See, I don't think the role of Government is to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, in which small businesses can thrive and flourish.

And as Mitt mentioned, our economy has been through a lot. When you're out there garnering the vote, remind your friends and neighbors what we have been through. We've been through a recession. That means we're going backwards. It's hard to be a small business in a recession, by the way. We've been through corporate scandals. That's when certain citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible American and did not tell the truth. By the way, we've changed that attitude in America too. It's clear now we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And we've been through a terror attack, all of which affected our economy.

But the economy is growing, and it's getting better, and it's strengthening. Why? Because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America, because we've got the greatest workers in the world, because our farmers and ranchers are the best in the world. I happen to think as well it's because of two well-timed tax cuts.

Benson tells me the unemployment rate here is 3.9 percent—3.8 percent. It's dropping every second. [*Laughter*] The tax relief plan, the economic stimulus plan we passed is working here in the Granite State—3.8 percent. That's what we want in America, isn't it? We want people working.

And so the question is how do we keep jobs here and how do we keep the economy growing. Well, I believe the most important thing is to make sure this is the best country in the world to do business. If you want businesses to expand, America has got to be the best place in the world to do business, which means—let me tell you what that means. It means we've got to have an energy policy. We've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy in order to make this a good place.

We've got to have trade policy. We've opened up a good trade policy. We have trade policy. And here's what good trade policy means. We've opened up our markets. See, it's good for you that our markets are open, because the more products you have to choose from, the more likely it is you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's how the market works. So good trade policy says, "We'll open up our markets. You open up yours. You treat us the way we treat you." And that's the policy of this administration. We're knocking down trade barriers. We're opening up doors. I believe the American worker and the American farmer can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair. So when you see us talking about unfair trade practices from China, that's what we're doing. We're making sure the rules are fair. That's all we want to be, is treated fairly.

In order to make sure that this economy continues to grow, we've got to do something about the cost of health care. Most people get their health care through their jobs. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, and many small businesses are having trouble with the cost of health care. It's an issue. The way to deal with it is to put a strategy out that makes sure that patients and doctors are the decisionmakers for health care, not Government bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

So we've done that. We have done that, and there's more work to be done. We have put in place community health centers for low-income Americans to get premium care—primary care, and that's important. We want to help. I think it's a legitimate use of taxpayers' money to help those who can't afford health care to have a place where they can go get primary care.

Secondly, we will use the new technologies available for other industries. We'll promote them into health care industries so that we can wring out the inefficiencies in the health care system to reduce the costs. People say, "What does that mean?" Well, I'll tell you what it means. I heard the story of a guy who had to carry a file full of paperwork from one specialist to the next, see. That's not the way most—most industries are able to use the Internet in order to wring out those kind of inefficiencies, to reduce cost. He not only has to carry the file from one specialist to the next; he could barely read the writing in the files. Why? Because doctors wrote them. They can't write very well. And it leads to medical error. My point to you is, is that by the proper use of technology, we will reduce the cost of medicine all across this land.

Thirdly, small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can get the same discounts on health insurance that big businesses are able to get.

Fourthly, people ought to look into health savings accounts. They are a way

to reduce the costs of health care and at the same time make sure that the patient is in charge of the decisionmaking process. I was talking to a guy in Ohio the other day. He said, "I have a health savings account," which basically says that he buys a high-deductible insurance policy for catastrophic care and contributes tax-free for the balance. So it's an incentive for him to make good choices. It's incentive for him to say, "I'm going"—and if he does go into the marketplace, to shop wisely. His premium was $1,100 a month. His premium now with the health savings account is $259 a month, and the company contributes tax-free into a savings account that is his own. Listen, this is an important opportunity for individuals and small businesses.

Finally—I may go on for a long time on health care. What I'm telling you is we're not going to nationalize health care under George W. And my opponent is, see. That's the difference. My opponent will. We won't.

Finally, I'll tell you one way to hold down costs—this is a—I'm telling you, I'm about to explain to you a national problem. You know how I know? I hear it everywhere I go—everywhere I go. I hear it from ob-gyns. I hear it from specialists. These frivolous lawsuits that are being filed against docs are running up your health care costs and are running good docs out of business.

This is a national problem that requires a national solution. I do not think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose—I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Let me make three other quick points; then I want to talk about how to make this country more secure. And then, if I don't filibuster, I'll answer some questions. [*Laughter*] I can see Laura beginning to grimace a little bit. She says, "He's getting awfully windy"—[*laughter*]—Texas term. Anyway—[*laughter*]—look, in order to keep jobs here, we've got to use our community college systems wisely. We have a changing economy, and in a changing economy, there are new jobs available, higher paying jobs than the old jobs—jobs of the past. But people need skills in order to fill those jobs. So I support what I call a lifetime of learning, to help these workers go back to our community colleges so they can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'll tell you a classic example of what I'm talking about. We were at Mesa Community College in Arizona, and a lady stood up and she said, "I'm a graphic design artist for 12 years, and then I heard of a program"—to help somebody in her status go back to the community college, Federal program. That where we provide money to help people go back to school if they want to go back to school. She went back to school, received an associate degree, I think it was after 18 months, and after 18 months of a community college experience, she made more money in her first year of working for her new company than she did in the 12th year of her previous job. You know why? Education enhances the productivity of the workforce. It makes people more likely to fill the jobs of the 21st century, and a more productive worker is a worker who will make more money.

Finally, we got a plan to continue to grow this economy. I'm running because I understand how to put the conditions in place to encourage economic growth and vitality. And there's two other things we need to do. One is we got to be wise about how we spend your money. Be real careful about people who are running for office and say, "Well, here's what we're going to do with Government money." See, if you have that mentality that we're spending the Government's money, they don't understand what they're talking about, because

it's not the Government's money we're talking about. It's your money. It's the people's money.

And secondly, in order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And there are some folks in Washington who do not want to keep your taxes low. Here's what I believe. I believe we can set priorities, meet those priorities, and then you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can.

And it's an issue in this campaign. We got ample money to meet our priorities, unless of course, you believe that the Federal Government ought to be the—ought to be giving the orders. [*Laughter*] And I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of spending—new spending. And we're just—we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. [*Laughter*] Awfully tempting to get out there and tell people what they want to hear. And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'm just going to tax the rich." We've heard that kind of talk before, "tax the rich." The rich dodge; you pay. But the good news is we're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on.

September the 11th changed America. I'm running for 4 more years because I want to make this country a safer place, change your sweet life. That day taught us that oceans no longer protect us from harm's way, that suddenly and unexpectedly, an enemy can strike us, and therefore, we've got to do a lot to protect the homeland, and we are. We've created the Department of Homeland Security to better coordinate between the Federal, State, and local jurisdictions how to respond to threats and how to deal with emergency.

We're going to talk here in a minute to the district chief of the Manchester Fire Department, Nick Campasano. Right—yes, there he is. Let me just say a couple of things. You can stay standing. I'll give you a chance to warm up. [*Laughter*] Got to loosen up.

A couple of things I want to say about protecting the homeland. We've got to make sure we've got the best intelligence-sharing possible. We are working hard to make sure the intelligence agencies are well coordinated and information makes it to my desk and to the other planners' desks. There's strategists' desks in Washington, DC. I've got great confidence in the Central Intelligence Agency. I just know we can make sure that we've got to do a better job of collecting information and analyzing information so that we can better protect you.

It's very important that we enable the FBI and the CIA to share information. You're not going to believe this, but prior to September the 11th, the operators in the FBI could not share information with the intelligence gatherers of the FBI. That's just the way it was. So you might have an entity find out that something that looked like a terrorist activity was going on, but they couldn't tell the people who were responsible for busting the cell. That's why we passed the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for our first-responders. They know it. And I want to assure you that anytime that we use the tools of the PATRIOT Act, we get court order. In other words, we go to a judge.

What I'm telling you is, is that we've given law enforcement the same tools with the same constitutional guarantees for our citizens that we've given them to track down drug dealers and white-collar criminals. The terrorist act is important. You need me in there for 4 more years to make sure it's renewed so the people on the frontlines of busting these cells are able to do so.

And so we're going to have a little talk with Nick here. One of the budgetary increases that we worked with Judd and the Congressmen on was to increase money for first-responders. Just—let me take a step back. Outside of funding for the war, and

I believe—you'll hear me talk about funding for the war—and homeland security, non-discretionary spending will increase by less than 1 percent on the budget I submitted to the Congress. In other words, we're being wise with your money. But one of the places where we have increased the budget is with our first-responders—for a reason, and that is to best secure our homeland.

What has it meant, Nick? Tell me—it's your mike. You run with it like you want to run with it. Here's your chance. Cameras everywhere. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Nick Campasano made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, let me stop him there. First of all, I want to thank the Governor and thank Nick for working on this. This is a very important statement he just made, because in order to better secure the homeland, there has to be the willingness of people to share assets across city boundaries or county boundaries, State lines as well. If something were to happen in Massachusetts, I can assure you, Craig Benson would say, "Let's move some assets down there to protect." And this is a vital part of making sure the taxpayers' money is spent wisely, and I want to thank you for doing that.

It's not a given, by the way. What he just said is not a given. It sounds simple, but we're talking Government. [*Laughter*] Seriously.

[*Mr. Campasano made further remarks.*]

The President. That's great. Yes. I appreciate it. Okay, I want you to do me a favor. I want to take—I want you to thank the people who work with you for their sacrifice to this community. Please.

Mr. Campasano. I will. On behalf of the emergency responders in the State of New Hampshire, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your support.

The President. All right, thanks.

My most solemn duty and our most solemn duty in Washington is to protect the American people. And I'm going to share with you some lessons I learned. And then we'll talk to a couple of more folks, and I'll answer some questions.

Lesson one is that the enemy is ruthless and coldblooded, and you cannot negotiate with them and hope for the best. They are—they don't have a conscience. We do. These are radical ideologues who have a hateful vision of the world and are willing to use terror to try to shake our will. That's the facts. And we've got to deal with it. And the best way to deal with them is to bring them to justice in foreign lands before they hurt us again. And that requires—[*applause*]—thank you all. Okay, thanks. Stay seated. Thank you. Thanks. Thank you all.

That requires a couple of things. It requires full utilization of all our assets. It means we've got to work with friends and allies to cut off money, to share intelligence. It means we've got to deploy brave troops. It means we've got to work with law enforcement. It means a full-scale offensive campaign and an unrelenting campaign. It's necessary to be clear-visioned and never yielding to these people.

The second lesson is that this is a different kind of war, and in order to make America more secure, we have to send a message to those who would provide safe haven for these killers. These are—they don't represent a country. These people represent an ideology. And what they look for are weak countries. They want to become the parasite, and they want the host nation to become infected with their dim vision. It's just the reality of the 21st century. And therefore, I thought it was very important to send a clear message that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you provide safe haven for these people, you're just as guilty as they are."

Now, when the American President speaks, he must do so clearly and he must mean what he says in order to make the

world a more peaceful place. So I meant what I said—I meant what I said. And the Taliban didn't believe us. So we put together a coalition and removed them from power. And it's not easy work to do that, by the way. It was hard work, and I want to—if there's some troops here or families of troops here that have done this work, I want to thank them.

But I want you—let me get on—let me talk to this point real quick. Afghanistan is a better place because the Taliban has been routed, and America is safer because Al Qaida can no longer train there.

Now, let me talk about Afghanistan right quick. You might remember the incident when four women were pulled off a bus and killed because they were registering to vote or had registered to vote. And a lot of people said, "Well, gosh, this is going to stop the movement of liberty in that country." It was going to intimidate. Those people did not understand how powerful freedom is to people who have been suppressed. Do you realize that in Afghanistan over 10 million citizens have registered to vote? It is a phenomenal—10 million.

The Taliban can't stop this movement toward liberty because freedom is universal. Freedom is inherent in people's souls. They want to be free. Our job in Afghanistan is to provide enough security so they can have Presidential elections on October the 8th of this year. Think how far we have come from the days of Al Qaida being able to train and plot against the United States of America. And 3 short years later, they will have Presidential elections. Freedom is powerful in this world.

Another lesson—and this is a vital lesson, and it's an important lesson that we must never forget—is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it comes to be, before it fully materializes. That's one of the important lessons of September the 11th. This country must never forget it.

So I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. And let me tell you why I did. He was an enemy of the country. Step one in determining threats is whether or not they like us or hate us. He was an enemy. He was actually shooting missiles, weapons at our pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. In other words, he not only—we knew he was an enemy; he was taking hostile action against U.S. pilots. He harbored terrorists in his country. Remember Abu Nidal? Leon Klinghoffer? He was the guy that was murdered because he happened to be Jewish. The Abu Nidal organization was housed and based out of Baghdad. That is a terrorist organization. Zarqawi, the coldblooded person who beheads people just like that, was in and out of Baghdad. He's a terrorist. Saddam Hussein had used weapons of mass destruction. He was the kind of mentality where he not only had them; he used them against his own people. If he would use them against his own people, wouldn't he have used them against his enemy?

And so I saw him as a threat and went to the Congress and said, "9/11 has changed the world." We must take threats seriously—and went up the Congress. And the Congress debated the issue of whether or not we ought to deal with threats seriously and in a strong resolution said, "We will deal with Saddam Hussein, and if need be, Mr. President, you've got the authorization to use force." They looked at the intelligence I looked at. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion. He voted for the resolution.

The last choice of any President ought to be to commit troops into combat. We ought to try everything possible before we commit one soul into combat, and that's why I went to the United Nations. I said, "We see a threat. How about you?" You've passed resolutions before—resolution after resolution after resolution. And I said—so I said, "There's a new world here." After September the 11th, we must take threats seriously. And they looked at the intelligence, and they remembered the evidence

of Saddam Hussein. And with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, they said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That is what the free world said.

Saddam Hussein listened to the free world again and totally ignored it. You know, I don't want to put words in his mouth, but I guess it was something along these lines: "Who cares what they say?" And so there were some discussions about, "Well, why don't we send inspectors into the country?" I thought that made sense. Before we commit troops, we ought to try everything, everything possible. And so we sent inspectors in, and as history has shown, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I have a choice to make at this point in history, whether to forget the lessons of September the 11th, take the word of a madman, or defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

Is that your dad? Okay, thanks.

Let me—a couple more points I want to make to you, and then I'll be glad to answer some questions. The goal in Afghanistan and Iraq is to provide enough security so the political process can get started and to train Iraqis and Afghans so they can do the hard work of defending their freedom. That's our goal. It's in our interest to achieve that goal.

Liberty has—liberty is powerful. Liberty can transform societies. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies are societies that don't export terror. Free societies are societies that listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Liberty is a strong, strong, powerful force in this world. I believe it's transforming.

I spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. And Laura and I were having Kobe beef with him there in Tokyo. He's the Prime Minister of a country that my dad fought against. And your dads or grandfathers fought against them too. They were an enemy. I mean it was a rough war, and here we were sitting down talking about peace. See, we were talking about the North Korean Peninsula, how best to achieve peace. It dawned on me then that, thankfully, my predecessor and others believed in the power of liberty to change an enemy into a friend. And that's what happened after World War II. There was great vision and depth of feeling about what we believe. There was the courage not to waver in the face of serious criticism. And as a result, by sticking to what we believe, Japan became a self-governing, democratic nation. And here Koizumi and I are talking about peace. It's amazing, isn't it, what liberty can do. [*Applause*]

Let me finish right quick. That's what is happening. That's why I say this is an historic moment. Someday an elected President will sit down with an elected Iraqi official talking about how to keep the peace. Liberties can transform societies. Liberty is a powerful, powerful agent of change. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Today we've got—[*applause*]—thank you all. Today—let me—okay, thanks. A couple of more points and we're going to talk to a mom whose son is there in Iraq. Just a couple of more points.

The Iraqi citizens are watching us real carefully. They want to know whether or not we're going to stick to our word. Prime Minister Allawi is a good guy. He believes in democracy. He wants us to help. We're there to help them help themselves. That's what we're going to do. And we'll get the job done as quickly as possible, and then we'll bring our troops home, not one day longer than necessary.

Speaking about troops, Christine Burritt is with us. I'll call her Mom, because that's what 2d Lieutenant Adam Burritt calls her. Where is Adam and what does he do?

Christine Burritt. Adam is a platoon leader. He's a 2d lieutenant with the Charlie Company mountain infantry unit from Manchester, New Hampshire.

The President. Very good.

Ms. Burritt. He's stationed 40 miles north of Baghdad in a place called LSA Anaconda.

The President. Right.

Ms. Burritt. And they do convoy missions, security, and other missions as defined—which he doesn't tell his mom about.

The President. That's good—[*laughter*]—particularly with all these cameras looking at you.

Ms. Burritt. That's right.

The President. So, have you heard from Adam?

Ms. Burritt. We got an instant message from him a week ago——

The President. Oh, good.

Ms. Burritt. ——saying he was going out on the road.

The President. Right. One of the things that's really important is for me to be able to look at the moms and say, "Our Government is supporting your son so that he can complete his mission." That's why I went to the Congress and proposed an $87 billion supplemental, so that Adam would have what was needed to be able to complete his mission. That's for body armor and fuel and spare parts and health benefits and hazard pay. It's well-received on the floor of the Senate and the House—the request. As a matter, it received huge bipartisan support. That means Republicans and Democrats voted for it—so strong that only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm looking you in the eye and telling you, your son is going to have what he needs. And that's important that—when you're out gathering the vote, you might remind them what the explanation was. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] I don't remember a lot of people talking like that in New Hampshire when I was campaigning up here in 2000. The people up here are straightforward. Then they pushed him hard, and he said he was proud of the vote and finally said, "It was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting her son in harm's way.

Got anything else you want to say? Okay, go ahead.

Ms. Burritt. The family support group from Mountain Company would like to thank you for your love, your support, and your care for our troops overseas, all the troops overseas. And just to add something to that, that yellow ribbon magnet that I gave to you earlier, we feel like those magnets are planting seeds of patriotism around the State and around the country.

The President. Well, thank you very much. What Christine—she's involved—one of the things I find out where I travel is there's all kinds of support groups, which is so strong and so American, isn't it? They've got the Mountain Family Support Group. And for those of you who are involved with supporting the families of our troops, I want to thank you for that. It means a lot. It really means a lot for people to know that our fellow citizens care about a lonely soul who may be waiting for a loved one to return.

Speaking about loved ones to return, Jackie Ceurvels is with us today. Jackie is—[*laughter*].

Jackie Ceurvels. Going to have a baby.

The President. She's going to be a mother again. [*Laughter*] All right, Jackie. We're talking about Jim.

Ms. Ceurvels. Yes.

The President. And?

Ms. Ceurvels. Jim, my husband, he is with the 172d out of Nashua. He is a squad leader with the 3d Platoon. From the beginning, we don't want him to be there—just for our reasons, selfish reasons, and he misses home. But he feels the need—he says if we could see what he sees in Iraq, everyone would know why he's there. And he looks into the children's eyes, and he says the kids are so happy to see them come. And they help the kids out. Our

family support group is in the process of sending clothes over to the Iraqi children, and our support group is also doing a rally—a Support Our Troops rally on October 16th, here in Nashua, at Greeley Park. And that is how we are all getting through it, together as a family. And we just thank everyone, and just—support our troops because they're there as their duty, and they truly believe in what they're doing over there.

The President. I appreciate you saying that. Thank you—thank you. Very good job.

Ms. Ceurvels. Thank you.

The President. I want to thank Jackie, thank Mom. We'll complete the mission. I think it's very important for the loved ones to hear from the Commander in Chief that we'll complete the mission. See, that's the best way we can honor their service, is to complete the mission, because the mission will make this world a more peaceful place. That's what we want. We long for peace. The enemy changed the dynamics, didn't they? They attacked us, and it calls us to a new duty. And the duty is to protect the country. And our duty—I believe it's our duty—is to lead the world toward peace, and that's exactly what I intend to do over the next 4 years.

So that's why I'm running. And that's why I'm asking for the vote. And now in the great New Hampshire tradition, I'll be glad to take some questions. Who's got a question?

Yes, sir. We got a mike for you right there. Okay, hold on. We need to hear this one. Now crank it up.

Defending and Spreading Freedom

Q. Can you hear me?

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. I happen to be a Pearl Harbor survivor, and God was good to me over there.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I spent 41 months overseas. I enlisted for 2 years' foreign service, and I love my country to the bitter end. And I think you're doing a wonderful job. But just a minute—[*applause*]—just a minute. I got two young couples here that their sons are in Iraq, and they love you too.

The President. I thank you. Thank you, sir. Thank you all.

I'll get you in a minute. What do you got there? You're going to give me that banner? Okay. I'm going to come over and give you a kiss on the way out. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your service.

It's interesting, isn't it—he survived Pearl Harbor. There are people today who, 30 years from now, are going to say, "I survived the attack on September the 11th." And the fundamental question is that, will we have the same determination, the same desire to defend ourselves and to spread freedom and liberty like those who survived the attacks during that era? That's the fundamental question facing this country. You know where I stand. I believe that we must never yield. I believe we must have the absolute determination and resolve to not only defend ourself but to believe in the great transforming power of liberty to make this world a better place for all of us.

The fundamental—you see, right after World War II, people said, "Well, we're not so sure the Japanese can self-govern." They were our enemy. They weren't like us. But liberty is bigger than religion. Liberty is bigger than race. You heard where I think liberty comes from. It is a powerful part of the human soul. And I believe that the people in Iraq not only want to but can self-govern. That's what Jackie said her husband has seen. He said he looks in the eyes of kids who are thrilled their liberators are there.

Let me tell you an interesting story. It's so good, I may use it next Thursday night. [*Laughter*] Ignore I said that. [*Laughter*] The Oval Office, first of all, is a powerful shrine to democracy. It's an intimidating place. There's only two people I've ever had in there that weren't intimated—or three: Barney—[*laughter*]—Judd—[*laughter*]—and Mother. [*Laughter*]

The door opens up, and in walks seven guys who have got Xs carved in their foreheads and their right hands had been cut off by Saddam Hussein's henchmen. And they came in to see me. They had been in Houston, Texas, where they had new hands put on because of the generosity and the compassion of people who live in the free world. It was a—I'm telling you, it was a powerful moment. It was a—such a stark contrast. I said to the guy, "Why your hand—why did your hand get cut off?" He said, "Because I was a small-business owner, and the Saddam dinar had devalued, and he needed a scapegoat." See, this guy went and sold Iraqi currency to buy another currency so he could buy gold so he could make jewelry. And he just happened to have a transaction the day the dictator decided to take action and teach people a lesson, in order to cover up his own deficiencies as a tyrant and a leader.

So these guys walk in the Oval Office. You can imagine. I mean, it is—first of all, I told you, it's overwhelming. But it was overwhelming for me. I'm kind of a crier sometimes. [*Laughter*] And the contrast was so unbelievably powerful, the difference between a society where a tyrant can whimsically cut off a poor guy's hand and a society that is compassionate enough to help heal that hurt. This guy takes his pen, and he writes a prayer to America on it. I'm telling you, it is—we are saving lives and, in so doing, making the world a better place and, in so doing, making this country a more secure place.

Tyranny—you know, the fact that people starve in this globe bothers me. Do you know your country has more food for starvation around the world, by far, than any country in the world? There is a pandemic of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa that we are leading the charge against. The United States of America has put up, by far, more money than any nation or collection of nations to help save lives. This country is leading. We're not only leading in the cause of freedom and security; we're leading in the cause of freedom by helping to defeat disease and hunger as well.

We are a compassionate nation. To whom much is given, much is required, is what I believe of the United States of America. And we are leading this world.

Let's see. Yes, ma'am. Crank her up. Start talking. They'll figure it out, yes.

Decisionmaking

Q. I'm a State rep from Nashua, New Hampshire, Mr. President. I want to thank you for being a man of action and a President of principle.

The President. Thank you. I appreciate that. How is the Governor? Has he vetoed any of your bills? [*Laughter*] No, that's good.

Q. No, I'm a great supporter of Governor Benson. I'd love to see 2 more years with the Governor.

The President. Okay, good, thank you.

Q. It's nice to have an entrepreneur in there. My question is about decisionmaking. Sir, I had a radio show in Lowell, and I had Mr. Kerry on frequently, and I never saw a man before who actually changed his mind mid-sentence, but this man does it. [*Laughter*] How do you make decisions, sir? And what do you think about the importance in this era of making a strong and swift decision?

The President. Yes, I appreciate it. That's a great question. It ought to be "the" question to people running for President. Because you know why? This is a job in which—requires a lot of decisionmaking. I make a lot of decisions. A lot of them you'll never know about. Obviously, some you do.

Step one is, a good decisionmaker is somebody who knows what he believes and knows the principles by which he'll make decisions. You just heard something I believe. I believe that liberty can transform. I believe that. It is a core part of my soul and being. So part of my decisionmaking is to adhere to principle.

Secondly, a good decisionmaker is somebody who listens well and listens to capable, smart people. One of the things that can happen in Washington, DC, is that people walk in that Oval Office, and they like to look at you and say, "Man, you're looking pretty." [*Laughter*] And you may not be so pretty. [*Laughter*] So you got to have people who walk in and tell you the truth. It's really important in Washington, DC, particularly in the complex world in which we live, is to surround yourself with capable, smart people. I have got capable, smart people. As a matter of fact, no administration has empowered more women in positions of power than the Bush administration has done. I like people—I don't want everybody sitting around the table to feel the same way. I want them to—I want people to feel comfortable saying, "You're wrong," or "You're right," "Yes," "No." I mean, it's important to have good, constructive debate in decisionmaking.

Thirdly, you've got to be able to decide. When you get all the facts, you have to actually be able to make the decision. And when you make the decision, you've got to stand by your decision.

That's a great question. I thank you for that very much. And in Washington, DC, when you make the decision, you best have people around you who say, "Yes, sir, Mr. President," and go execute. And that's what I've got. I've got a great team and a wonderful group of people who have served our country.

Yes, ma'am, in the blue shirt. Crank it out there. They're charging up there. They got mikes—mikes to the left of you, mikes to the right of you.

Invitation to New England College

Q. My name is Sarah, and I'm actually on the e-board for the New England College chapter of College Republicans in Henniker. And we've been doing everything we can to support our candidates, and what we have is a question—well, actually, we had a lot of the other candidates come and speak, and we were hoping that maybe you and your campaign—and this is for any other candidates, our Governors, our Senators—if you would come and speak to our school and let them hear your point of view, personally.

The President. Okay. Well, I appreciate that. One option, in case I can't make it—[*laughter*]—is to, like—would you loan her a videotape of this, so she can show it, you know? [*Laughter*] We'll be back in New Hampshire. Thank you for the invitation. We'll be back a lot.

Yes, sir. One reason they were here is you had a primary. You might remember 2000; we were here a lot. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Support for Veterans

Q. Before my question I'd like to say thank you for your leadership and your strength. I appreciate it. One of the false charges from your opponents is that you've been neglecting veterans. I was wondering if you could address that criticism.

The President. Yes, thanks, I appreciate you saying that. I made a commitment to our veterans that we would support them, and we met that commitment. And let me tell you, let me just give you the facts—that our spending for veterans during the last 4 years, when they approved this budget, during the 4 years I've been President, will be bigger than the spending for veterans under my predecessor during 8 years. It's a fact. The waiting time for our veterans has been reduced substantially. Concurrent receipts for our veterans is now law, and I signed it. We are making sure that the facilities for our veterans have been updated and modernized.

No, my record on the veterans is a strong record. And one of the reasons why is I've had good support from the Members of Congress, and also I put a Secretary of Veterans Affair named Tony Principi in as the Secretary, who has done a fabulous job.

And I want to thank you for giving me a chance to talk about that. See, in Washington, one of the problems you got is, you got some good talkers. The question is, are they doers. And I'm looking forward to laying out my record on what we've accomplished, based upon the facts during the course of this campaign. We got a great record when it comes to veterans. And we'll have a great record over the next 4 years when it comes to veterans as well.

Yes, sir, what have you got?

Nancy Reagan

Q. Mr. President, thank you for your leadership, Mr. President. God bless you. It's a difficult job, and you've done a great job for us. You brought us back after 9/11. It was a tremendous blow that day, and we were emotionally crushed as a country. But you brought us back all the way. And thank you, and God bless you.

I watched the Reagan funeral, Mr. President, and a lot of what President Reagan had to deal with in bringing our country back, you have basically the same challenges, and you have the same challenges. And I was—just wanted to know, since this is Nashua, where he was famous in saying——

The President. Yes, I remember that one well. [*Laughter*] Something about a microphone. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, how is Mrs. Reagan doing? I know you met with her.

The President. Thanks for asking, yes. She's doing great. Laura and I dropped by to see her. Thanks for the question. She is a very strong woman, and we admire her a lot. We went by to see her in her beautiful home in Los Angeles. She was—her spirits were up, after what had been a very difficult period in her life. Although I will tell you, the outpouring of support and love for President Reagan really lifted her spirits. I mean, it was a tremendous show of support for the guy she loved.

Yes, ma'am. No question about her; she loved him. She loved Ronald Reagan a lot, and the country obviously loved him too. And it helped her a lot. We loved him. She had some beautiful trees she was showing us. It was an unbelievable yard, by the way. It was spectacular. [*Laughter*]

Support for the President

Q. Mr. President, thank you. I actually—I wanted to give you a little bit of what you said you want. I appreciate so much what you've done for the veterans. We still have a ways to go on the concurrent receipt. What you've done, we are most grateful for. You've made a great start on America keeping her promise to her veterans. I just want you to know that there is—a group drove today from as far away as they could in New Hampshire, troops' families. And this little girl, when you asked her if that was her dad, that was her granddad that is in Afghanistan. Her uncle is in Iraq. Her mother is on the U.S.S. *Harry Truman.* Her other uncle has already been to Iraq and is being deployed. And this is their grandma who is watching them so their mother can serve.

The President. Fantastic.

Q. And I was just—we also brought—we brought a lot of special supporters today. Do we have a—Blue Stars over there? We brought a lot of families that wanted to come to show you their support today for what you're doing for their families in Iraq. And in addition, we have Ellen Goodchild, whose daughter was on the second plane into the World Trade Center, that is a huge supporter of yours. And we want to thank you for all of that support.

The President. Well, thanks. God bless. Yes, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Yes, ma'am. Go ahead and yell it out. The U.S.S. *George H.W. Bush.* That's pretty powerful. It fits well.

Accomplishments in the War on Terror

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Career sailor, right.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. She wants to know whether or not we're making progress. That's what she wants to know. You bet we are. Ten million people have registered to vote; young girls are going to school. I'll tell you an interesting story. My barber in Washington, DC, Zahira, she goes out and she raises $300,000 to build schools in Afghanistan. New schools are opening up. I think she told me yesterday—I hope it looks like I got a good haircut—[*laughter*]—that the schools will have 7,000 kids.

So a major accomplishment is—you've got to know—and it's hard to envision or believe this is the truth—many young girls were not allowed to go to school. That's the way the Taliban viewed the world. That's the kind of vision of these people we're defeating. That's what they believe. They believe that girls shouldn't go to school. They believe that if you have a difference of opinion on religion, you're taken out into the public square and flogged. That's what they believe.

I'm in—so I'm in Cleveland, Ohio, to kick off the International Children's Games. And a bunch of kids there, and I'm standing up there ready to talk, and right to my right, right on the front row, was the Afghanistan girls soccer team. You know, there is an accomplishment there. These kids would no more have been in the United States of America to play soccer had we not made the decision we made.

I'll tell you a couple of other examples. Prior to September the 11th and prior to our actions, the leader of Libya had a weapons-of-mass-destruction program. And he heard a clear message and voluntarily got rid of his weapons-of-mass-destruction program. There is an action that took place as a result of the actions we have taken to uphold doctrine and to secure ourself.

Prior to September the 11th, Pakistan was friendly with the Taliban. And that could have been a very dangerous circumstance. Because of our action and because of our leadership, President Musharraf is an ally in the war on terror now. He's helping to chase down Al Qaida in remote regions of his country. He's helping to secure his borders as best as he can against the Taliban from infiltrating to kill people who are getting involved in the election. In other words, the world is changing, and it's going to change more as we continue to spread freedom.

A trouble spot in the Middle East is, obviously, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We're strong supporters of Israel. Israel is our ally. And I believe the best way to bring peace to that part of the world is for a Palestinian State, based upon democracy, to emerge. And so our vision is two states living side by side in peace. A free Iraq will serve as a powerful example to the Palestinian people that there's a better hope for them. See, freedom and the example of freedom will empower women and reformers and exiles and people who have been put in prison. It will show that—what's possible.

And I think it's a vital part of making sure this world is more peaceful over the long run. There are some success stories, and we're just getting started. There's more work—that's what I'm here to tell you. We've done a lot, but there's more to do. There's more to do to make this world a better place.

Yes, ma'am.

Situation in the Middle East

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You did? She went to Libya, she said. Were you on the shores of Tripoli?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—and I share their curiosity—oh, thank you. How can Ariel Sharon, as you've said, be a man of peace if he causes death and torture among innocent Palestinians every day? How can Ariel Sharon be a man of peace if he fits your definition of a terrorist? I'd be curious to hear how you plan to carry out the two-state solution.

The President. Yes, good. No, that's a great question. First of all, Ariel Sharon

is defending his country against terrorist attacks, just like we will. He has made the conscious decision that a Palestinian state is in his nation's best interests. He's made that decision. Now, how do you—the right question is, how do you carry out the two-state solution. That's what we have the roadmap for. The roadmap says, here are the steps necessary in order for a Palestinian state to emerge.

I also believe there's a leadership question involved with whether or not a Palestinian state will emerge. See, I think in order for a Palestinian state to emerge, there must be leadership that believes in the hopes and aspirations of the people and are willing to put institutions in place that are larger than mankind—in other words, willing to have a system based upon law and institutions that survive the people, as opposed to a system in which one person pretty well dictates the fate of the Palestinian people.

And so the real challenge is to not only stay on the roadmap, which is institution-building—and, by the way, there's also a commitment to fight off terror—but it's for leadership to emerge that is committed to the aspirations of the people.

Ariel Sharon is a duly elected official in a democracy. In other words, Israel is a democracy. We would hope that the Palestinians would have that same kind of democracy, which would lead to a more peaceful world.

Yes, ma'am.

Small Business and Health Care

Q. Okay, I'm going to appear to be sophisticated, but I'm a wreck.

The President. That's what I try to do too. I try to be sophisticated and—[*laughter*]—I have trouble pulling it off, though, you know? [*Laughter*]

Q. I do want to say it's an honor to be here today to meet you, Mr. President. Okay—and New Hampshire chicks love you. I got to say that.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] So far you haven't acted very sophisticated, I admit it, you know? [*Laughter*]

Q. And if I knew nothing about politics, I would vote for you because of your moral values.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'm bringing it back to the health care.

The President. Okay.

Q. My husband and I are small-business owners in New Hampshire. My daughter is here with me today, and her husband also is. I'm a breast cancer survivor of 10 years. That's the good news. The bad news is, we don't have health insurance. For me to have it would be $1,200 a year. Now, I did hear—and you touched on that a little bit.

The President. Health savings accounts—yes.

Q. I have made phone calls for 3 years and have gotten nowhere at all. And I wanted to know, as a small-business owner, what can we do as small-business owners to make a difference so that we can also be insured?

The President. Sure. I appreciate that. Well, first of all, let me explain health savings accounts to you. And the reason why you've called for the last 3 years and nothing has happened is because they haven't been available until I signed the Medicare reform law. And that's part of the new law. There was something called medical savings accounts, but these health savings accounts replaced them. And I really think you ought to look into them. And I don't know if it will solve your particular issue, but it is a big difference in terms of cost of premium. And it also makes sure that, as I say, you're a part of the decisionmaking process, you're directly involved with what you spend and what you spend it on.

Secondly, association health plans are a very important way to enable small businesses to pool risk. Now, what is your small—what do you do?

Q. Heating and air-conditioning.

The President. Heating and air-conditioning.

Q. Heating and air-conditioning.

The President. Well, see, here's the problem and—is that you're not able to spread your risk across enough employees to be able to get insurance at a—yes, two, that's not a lot. So I think you ought to be able to take your business and pool together with other heating and air-conditioning businesses, whether they be in New Hampshire or in Maryland or in Texas or in California, so you've got more economies of risk. In other words, you've got—if you've got two employees you're trying to insure, your premium is going to be much higher than if you had a thousand employees you were spreading risk across. That's how it works. Insurance premiums are based upon risk and the spreading of risk. And so that's what—when I'm talking about what they call association health plans, admittedly it's kind of long Washington words—what that really means is, is that heating and air-conditioning companies of like size or small businesses can pool risk. And it's necessary, and it's an important part of you being able to find affordable insurance.

You know, it's a very interesting point. You say, "We're having trouble finding affordable insurance." The issue is cost. That's the issue. It's how do we control the cost of insurance. One way to do so is to spread risk, is how you control cost. If you've got two people to insure, you're going to pay more than if you have 1,000.

A second way to control cost is what I told you about medical liability reform. I'm telling you, your premiums are high because of junk lawsuits. And I'll tell you why they're high because of junk lawsuits. A doctor says, "I'm getting ready to practice medicine on you, and because the lawsuits are around, I'm likely to get hauled into court. Therefore, I'm going to practice more medicine than I should practice." It's called the defensive practice of medicine. In other words, he kind of shields himself or herself from a lawsuit. And therefore, the defensive practice of medicine, plus the fact that they're getting sued, runs your premiums up.

Now look, I believe people ought to have their day in court. If you get harmed, you ought to have your day in court. But we need a system that's fair and balanced. And so—you know, when I first went to Washington, these Governors—one ex-Governor, three—two are sitting Governors—would say, you know, maybe it's none of your business in Washington, DC, on medical liability reform. Maybe this is a State prerogative. And I thought maybe they were right until I looked at what the cost of rising premiums and defensive medicine costs the Federal taxpayer. Remember, we pay a lot of money on Medicare. We pay a lot of money for the veterans. We pay a lot of money on Medicaid. And therefore, these lawsuits are running up the cost to the Federal taxpayer.

So I said, "This is a Federal issue," and went to the Congress. Of course, we get it passed out of House, and it gets stuck in the Senate. I'll tell you why it's stuck in the Senate. The plaintiff's bar are one of the most powerful—is one of the most powerful special interests in Washington, DC. Make no mistake about it. You try to get tort reform out of the United States Senate, it gets shut down just like that because of the special interests in Washington.

So there are two ways to help you be able to afford a better plan—three ways, excuse me—HSAs, association health plans, medical liability reform. Those are three ways that will help reduce the cost of medicine and give you a chance to get a product that you can afford. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Yes, sir. Final question. This has got to be the last question because Laura and I are headed to Motown. That would be Detroit.

Prayers for the President

Q. God bless you, Mr. President.

The President. He has, thank you.

Q. Youngest of 11, 7 boys, all served in the military.

The President. Fantastic.

Q. The only thing I wanted to say—I don't have a question for you because you and I are on the same page, but I want you to go out throughout the country, and every time you ask for a vote, you ask for our prayers.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that very much. I appreciate you saying that. Let me conclude on this note. I appreciate that very much. That is a—you know something about this country—amazing thing is I don't have to ask for the prayers. You know why? The people are praying anyway. And I want to thank you for your prayers. I appreciate that very much.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at Nashua High School North. In his remarks, he referred to Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; Gov. Craig R. Benson of New Hampshire and his wife, Denise; Gov. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and his wife, Ann; Kathleen MacLellan Gregg, wife of Senator Judd Gregg; Mayor Bernard A. Streeter of Nashua, NH; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; hairstylist Zahira Zahir; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Taylor, Michigan
August 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. You know something—Bo knows Michigan, and he just told me we're going to carry this State, and I agree. I want to thank you all for coming. It is great to be here in Taylor, Michigan.

Laura and I are thrilled to be here, home of the WNBA champs; it's the home of the NBA champs. More importantly, it's the home of really decent people, good, hard-working American citizens, and I'm proud to be in your midst. I'm here to ask for your vote.

That's what we're doing. We're traveling your important State asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I've got some—more to do to make this country a safer place and a more hopeful place for every American. But perhaps the most important reason to put me back in is so that Laura will have 4 more years. I'm proud of her. I love her dearly. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife, and a terrific First Lady.

And I'm proud to be standing by Bo. What a great man Bo Schembechler is. He is a strong, honorable citizen of this great State. You know, a few weeks ago, when my opponent was campaigning in Ohio, he said, "There's nothing better than Buckeye football, period."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then he came over here to Michigan, and he said, "I just go for Buckeye football."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's a good thing Bo wasn't there. Then he remembered where he was, and he called an audible. [*Laughter*] He said that the University of Michigan was a powerhouse team. You see, I'm running against a fellow who is a Washington politician, who has taken both sides of just about

every issue, and now we can add Big Ten football to that list.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney, a fine man. He—I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him for his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people that are out putting up the signs and making the phone calls. Not only are we here to ask for the vote, we're here to ask for your help. I believe we have a duty in this country to vote. I believe all of us have an obligation to go to the polls. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors. Give them a chance to vote. And then when you get them headed to the polls—[*laughter*]—remind them that if they want a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country, to put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In the past few years, we have been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead this Nation forward. I am here to let you know that we have a plan to make this a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm here to ask for your vote and your help. You see, there is more to do. There is more work to be done.

We've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be. When we came to office 3 years ago, too many of our children were being shuffled through school, grade by grade, year after year, without learning the basics. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're reforming our public schools by demanding high standards, accountability, and local control of schools. My administration will challenge those schools that will not teach and will not change. We want no child left behind in America.

There is more work to be done to maintain this path to excellence. We'll make sure there's more math and science in our high school classrooms so our kids will be prepared for the jobs of the 21st century. We'll make sure technology is in our classrooms. We want a high school diploma to mean something. What I'm telling you, after 4 more years, a rising generation of Americans will have the skills and confidence necessary to realize the great dreams of the American system.

We got more to do to make sure health care is available and affordable. You might remember the old Medicare debate. Campaign after campaign, politicians came around and said, "Oh, we're going to fix Medicare." But it was called "Medi-scare." People didn't want to deal with it, but the system was failing our seniors. In order to make sure our seniors have got prescription drug coverage, which they will in 2006, I led the United States Congress to strengthen Medicare, and our health care is better for the seniors of this country.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. There's more work to be done. We'll introduce technologies into the health care to hold down costs.

Most Americans get their health care through their jobs. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, and many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. The best way to enable American families to get health care is to allow small businesses to pool resources together so they can buy insurance at the same discount big businesses can.

In order to make sure you've got good health care here in Michigan, we need to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running docs out of businesses and raising your costs. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient, and pro-

plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now. In all we do to improve health care here in this country, we will make sure the health decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'm running because I know we've got more work to do to keep this economy growing. You might remember what our economy has been through during the last 3½ years. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. By the way, it's now clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We've been through the terror attack, all of which affected job creation here in America.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. We're overcoming it because we've got great workers in America. We're overcoming them because our farmers and ranchers are good at what they do. We're overcoming them because the entrepreneurial spirit in this country is strong. We're also overcame them because of well-timed tax cuts.

When it came time to reduce taxes, we did it the fair way. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." We raised the child credit to help our families. We reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code sends the wrong message. We ought to be encouraging marriage in America, not discouraging marriage. We helped our small businesses. This time, the check actually was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added over 1.5 million jobs since last August. The national unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent, well below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

There is still more work to be done here in Michigan. The recovery has lagged here. And so as long as anybody is looking for a job, I'll work to make sure the environment for job creation is strong.

See, in order to make sure jobs are here in America, we need an energy policy. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, encourages research on alternative sources of energy, encourages the use of coal in environmentally friendly ways, exploring for natural gas. But in all we do, we better make sure that we no longer have to beg for energy from other parts of the world. This country can do a better job.

We've got to make sure regulations are fair and reasonable on the employers of America. To keep jobs here in this country, we need reasonable automobile policies. American automobile makers are making the cleanest cars and trucks in history. We can do more. My administration has worked with manufacturers to set wise fuel efficiency standards. We will cut air pollution from diesel vehicles by more than 90 percent. My opponent has taken a different approach. He's consistently supported arbitrary, unfair fuel standards that could cost Michigan thousands of jobs and makes our cars less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now it's campaign time here in this great State, and he's shifted into reverse. [*Laughter*] Says he's not committed to drastically increasing efficiency standards. You know, he hasn't sounded this confused since he tried to decide if he owns an SUV.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we want to make sure that we're treated fairly around the world. Listen, our markets are open, and that's good for Michigan consumers. You've got more choices to choose from. You're going to get better price and better quality. What I'm saying is, is that we're treating you one way; you treat us the same way. We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

In order to make sure jobs stay here in America, we will expand our access to our community colleges so workers are able to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. In order to keep jobs here in America, we'll be wise about how we spend your money. See, I think the Federal Government ought to set priorities and let you keep your own money. You can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can.

In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to keep your taxes low. Running up taxes on the American people will hurt this economic recovery. We have a difference of opinion in this race. My opponent went out there, and he's already promised about $2 trillion in new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We've still got September and October to go. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? You know what that means. The rich dodge, and you pay. But we're not going to let him. We're going to carry Michigan and this country in November.

We have more to do——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do. We've got more to do to wage and win the war on terror. Our future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. I don't know if you know this or not, but over 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Afghan Presidential elections. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies sent a clear and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He attacked his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He and his henchmen murdered thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. I saw a threat.

After September the 11th—one of the lessons of September the 11th, an important lesson that this country must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. And so I went to the United States Congress. I said, "We see a threat." The Congress looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history of Saddam, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent came to the same conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force.

The last option of a President is the use of military. And so, therefore, I went to the United Nations in the hopes that we could solve this problem diplomatically, that we could deal with this threat through diplomatic means. There was a debate in the

United Nations, and the Security Council of the United Nations voted unanimously to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke with united voice about the threat of Saddam Hussein.

But as he had over a decade, he chose to defy the demands of the free world. He ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or take action to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Even though we did not find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons and could have passed that capability on to the enemy. That was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Given what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has now found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we haven't found the stockpiles we all thought were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate the fact that he cleared that up. [*Laughter*] But I do want to remind you, there are still 64 days for him to change his mind again.

I'm running because I know we've got more to do to defend this country. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. After September the 11th, you just can't hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have put together a strong coalition to help us defeat the enemy. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan; some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. During the next 4 years, we will continue to build on these alliances, call upon our friends to work in concert to make us more secure. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We will keep our commitments to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. We will help them become democratic and peaceful societies. It's in our national interest that they do so. These nations are now governed by two strong leaders who believe in the aspirations of their people. We've got a clear goal in those countries, countries that will be allies in the war on terror, countries that are headed down the road to democracy.

Our troops are helping to stabilize those countries. More importantly, they're helping to train Afghan citizens and Iraq citizens so they can do the hard work, so they can fight off the terrorists, so they can realize their dreams of a free society. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

And we will prevail. One of the reasons we'll prevail is because we've got a fantastic United States military. I've seen—I've had the privilege of meeting with them around our country and all around the world. I've seen their decency and their unselfish courage. I want to thank the veterans who are

here for setting such a fine example for those who wear our uniform.

I made a commitment to those who wear our uniform and to the loved ones of those who wear the uniform, that they will have the resources they need to fight and win this war against the terrorists. I went to the United States Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding to support our troops in their missions in Afghanistan and in Iraq. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was necessary funding. We received great bipartisan support for the funding request. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And so they say—asked him why. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Then they pressed him further, and he said, well, he was proud of his vote. Then they pressed him even further, and he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free nations do not export terror. Free nations listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others, but we're making America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we are spreading the peace.

Laura and I were having dinner one evening with the Prime Minister of Japan in Tokyo. He's a fellow who's running a country that my dad was at war with. So was your dads and granddads. They were the enemy. But after World War II, my predecessors and others had this great, deep faith that liberty could transform societies, that liberty could convert an enemy into a friend. And they stood strong on those values.

The Prime Minister and I were talking about the peace. We were talking about how to work together to make the world a more peaceful place. By standing the line for what we believe in, by holding true to our values, someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We've got more to do to protect this country. I'm running because I understand there's an enemy out there that still lurks. They hate what we stand for. You know, we have a difference of opinion on these terrorists. My opponent said that going to war with them is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I'm sure you've heard that before. I believe the logic is upside-down. I think it shows that people don't understand the nature of these folks. See, during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before America went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. You don't create terrorists by fighting back. You defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

There's a lot of really good people at the Federal level and the State level and local level who are working hard to protect you. We reorganized the homeland defenses into the Department of Homeland Security to better communicate, to better respond. We're making needed reforms in our intelligence gathering. It is essential that we renew the PATRIOT Act so our

law enforcement officials have the tools necessary to disrupt the terrorist cells. We're doing more to protect our borders and our ports.

We're working hard, but reform in Washington isn't easy. There's a lot of entrenched interests there, a lot of people who say, "I love the status quo." It's not enough to advocate reform; you've got to be able to get the job done. So when you're out gathering the vote, remind people that when it comes to reforming the schools and raising the standards and closing the achievement gap, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families and seniors more access and more choices, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving this economy so people can find work, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and defeating the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When you're out there campaigning, remind people, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

You know, we're living in exciting times. We really are. But they're times of change, and change can be unsettling for American families and workers. That's why I believe so strongly in promoting an ownership society in America. We want people owning their own health care accounts that they can take from job to job. We want people owning their own retirement accounts. Listen, baby boomers like me are just fine when it comes to Social Security. But for you younger workers out there, look carefully at the rhetoric during this campaign. Look carefully at the fiscal solvency of the Social Security system. I believe younger workers ought to have the option of taking some of their own money and putting it in personal savings accounts that they can call their own.

We want more people owning their own business in America. You know, one of the most hopeful statistics at the beginning of the 21st century is the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We'll continue to promote homeownership in America. I love the fact that somebody opens up their door to their house and says, "Welcome to my home. This is my piece of property." I believe strongly in ownership, because I know if you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

In these changing times of ours, however, there are some things that won't change, the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. Our beliefs won't change, in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. During changing times, we must support the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in America, where every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. You know, the culture is changing from one that had said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are responsible for supporting your teachers and doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Today I got off Air Force One and met Annie Kaigler. She is—she works for the foster grandparent program. She is a volunteer. She takes time out of her life to mentor children. She takes time out of her life to change America one heart at a time. The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people. During the next 4 years, I will continue to rally the armies of compassion so this country can be a great, hopeful place.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a great belief in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that day when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm as I was trying to thank people, and he looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down."

I have a duty that goes on for this country. I wake up every morning trying to—how best to secure this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work, but there's more to do. Over the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity and hopes throughout every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We will continue to spread freedom and peace.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I said if I had the great honor of serving the American people as your President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, with your hard work and help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless you all. Thank you for coming. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 6:53 p.m. at Heritage Park. In his remarks, he referred to Bo Schembechler, former head coach, University of Michigan football team; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks to the American Legion Convention in Nashville, Tennessee
August 31, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for having me. And thank you for the warm welcome. Thank you all. I'm honored to be here at your 86th national convention.

I—there's another convention going on in New York you might have heard about. [*Laughter*] Tomorrow they're going to choose a Presidential nominee. I think I got the inside track. [*Laughter*] I'm taking nothing for granted, however. I'm taking nothing for granted, so Laura headed to New York this morning to make my case, but I do want you to know she sends her very best regards.

I also want to let you know that Americans' veterans are the heart and soul of this Nation. When freedom was under threat, you risked your lives in places like Omaha Beach and Okinawa, Keshan, Kandahar, and Baghdad. Because you served, Americans live in freedom. I'm proud to stand before you as your Commander in Chief and look in the eye and say, America is grateful for your service.

And America is grateful for the service of Senator John McCain. He gave a great speech last night in New York. He's a great American. He's a great American who gave his Nation some of the most difficult and distinguished service in the history of our military. He fought for America. He suffered for America. He returned for honor, and his service continues today. I'm proud to have John McCain with us and standing by my side.

I have enjoyed working with the national commander, John Brieden. Maybe we got along so well because we both speak the same language—[*laughter*]—Texan. [*Laughter*] But he served this august body with class and dignity, and I'm proud of your service, John. Thank you, sir. And I was pleased to be introduced by Katherine Morris as well. She too speaks Texan. [*Laughter*] I want to thank her for her leadership as the American Legion Auxiliary national president.

I'm pleased to be here with my friend Tony Principi, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I want to thank Les Brownlee who is with us, the Acting Secretary of the Army.

I appreciate the mayor of this great city of Nashville joining us. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming.

I appreciate Congressman Cooper from the State of Tennessee for joining us.

Most of all, I want to thank the Legion members who have been so gracious in your hospitality. Thank you and the Auxiliary members for welcoming me.

Since your founding, the American Legion has always been faithful to God and to country. You served our Nation in uniform, and you still serve today. When Hurricane Charley hit Florida a few weeks ago, American Legion posts gathered food and helped neighbors in need. In moments of crisis, Americans know Legionnaires always come through.

Members of the American Legion and the Auxiliary are also serving your neighbors every day, volunteering in veterans hospitals, sponsoring scout troops and youth baseball, and collecting scholarship money for deserving students. You've started a scholarship fund for the children of troops killed since September the 11th, 2001, in the war on terror. Our country owes these families so much, and I thank you for showing the gratitude and the good heart of the United States of America.

The most important gift you give our country is the example you set for the men and women of our Armed Forces. In Afghanistan and Iraq and other fronts in the war on terror, today's service men and women are carrying on your legacy of selfless service and courage under fire. I know you share America's pride in them. They are serving our country with pride, and they are bringing honor to the uniform.

Our fighting men and women are serving America under a proud flag, and that flag should be cherished and protected. When John and your national adjutant general, Bob, have come by the Oval Office, they always remind me about the Citizens Flag Alliance. I appreciate your leadership in that important alliance. Like you, I support a constitutional amendment to protect the flag from desecration. I think John McCain put it best when he said, "American blood has been shed all over the world for the American flag, and I believe it deserves respect."

Our Nation's veterans have made serving America the highest priority of your lives. And that is why I have made serving our Nation's veterans one of the highest priorities of my administration. To make sure my administration fulfills the commitment

I have made to America's veterans, I selected one really fine man in Tony Principi. I am proud of the job that our Secretary is doing.

Thanks in large part to Tony's leadership, my administration has a solid record of accomplishment for our veterans. When my 2005 budget request is approved by Congress, we will have increased overall funding for our Nation's veterans by almost $20 billion or 40 percent since 2001. We have increased funding for our veterans more in 4 years than the previous administration did in 8 years. We have increased VA medical care funding by 41 percent over the last 4 years. We're bringing care to more veterans more quickly. Since 2001, we have enrolled 2.5 million more veterans in health care services. We have increased outpatient visits from 44 million to 54 million. We've increased the number of prescriptions filled from 98 million to 116 million. We've reduced the backlog of disability claims by about a third. We will reduce it even further. We have cut the average time it takes to process disability claims by 70 days. We're getting the job done for our veterans.

We have focused resources on veterans who need it most, those with service-related disabilities and low incomes and special needs. We've established a new scheduling system to make certain that veterans seeking care for a service-connected condition are the first in line.

For more than a century, Federal law prohibited disabled veterans from receiving both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve better. I was the first President in over 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation.

My administration has launched a $35 million program to provide housing and health care and other support services to homeless veterans. No veteran who served in the blazing heat or bitter cold of foreign lands should have to live without shelter, exposed to the elements, in the very country whose freedom they fought for.

We are modernizing VA health centers and building new ones, especially in the South and West where increasing numbers of our veterans live. Since 2001, we have opened 194 new community-based clinics nationwide. Through the CARES Initiative we're providing $1 billion and have requested another half-billion for next year to modernize VA facilities and to provide better care for veterans in areas where the need is growing. When it comes to providing first-class care for our veterans, we are getting the job done.

Our Nation's debt extends not just to the veterans who served but to the families who supported them in war and depend on them today. So last December, I signed the Veterans Benefits Act, authorizing $1 billion in new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans, surviving spouses, and their children.

We meet today at a time of war for our country, a war we did not start, yet one that we will win. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, 2001, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. I don't know whether you know this or not, but over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the coming October Presidential elections. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America

and our allies sent a clear and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He and his henchmen murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of instability in the world's most volatile region. Saddam Hussein was a threat.

After September the 11th, one of the lessons this country must always remember is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. So I went to the United States Congress, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence and looked at the background and came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Before a President ever commits troops, we must try all other alternatives to deal with threats. And so I went to the United Nations. I said to the free world, "Saddam Hussein is a threat." They looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion with a 15-to-nothing vote in U.N. Security Council. They said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world had spoken.

But as he had for over a decade. Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He ignored the demands of the United Nations. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors—or when the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy, and that was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have taken the same action. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

We will continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home. In this different kind of war, we may never sit down at a peace table. But make no mistake about it, we are winning, and we will win. We will win by staying on the offensive. We will win by spreading liberty. We believe that liberty can transform nations from tyranny into peaceful nations.

And so we'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We will help them become peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. Those countries are now governed by strong leaders who believe in the aspirations of their people. We'll help them in the political process. More importantly, we will train Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens so they can defend their own country against a few who would stop the wishes of the many. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

We're doing the hard work of securing our country and spreading the peace, and those commitments are made by the men and women of our military. I've had the privilege of traveling to bases around our country and around the world. I've met with those who defend our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish

courage. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those who wear our uniform deserve the full support of the Government. For the past years my administration has strengthened our military. We enacted the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan served as the Commander in Chief. We've increased military pay by nearly 21 percent. We provided for better housing, for better training, for better maintenance.

Last September, when our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and in Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was important funding. We received great bipartisan support for that funding. All but 12 United States Senators voted to support our troops in combat. My opponent chose to vote no on that vital legislation. When asked, he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] When further pressed, he said he was proud of his vote, and then he said it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in part of the world that is desperate for freedom. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and we're making our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we are making the world more peaceful, and by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American soul. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more work to do to defend our freedom and to protect our country. For decades, America's Armed Forces abroad have essentially remained where the wars of the last century ended, in Europe and Asia. Much of America's current force posture was designed to protect us and our allies from Soviet aggression, a threat that no longer exists. And that's why I announced a plan to transform our global force posture, the numbers, types, locations, and capabilities of U.S. forces around the world.

This new plan will help us fight and win the war on terror. This new plan will help us deal with the threats of the 21st century. It will strengthen our alliances while we build new partnerships to better preserve the peace. It will reduce the stress on our troops and on our military families. It will save the taxpayers money, as we consolidate and close bases and facilities overseas no longer needed to face the threats of our time and defend the peace and freedom of the world.

This plan was carefully crafted over more than 3 years in close consultation with friends and allies around the world. We will have a presence, but we'll have a smarter presence to promote the peace.

Within hours after I announced this plan, my opponent came out against it, and that's his right to do so. After all, it's a campaign. He's allowed to say what he believes. The only problem is that he endorsed the idea just 17 days earlier. [*Laughter*] On August the 1st, he said, "I think we can significantly change the deployment of troops, not just in Iraq but elsewhere in the world, the Korean Peninsula, perhaps, Europe, perhaps. There are great possibilities open to us, but this administration has very little imagination." Well, it takes a lot of imagination to come out against a position you took just 17 days earlier. [*Laughter*]

This world has changed a great deal since many of you have worn the Nation's uniform. Today, our troops have the most advanced technologies at their disposal.

Weapons are more lethal and precise than any that were available for you. Yet, their success in the war on terror is made possible by the same things that made your success possible, personal courage, dedication to duty, and love of our great country.

As our troops serve today in Baghdad and Mosul and the Hindu Kush Mountains and around the world, I know American veterans feel a special pride in them. They're carrying on your legacy of sacrifice and service. They're determined to see the mission through. America is proud of them. America will stand with them.

I want to thank you for standing by our men and women in uniform. Thank you for your idealism. Thank you for your example. Thank you for your dedication to God and country, and thank you for having me here. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Robert W. Spanogle, national adjutant, American Legion; Mayor William Purcell of Nashville, TN; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

Remarks at the Farm Progress Show in Alleman, Iowa
August 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be back in the great State of Iowa. As you can see, I'm traveling in pretty good company. Speaking about people who gave a great speech last night, John McCain did exactly what I hoped he would do, which is set the message straight about our record in fighting this war on terror. I'm proud to call John a friend. He is, in fact, a hero, as Glen said, and he's a great United States Senator from the State of Arizona. Thanks for coming, John. I'm proud to be with you.

It's good to be here at the Farm Show. You know, some people think you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. I think you find it right here in Iowa, and I appreciate you coming out to say hello.

I wish Laura were here. She's getting ready. She's warming up for her speech tonight. [*Laughter*] She's getting ready to talk to the Nation, and I'm glad she is. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife, and she's a great First Lady for this country. I'm really proud of her—really proud of her. I'm going to be talking to you today about why I think you ought to put me in there for 4 more years. But perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Glen Keppy. He's the chairman of the Farmers for Bush campaign here in this great State. It's a vital position because you got a lot of farmers here. [*Laughter*] He's a good man. He's been a friend for a long time. I said, "Would you help me get out and get my message out in the ag community?" He said, "You bet." He said, "Why don't you come over here to the Farm Show. Maybe a couple of people will show up and say hello." I'm glad you're here, Glen, and thank you for putting this on. I want to thank all the people who have organized this great event.

I appreciate Karen Nussle is here. She's the wife of my friend Congressman Jim Nussle.

I'm sorry Senator Grassley is not here. He's a good one. I enjoy working with him. We're getting a lot done together for Iowa, and I appreciate working with Chuck. I remember campaigning in your State a lot.

Every time I'd go with him he'd say, "Oh, Farmer Jones lives here," and then you'd go down the road about another mile, and he'd know the name of that farmer; then he'd know the name of that farmer's wife. He probably knows everyone here names too. [*Laughter*] That's because he loves his State. He's doing a fine job.

I appreciate the mayor, Mayor Bodensteiner,for being here. Mayor, I appreciate you coming. I think the only thing I'd suggest is you make sure you fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you, though, Mr. Mayor. Thanks for your service.

I know my friend Stew Iverson is here, of the State senate. I know we've got a lot of local officials and State officials here. Thank you for serving, and thank you for coming.

There's members of the ex-Governors club here. I'm one of those members. Terry Branstad and Bob Ray are with us, and I'm honored they are here—fine friends and great people.

My friend Stan Thompson is running for the United States Congress, and I hope you give him a good look. He's a good fellow.

Jan Lyons, president of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, is with us. They have given me their endorsement. I am honored to be endorsed by the Cattlemen of the United States of America. Got the corn growers represented here by Len Corzine. I appreciate Len coming. I appreciate all the corn growers being here too, by the way. Ron Heck, the chairman of the American Soybean Association, is with us. I appreciate Ron coming. I want to thank Keith Berry, whose pork people are here, pork grower—hog raisers—[*laughter*]—Pork Producers Council. I want to thank Craig Lang, who is the President of the Iowa Farm Bureau.

Most of all, I want to thank you for coming. I'm here to let you know I'm asking for your vote. I believe you got to get out—[*applause*].

I got more work to do on behalf of the American people. You know, we've got a really good record. We've done a lot in office, and we've come through a lot together. But there's only one reason to look back, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm here to let you know I've got more to do to make this country safer and America a more hopeful place, and I'd like your help. I'd like you to go to your friends and neighbors and remind them, in a democracy we have a duty to vote. In this great country, we have an obligation, in my judgment, as citizens to go to the polls. And the first step is to register people.

So if you don't mind, as we're coming down the stretch, why don't you find friends and neighbors and say, "As an—you got an obligation as an American to vote, and so, register to vote." And then when you're heading them to the polls and you get them going our way—[*laughter*]—tell them if they want a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, to put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running with a good man in Vice President Cheney. I admit it, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I did not pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his sound advice, his great experience, and because he can get the job done.

I'm running because we—I know we've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence they can be. You know, 3 years ago, when we got into office, there was too many of our kids getting shuffled through the school, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We're willing to challenge schools that will not teach and will not change. Every child in America deserves an excellent education.

I'm running again because I know we've got to do more to make health care available and affordable. You might remember that old Medicare debate. They called it "Medi-scare." People would talk about it, but nobody would touch it. I was worried that the Medicare system was not fulfilling the promise to our seniors. You know, a senior would go in and get a heart operation for $100,000. The Government would pay for it, but they wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart operation from needing to be in the first place.

So I said to Congress, "Why don't we come together and make sure our seniors have got a modern health care system." We got the job done when it came to strengthening Medicare for our seniors. And working with Chuck Grassley, we've also taken care of our rural hospitals. You know what I'm talking about if you live in rural Iowa. You know how the system wasn't good for the Iowa hospitals and docs. We corrected the problem. We're getting the job done.

We will continue to expand community health centers for low-income Americans. We will expand health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. I understand most people get their health insurance through the businesses, and most new jobs are created by small businesses. Yet, small businesses are having trouble affording health care. We must allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses are able to do.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable here in Iowa, we need to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the cost of your health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'm running because I know there's more to do to keep this economy strong. We've been through a lot together when it came to this economy. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. The terrorist attack hurt our economy.

And yet, we've got an economy that's growing. We've overcome the obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got great workers. We've overcome them because we've got great farmers. We've overcome those obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector of this economy is alive and well. And I believe we've overcome those obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

Our view was, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." We also helped our families by raising the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. I think the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We helped our small businesses. We helped them purchase equipment. This time, the check was actually in the mail, too. [*Laughter*]

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is at 5.5 percent, which is well below the national average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is at 4.4 percent. Our economic recovery plan is working.

A strong farm economy is good for our Nation's economy, and we have a strong farm economy today. We're seeing record exports for farm products. Farm income is up. And that means people are making a living here in rural Iowa. And that is good for the United States of America, and I intend to keep it that way.

There's more work to be done to make sure this economy grows. I submitted an energy plan to the United States Congress. It needs to get the energy plan to my desk. The energy plan says, "We'll work on conservation. We'll have clean coal technology. We'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways." But it's an energy plan that also recognizes the vast potential of corn and soybeans. I believe in ethanol, and I believe in biodiesel. See, I think, one of these days, with good research, a President is going to be sitting at the desk there in the Oval Office; somebody is going to walk in and say, "Guess what, Mr. President. The corn crop is up, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

I believe we ought to have wise trade policy in order to make sure this economy grows and people can find work here in America. We open up our markets for other—to other countries, and that's good for you. You see, when you have more product to choose from, you're going to get a—what you're demanding at a better price and better quality. That's the way the market works. So instead of shutting down our markets, we'll continue to open up other people's markets. If people treat us the way we treat them, we can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere in the world.

That's why we've been—I've been out there working to have free trade agreements with countries all around the world. It's good for Iowa farmers that we're opening up markets. See, I think you can compete with any farmer, anyplace, anytime, and all you need is a chance, a level playing field. This administration is committed to making sure Iowa farm products are sold all over the world.

Every day is Earth Day when you own your own land. The best conservation policy starts with encouraging our farmers and ranchers to conserve. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the CRP program. It's a good program. It's good for wildlife. It's good for land. It's good for the families who make a living off the farm. Right now we have about 35 million acres of farm land in the program, and I know you know that contracts covering roughly two-thirds of the existing land in that program are scheduled to expire in 2007 and 2008. To make sure the farmlands stay protected, I've directed the Secretary of Agriculture to offer early reenrollments and extensions on existing projects, existing contracts.

There's more work to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. One thing we got to do, be smart about how we spend your money in Washington, DC. And the other thing is to keep your taxes low. The worst thing that could happen to our economy right now is to let them run up your taxes on you. I'm running against a fellow who's promised over $2 trillion of new spending, and we still got September and October to go. [*Laughter*]

So they said, "How you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you? Yes. When you hear them in Washington say "tax the rich," hang on to your wallet. [*Laughter*] But the good news is, we're not going to let him tax anybody because we're going to win Iowa and win the country in '04.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers and set up cells around the world, including the United States. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential elections. Because we acted, many young girls

go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He funded—he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein and his henchmen killed thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. I saw a threat.

After September the 11th, this country must deal with threats before they fully materialize. One of the lessons of that day is that when we see a threat, we can no longer hope for the best. We must deal with those threats. We must never forget that lesson, for the security of our people.

So I went to the United States Congress. The Congress looked at the same intelligence I had looked at. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein. They concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. Members of both political parties came to that conclusion, including my opponent.

The last choice of the Commander in Chief is to commit troops into combat. We must try all means necessary to deal with threats before they fully materialize. So I went to the United Nations. I said, "Saddam Hussein is a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, and they came to the same conclusion we had come to that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and by a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council said Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequence. The world spoke, and the world spoke with one voice.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He wasn't about to listen to what the world had said. As a matter of fact, when inspectors were sent into Iraq, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we all thought were there, Saddam Hussein had the capability to make weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to his enemies. And that was a risk this country could not afford to have taken after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found another nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we didn't find the stockpiles we thought were there, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. And I thank him for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] But I want to caution you, there's still a little over 60 days left for him to change his mind again.

We have more to do. I'm running because I know we have more to do to make this country secure. We'll continue to work with our friends and allies around the world

to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We are winning this war against these terrorists, and we will win this war against these terrorists. In order to do so, America must continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat these people. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to build coalitions so we can work together. It's in our interest. We have good, strong coalitions. It's in the interest of others that we work together. But I will never turn over America's national security decision to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitment to help the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. We set a clear goal. Those countries will be peaceful. They'll be democratic, and they'll be allies in the war on terror. We'll keep our commitment because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We'll keep our commitment because it's in our interest that free societies emerge in those countries. Our strategy is clear. We'll provide enough security so they can head for elections. And at the same time, we'll help Afghans and Iraqis assume the duties necessary for a free society to emerge. We're training their troops. We're training their police, so they can do the hard work of defeating the few who want to deny the hopes and ambitions of the many. Our military will complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

Our troops are keeping our commitments around the world. We have got a fantastic United States military. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. And I have made a pledge to them and their loved ones that our Government will support them in their missions. And that's why, last September, I went to the United States Congress, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was a very important piece of legislation and funding. It was necessary. We had great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they said, "Why did you vote against this vital legislation?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." I spend a lot of time here in this State. I've never heard anybody talk like that in Iowa. [*Laughter*] They pressed him further, and he said, well, he's proud of the vote. And finally, he said it's just a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and democratic Iraq and a free and democratic Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries provide hope for their people. The best way to defeat terror in the long run is to spread liberty around the world.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've spent time sitting at a table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. My dad fought against the Japanese; your dads fought against the Japanese. But because we believed in—liberty could transform people, after World War II, my predecessor and many in this country worked with Japan to become a self-governing, democratic nation. And so when you hear me

talk about the transformational power of liberty, think about the fact that I'm talking to the head of a former enemy that's now an ally in peace. When we sit around the table, we're talking about how to make the world more peaceful. Someday, an elected official from the United States and a duly elected leader of Iraq will be talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're making America more secure. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of the American spirit. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We'll continue to work hard to protect you here at home. We've created the Department of Homeland Security to better organize our Government to deal with the threats of the 21st century. No, there's great communication now between the Federal, State, and local levels. I want to thank the first-responders here in the great State of Iowa for serving your communities. The FBI and the CIA are talking better. We're reorganizing the intelligence gathering to make sure we get the very best information possible to protect the American people.

We must renew the PATRIOT Act so our law enforcement has the tools necessary to defend you against terrorist threat. We must do a better job of securing our borders and our ports.

We're working hard. We're working hard to make this country more secure, and we'll continue to press for needed reforms in Washington. But it's hard in that city for reform. There's a lot of entrenched interests there, a lot of people who like the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get the job done.

So when you're out there gathering up the vote, remind people in this great State that when it comes to reforming schools and improving education for every child in America, we're getting the job done; that when it comes to health care reforms to help rural hospitals in Iowa and to help families and seniors, we're getting the job done; and when it comes to improving our economy and keeping this ag economy strong in America, we're getting the job done; that when it comes to better securing this homeland, defeating the terrorists, and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And remind them, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody back in there who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. At my convention speech Thursday—I guess I better get home and write it here pretty soon—[*laughter*]—I'm going to talk about the fact we're in a changing world, and the role of Government is to help people during a changing world, not to give them orders but to stand side by side so people can realize their dreams.

And one of the ways to do that is to promote an ownership society in America. In changing times, if you own something, it provides stability. For example, in changing times, if you own and control your own health care account, you can take it from job to job. In changing times, it's helpful for younger workers to be able to take some of their own money and have a personal savings account in Social Security that they can call their own. In changing times—by the way, for baby boomers and older, we're in good shape in Social Security. Nothing is going to change because it's solvent for us. It's the younger workers we need to worry about.

In changing times, we want more people owning their own business, owning their own farm, owning a piece of the future of America. In changing times, we want more people owning their own home. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high? More and more people are owning their own home.

I think there's nothing better in America than somebody who says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." See, when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In changing times, there's some things that won't change, the individual values we try to live by, courage, integrity, and reverence, and compassion. Our beliefs in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity won't change. In changing times, we'll protect the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. You know, the culture of our country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're a mom or a dad, 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for supporting your teachers and doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there's quiet times in the life of this Nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, steadfast purpose, and a deep belief in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember thanking people for their hard work, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye with his bloodshot eyes, and he said, "Do not let me down."

I have a duty that has gone on since that day. I wake up every morning trying to best determine how to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. There's more to be done to make sure our schools reach their full potential. There's more to be done to spread opportunity to every single corner of this country. There's more to be done to pass the values of this land on to another generation. There's more to be done to spread freedom and peace so our children can grow up in a peaceful world.

You know, when I campaigned across your State, I said if you gave me the honor of holding this office, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

Thanks for coming, and may God bless. Thank you all very much. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Alleman Farm. In his remarks, he referred to Glen Keppy, chairman, Iowa Farm Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Mayor Bill Bodensteiner of Alleman, IA; Stewart E. Iverson, Jr., majority leader, Iowa State Senate; former Governors Terry Branstad and

Robert D. Ray of Iowa; Stan Thompson, candidate for Iowa's Third Congressional District; Jan Lyons, president, National Cattlemen's Beef Association; Leon "Len" Corzine, first vice president, 2004 Corn Board, National Corn Growers Association; Ron Heck, chairman, American Soybean Association; Keith Berry, president, board of directors, National Pork Producers Council; Craig Lang, president, board of directors, Iowa Farm Bureau; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture.

Remarks in Columbus, Ohio
September 1, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. What a warm welcome. It doesn't get any better than being introduced by Jack Nicklaus in Columbus, Ohio. While you were cheering, I asked him if he had any advice for my golf game. He said, "Quit." [*Laughter*] I'm so honored to be here with Jack and Barbara Nicklaus. He is a—what a class act. And I'm proud to have him endorse my candidacy for the Presidency of the United States.

Jack said he and Barbara are from Columbus—so am I. My grandfather was raised right here in Columbus, Ohio. So I'm here to ask that you send a homeboy back to Washington, DC.

I'm thrilled to be traveling today with Laura. She raised the bar last night. What a fantastic speech she gave. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is to put her back in for 4 more years.

I appreciate you all coming. I'm here to ask for the vote. See, I believe you've got to come to the people and ask for their vote. I'm here to let you know I'm going to lay out a vision tomorrow night for a safer world and a more hopeful America, that we have done a lot—[*applause*].

I'm here to ask for your help as well. You can't win an election alone. I need you to help register your friends and neighbors. Get on the Internet at georgewbush.com and find out how you can volunteer for this campaign. For those of you who are volunteering, I want to thank you very much for the work you've done and the work you're going to do. There is no question in my mind, with your hard work, we will carry Ohio again and win this country.

I'm looking forward to hearing my superb runningmate's speech tonight. Dick Cheney is a solid citizen. He's got good judgment and sound advice. He's a man who can get the job done.

I'm thankful that Barbara Nicklaus and son Gary Nicklaus are traveling with Jack today. I want to thank both of them for joining us.

I appreciate my friend Senator Mike DeWine joining us today. He's a fine United States Senator. You know, we've been traveling your State by bus, and old Mike showed up every time. He's out there shaking those hands and waving to the crowds. I appreciate his friendship. I also want to urge you to put George Voinovich back into office as your United States Senator. I'm proud that my friend Congresswoman Deborah Pryce is with us. She is a fine Member of the House of Representatives.

I want to thank John McConnell for opening up this beautiful hall. He's a great

citizen of this community who owns the Columbus Blue Jackets. He said, "Do you have any advice?" I said, "I cannot skate." [*Laughter*] But I appreciate the hospitality.

I want to thank Chris Spielman for being here as well. I'm honored he's here. I appreciate the Pickering Central High marching band for joining us today. I'll try to keep my speech short so you can get home and do your homework.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I want to thank the folks who put this on, this fantastic rally on. I know it takes hard work to get this many people here. But thanks for all you're doing. I'm here to let you know that I've got a clear vision and strong determination to make this country a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every American.

In the past few years, we've been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a lot. But the only reason to look back in a campaign is to determine who best to lead us forward. Even though we've done a lot, I'm here to tell you there's more to do. There's more to do to make this country a hopeful country for every citizen.

We've got more to do to make sure the public schools in America are centers of excellence we know they can be. When I went to office—got into office a couple of years ago, too many of our schools were shuffling children through, grade after grade, year after year, without them learning the basics. We challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations in the public schools in America. We've raised the standards. We believe in local control of schools. And we believe in return for Federal money, people must show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract, because we expect every child to learn in America. Because we're measuring and correcting problems early, before it's too late, the achievement gap in America is closing.

But there's more work to be done. We've got to make sure the Internet is in our high school classrooms. We need to have early intervention programs for junior high and high school students, so they're not left behind. We got to make sure AP courses are expanded. We got to make sure we teach more math and science in the high schools so that kids can compete in this global economy. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something. We'll increase Pell grants and loans so when a high school kid gets out of high school, he's got a chance to go to college. What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, a rising generation will have the confidence and the skills necessary to be able to find a job in America.

We've got more to do to make such health care is available and affordable. When I came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember those old Medicare debates. Matter of fact, they used to call it "Medi-scare," and the system was getting old. See, we'd pay $100,000 for a heart operation in Medicare but wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart operation from happening in the first place. I went to Washington with the desire to improve Medicare for our seniors, and we got the job done.

We're expanding community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. Most people get their insurance through their places of work. Most new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To make sure American families get health care, small businesses must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to get.

There's more work to be done to make sure health care is accessible and affordable. We'll harness technology to reduce

costs and prevent costly mistakes. We'll expand research to find new cures. In order to make sure your health care system here is a viable health care, we must get rid of the frivolous lawsuits that are running your docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care in this country, we will make sure that health decisions are made by patients and doctors and not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

I'm running because I know there's more to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. Our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through the terrorist attacks. We had the corporate scandals. These were obstacles in the way for good economic growth, but we've overcome the obstacles because America's workers are the finest in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is thriving in this country. We've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

We didn't pick winners or losers when it came time for tax cuts. We said, "If you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief." That's the fair way to do it. We also increased the child credit to help moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We helped our small businesses; this time the check actually was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, over the past 12 months we've added 1.5 million new jobs. Because we acted, the national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent, well below the national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I fully understand we still face challenges in manufacturing communities and places like Youngstown and some other parts of your great State—Canton. I've been to those communities. I know there are workers worried about their future. I've got a plan to continue the economic vitality of this State and this country. I will not rest so long as anybody in your State who wants to work cannot find a job. I'm running because I know there's more to do to create economic vitality.

And to keep jobs here in America, this country must have an energy strategy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress that encourages conservation, encourages alternative sources of energy, encourages clean coal technology, encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for natural gas. It's a reasonable plan. It's stuck in the Congress. They need to get it to my desk so we can keep jobs here in this country.

In order to keep jobs here in America, we need tort reform and regulatory relief. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must make sure our trade policies are fair. We've opened up our markets, and it's good for you that we've done so. See, if you've got more to choose from, you're more likely to get a better product at a better price. But it's only fair if other countries treat us the way they treat them. The best trade policy is to open up their markets. The best trade policy is to enforce trade laws. The best trade policy is to say, "Treat us the way we treat you." We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, if the rules are fair.

In order to keep jobs in America, we must have a lifetime of learning opportunity for American workers. I'm a big believer in the community college system. I believe they make a lot of sense. It's a good use of taxpayers' money to encourage and help

workers retrain for the jobs which will be created in the 21st century. If we help our workers find the skills necessary to fill the jobs, this economy will continue to grow and people will be able to realize their hopes and aspirations.

In order for this economy to continue to grow and for jobs to stay in America, we must be wise about how we spend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the working people and the small-business owners and the farmers and ranchers of America would hurt this economic recovery. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we've still got 60 days to go in the campaign. [*Laughter*] No telling what's going to happen coming down the stretch. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, I'll just tax the rich." Yes, we have heard that before in American politics. You know what it means, "tax the rich." It means the rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him do it. We're going to carry Ohio and this country in November.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, Libya has abandoned its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein and his henchmen murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. Saddam Hussein was a threat. And one of the important lessons of September the 11th, a lesson this country must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

So I went to the United States Congress. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein, and came to the same conclusion—Saddam Hussein was a threat—and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion.

The President must try all options to resolve a threat before he commits troops into combat, and so I went to the United Nations. I said, "I see a threat." They looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence. They remembered the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. When we sent inspectors, or when

the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived them. So I have a choice to make at this point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we expected to find, Saddam had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. That is not a risk we could afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

And now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching positions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. After months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, my opponent now agrees with me that even though we didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I appreciate him clearing all this up. But I caution you, there's still 62 days left for him to change his mind.

I'm running because I understand we have more to do to make this country secure. We will continue to work with friends and allies around the world to pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You cannot talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best with them. We must aggressively pursue them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on the alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq. We've set clear goals, peaceful and democratic countries that are allies in the war on terror. It's our interest that those countries become peaceful and democratic countries. It's in our interest that they become allies in the war on terror.

They're run by strong leaders now. Our military will help them on their way to the political process that the people demand. We'll help train Iraqis and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their democracy. Our troops will complete this mission as quickly as possible so they do not have to stay a day longer than necessary.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the fine men and women of the United States military. At bases across our country and around the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with them. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. I appreciate the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear our uniform.

I made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones of our troops that they will have the resources they need to fight and win this war against the terrorists. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor, vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. It was an important funding request, and it received significant bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. And here's actually what he said: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Yes. Now he's offering different explanations. They said—he said he's proud of his vote. And they kept pressing him, and he said, "Well, the whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will serve as powerful examples of liberty in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams of their people.

By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others, and we're making our country more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping to spread the peace that we all want. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect our country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. We have a difference of opinion on these terrorists. My opponent said that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic is upside-down. If you ever hear that, tell your friends and neighbors that during the 1990s, the terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. These people don't need an excuse for their hatred. I think it's wrong to blame America for the anger and the evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back. We will defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

There are a lot of really fine people at the Federal level, the State level, and first-responders at the local level who are working hard to protect us. I want to thank the first-responders who are here today. I want to thank you for your dedication.

The cooperation has never been better between the Federal, State, and the local government. We're working hard to make sure we get the best intelligence gathering capability. It's important that we know the movements of the enemy. And so we're pushing for reforms for intelligence gathering. It's essential that we renew the PATRIOT Act so law enforcement has the tools necessary to find and disrupt terrorist activity in the United States. We've been pushing hard for reforms to make sure we better guard our borders and safeguard our ports. We created the Department of Homeland Security.

These reforms are hard in Washington. See, there's a lot of entrenched interests there, a lot of people who like the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get the job done. So when you're out campaigning, remind people that when it comes to reforming schools, raising the bar, and closing that achievement gap, we're getting the job done. When it comes to health care reforms and helping our seniors with modern health, we're getting the job done. When it comes to improving our economy and growing jobs so people can find work, we're getting the job done. When it comes to better securing the homeland and defeating the terrorists and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. And when you're out there working hard to garner the vote and gather the vote, tell them, when it comes time to choose a President, put somebody in there who can get the job done.

Tomorrow night I'm going to talk about how this world of ours is changing, and Government must change with the changing world to make people's lives easier, to give people a chance to be able to realize the full promise of tomorrow. Changing times are difficult times. And one way to

help add security to people's lives during changing times is to promote an ownership society. See, if you own your own health care account and you change jobs, you'll have the security of being able to take it with you from job to job.

We've got a lot of younger folks here today. And I appreciate you coming. Baby boomers like me are in good shape when it comes to Social Security. The system is sound for people like me and older. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen carefully to the debate about the retirement systems here in America. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and create a personal savings account as a part of Social Security.

We'll continue to create an environment so that people are willing to take risk and create their own small business. We want more small-business owners in America. One of the most hopeful statistics is the fact that today the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. During changing times, owning your own home brings stability in your life. See, we're going to continue to promote an ownership society in America because it brings stability during changing times, but also because I understand when a person owns something, they have a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a time of change, there's some things that won't change: the individual values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; our belief in liberty and opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. In changing times, we must value the institutions that give us direction and purposes, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe and stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. You know, the culture is changing from one that says, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are 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 worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and an unyielding belief in the values that make this country a wonderful land.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was thanking people for their work, and a fellow looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down."

Since that day, I have a duty that has gone on. I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have come through much together. We have done a lot of hard work. We're moving this country forward, but there's more work to be done. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership

and hope and opportunity to every corner of this country—I mean every corner. We will pass the enduring values of this country on to a younger generation. We will continue to spread freedom and peace.

You know, when I campaigned across your State 4 years ago, I said if you gave me the great honor of serving as President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. And with your hard work and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:18 p.m. at the Nationwide Arena. In his remarks, he referred to professional golfer Jack Nicklaus, his wife, Barbara, and their son, professional golfer Gary Nicklaus; and former professional football player Chris Spielman.

Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in New York City
September 2, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Mr. Chairman, delegates, fellow citizens: I am honored by your support, and I accept your nomination for President of the United States.

When I said those words 4 years ago, none of us could have envisioned what these years would bring. In the heart of this great city, we saw tragedy arrive on a quiet morning. We saw the bravery of rescuers grow with danger. We learned of passengers on a doomed plane who died with a courage that frightened their killers. We have seen a shaken economy rise to its feet. And we have seen Americans in uniform storming mountain strongholds and charging through sandstorms and liberating millions with acts of valor that would make the men of Normandy proud.

Since 2001, Americans have been given hills to climb and found the strength to climb them. Now, because we have made the hard journey, we can see the valley below. Now, because we have faced challenges with resolve, we have historic goals within our reach and greatness in our future. We will build a safer world and a more hopeful America, and nothing will hold us back.

In the work we have done and the work we will do, I am fortunate to have a superb Vice President. I have counted on Dick Cheney's calm and steady judgment in difficult days, and I am honored to have him at my side.

I am grateful to share my walk in life with Laura Bush. Americans have come to see the goodness and kindness and strength I first saw 26 years ago, and we love our First Lady.

I'm a fortunate father of two spirited, intelligent, and lovely young women. I'm blessed with a sister and brothers who are my closest friends. And I will always be the proud and grateful son of George and Barbara Bush.

My father served 8 years at the side of another great American, Ronald Reagan. His spirit of optimism and good will and decency are in this hall and are in our hearts and will always define our party.

Two months from today, voters will make a choice based on the records we have built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. A Presidential election is a contest for the future. Tonight I will tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I will lead this country in the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach, so we passed the most important Federal education reform in history. Because we acted, children are making sustained progress in reading and math; America's schools are getting better; and nothing will hold us back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors, so I brought Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Medicare. Now seniors are getting immediate help buying medicine; soon every senior will be able to get prescription drug coverage; and nothing will hold us back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, entrepreneurs, farmers, and ranchers, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing again and creating jobs, and nothing will hold us back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy, that government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will win this election.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The story of America is the story of expanding liberty, an ever-widening circle, constantly growing to reach further and include more. Our Nation's founding commitment is still our deepest commitment: In our world and here at home, we will extend the frontiers of freedom.

The times in which we work and live are changing dramatically. The workers of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career, often with one company that provided health care and a pension. And most of those workers were men. Today, workers change jobs, even careers, many times during their lives. And in one of the most dramatic shifts our society has seen, two-thirds of all moms also work outside the home.

This changed world can be a time of great opportunity for all Americans to earn a better living, support your family, and have a rewarding career. And Government must take your side. Many of our most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared—and thus truly free—to make your own choices and pursue your own dreams.

My plan begins with providing the security and opportunity of a growing economy. We now compete in a global market that provides new buyers for our goods but new competition for our workers. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs, my plan will encourage investment and expansion by restraining Federal spending, reducing regulation, and making the tax relief permanent. To create jobs, we will make our country less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create jobs, we will expand trade and level the playing field to sell American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect small-business owners and workers from the explosion of frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across our country.

Another drag on our economy is the current Tax Code, which is a complicated mess, filled with special interest loopholes, saddling our people with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. The American people deserve—

and our economic future demands—a simpler, fairer, progrowth system. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Another priority in a new term will be to help workers take advantage of the expanding economy to find better and higher paying jobs. In this time of change, many workers want to go back to school to learn different or higher level skills. So we will double the number of people served by our principal job training program and increase funding for our community colleges. I know that with the right skills, American workers can compete with anyone, anywhere in the world.

In this time of change, opportunity in some communities is more distant than in others. To stand with workers in poor communities and those that have lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs, we will create American opportunity zones. In these areas, we will provide tax relief and other incentives to attract new business and improve housing and job training to bring hope and work throughout all of America.

As I've traveled the country, I've met many workers and small-business owners who have told me that they are worried they cannot afford health care. More than half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer a tax credit to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts and provide direct help for low-income Americans to purchase them. These accounts give workers the security of insurance against major illness, the opportunity to save tax-free for routine health expenses, and the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you whenever you change jobs. We will provide low-income Americans with better access to health care. In a new term, I will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center.

As I have traveled our country, I have met too many good doctors, especially obgyns, who are being forced out of practice because of the high cost of lawsuits. To make health care more affordable and accessible, we must pass medical liability reform now. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In this time of change, Government must take the side of working families. In a new term, we will change outdated labor laws to offer comp-time and flex-time. Our laws should never stand in the way of a more family-friendly workplace.

Another priority for a new term is to build an ownership society, because ownership brings security and dignity and independence.

Thanks to our policies, homeownership in America is at an alltime high. Tonight we set a new goal: 7 million more affordable homes in the next 10 years so more American families will be able to open the door and say, "Welcome to my home."

In an ownership society, more people will own their health care plans and have the confidence of owning a piece of their retirement. We'll always keep the promise of Social Security for our older workers. With the huge baby boom generation approaching retirement, many of our children and grandchildren understandably worry whether Social Security will be there when they need it. We must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg you can call your own and Government can never take away.

In all these proposals, we seek to provide not just a Government program but a path, a path to greater opportunity, more freedom, and more control over your own life.

And the path begins with our youngest Americans. To build a more hopeful America, we must help our children reach as far as their vision and character can take

them. Tonight I remind every parent and every teacher, I say to every child: No matter what your circumstance, no matter where you live, your school will be the path to promise of America.

We are transforming our schools by raising standards and focusing on results. We are insisting on accountability, empowering parents and teachers, and making sure that local people are in charge of their schools. By testing every child, we are identifying those who need help, and we are providing a record level of funding to get them that help. In northeast Georgia, Gainesville Elementary School is mostly Hispanic and 90 percent poor, and this year 90 percent of the students passed State tests in reading and math. The principal expresses the philosophy of his school this way: "We don't focus on what we can't do at this school. We focus on what we can do, and we do whatever it takes to get kids across the finish line." See, this principal is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And that is the spirit of our education reform and the commitment of our country: *No dejaremos a ningun nino atras.* We will leave no child behind.

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

We are making progress—we are making progress, and there is more to do. In this time of change, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only about one in four students gets there. In our high schools, we will fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We will place a new focus on math and science. As we make progress, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

America's children must also have a healthy start in life. In a new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for the Government's health insurance programs. We will not allow a lack of attention or information to stand between these children and the health care they need.

Anyone who wants more details on my agenda can find them online. The web address is not very imaginative, but it's easy to remember: georgewbush.com.

These changing times can be exciting times of expanded opportunity. And here, you face a choice. My opponent's policies are dramatically different from ours. Senator Kerry opposed Medicare reform and health savings accounts. After supporting my education reforms, he now wants to dilute them. He opposes legal and medical liability reform. He opposed reducing the marriage penalty, opposed doubling the child credit, opposed lowering income taxes for all who pay them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Wait a minute—wait a minute. To be fair, there are some things my opponent is for. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than $2 trillion in Federal spending so far, and that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. And to pay for that spending, he's running on a platform of increasing taxes, and that's the kind of promise a politician usually keeps. [*Laughter*]

His tax—his policies of tax and spend, of expanding Government rather than expanding opportunity, are the politics of the past. We are on the path to the future, and we're not turning back.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In this world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, the institutions that give our lives meaning and purpose. Our society rests on a foundation of responsibility and character and family commitment.

Because family and work are sources of stability and dignity, I support welfare reform that strengthens family and requires work. Because a caring society will value

its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges, and I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent recently announced that he is the conservative—the candidate of "conservative values"—must have come as a surprise to a lot of his supporters. [*Laughter*] There's some problems with this claim. If you say the heart and soul of America is found in Hollywood, I'm afraid you are not the candidate of conservative values. If you voted against the bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act, which President Clinton signed, you are not the candidate of conservative values. If you gave a speech, as my opponent did, calling the Reagan Presidency 8 years of "moral darkness," then you may be a lot of things, but the candidate of conservative values is not one of them.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism, and you know where I stand. Three days after September the 11th, I stood where Americans died, in the ruins of the Twin Towers. Workers in hardhats were shouting to me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So we have fought the terrorists across the Earth—not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We have tripled funding for homeland security and trained a half a million first-responders, because we are determined to protect our homeland. We are transforming our military and reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We are staying on the offensive, striking terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And we are working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East, because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all want. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Today, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led; many have joined; and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must and we will confront threats to America before it is too late.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. Members of both political parties, including——

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Members of both political parties, including my opponent and his runningmate, saw the threat and voted to authorize the use of force. We went to the United Nations Security Council, which passed a unanimous resolution demanding the dictator disarm or face serious consequences. Leaders in the Middle East urged him to comply. After more than a decade of diplomacy, we gave Saddam Hussein another chance, a final chance, to meet his responsibilities to the civilized world. He again refused, and I faced the kind of decision that comes only to the Oval Office, a decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted to defend our country, the murderous regimes of Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are history, more than 50 million people have been liberated, and democracy is coming to the broader Middle East. In Afghanistan, terrorists have done everything they can to intimidate people, yet more than 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential election, a resounding endorsement for democracy. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a national council, and national elections are scheduled for January. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

As importantly, we are serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear: We will help new leaders to train their armies and move toward elections and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

Our troops know the historic importance of our work. One Army specialist wrote home: "We are transforming a once sick society into a hopeful place." "The various terrorist enemies we are facing in Iraq," he continued, "are really aiming at you back in the United States. This is a test of will for our country. We soldiers of yours are doing great and scoring victories and confronting the evil terrorists."

That young man is right. Our men and women in uniform are doing a superb job for America. Tonight I want to speak to all of them and to their families: You are involved in a struggle of historic proportion. Because of your service and sacrifice, we are defeating the terrorists where they live and plan, and you're making America safer. Because of you, women in Afghanistan are no longer shot in a sports stadium. Because of you, the people of Iraq no longer fear being executed and left in mass graves. Because of you, the world is more just and will be more peaceful. We owe you our thanks, and we owe you something more. We will give you all the resources, all the tools, and all the support you need for victory.

Again, my opponent and I have different approaches. I proposed and the Congress overwhelmingly passed $87 billion in funding needed by our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. My opponent and his runningmate voted against this money for bullets and fuel and vehicles and body armor.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain his vote, the Senator said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Then he said he was proud of that vote. Then, when pressed, he said it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Our allies also know the historic importance of our work. About 40 nations stand beside us in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. I deeply appreciate the courage and wise counsel of leaders like Prime Minister Howard, President Kwasniewski, Prime Minister Berlusconi, and, of course, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Again, my opponent takes a different approach. In the midst of war, he has called American allies, quote, "a coalition of the coerced and the bribed." That would be nations like Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, El Salvador, Australia, and others, allies that deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician. I respect every soldier from every country who serves beside us in the hard work of history. America is grateful, and America will not forget.

The people we have freed won't forget either. Not long ago, seven Iraqi men came to see me in the Oval Office. They had X's branded into their foreheads, and their right hands had been cut off by Saddam Hussein's secret police, the sadistic punishment for imaginary crimes. During our emotional visit, one of the Iraqi men used his new prosthetic hand to slowly write out, in Arabic, a prayer for God to bless America. I am proud that our country remains the hope of the oppressed and the greatest force for good on this Earth.

Others understand the historic importance of our work. The terrorists know. They know that a vibrant, successful democracy at the heart of the Middle East will discredit their radical ideology of hate. They know that men and women with hope and purpose and dignity do not strap bombs on their bodies and kill the innocent. The terrorists are fighting freedom with all their cunning and cruelty because freedom is their greatest fear. And they should be afraid, because freedom is on the march.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. As the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq seize the moment, their example will send a message of hope throughout a vital region. Palestinians will hear the message that democracy and reform are within their reach, and so is peace with our good friend Israel. Young women across the Middle East will hear the message that their day of equality and justice is coming. Young men will hear the message that national progress and dignity are found in liberty, not tyranny and terror. Reformers and political prisoners and exiles will hear the message that their dream of freedom cannot be denied forever. And as freedom advances, heart by heart and nation by nation, America will be more secure and the world more peaceful.

America has done this kind of work before, and there have always been doubters. In 1946, 18 months after the fall of Berlin to Allied forces, a journalist in the New York Times wrote this: "Germany is a land in an acute stage of economic, political, and moral crisis. European capitals are frightened. In every military headquarters, one meets alarmed officials doing their utmost to deal with the consequences of the occupation policy that they admit has failed." End quote. Maybe that same person is still around, writing editorials. Fortunately, we had a resolute President named Truman who, with the American people, persevered, knowing that a new democracy at the center of Europe would lead to stability and peace. And because that generation of Americans held firm in the cause of liberty, we live in a better and safer world today.

The progress we and our friends and allies seek in the broader Middle East will

not come easily or all at once. Yet Americans, of all people, should never be surprised by the power of liberty to transform lives and nations. That power brought settlers on perilous journeys, inspired colonies to rebellion, ended the sin of slavery, and set our Nation against the tyrannies of the 20th century. We were honored to aid the rise of democracy in Germany and Japan and Nicaragua and Central Europe and the Baltics, and that noble story goes on. I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom in a new century. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; it is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

This moment in the life of our country will be remembered. Generations will know if we kept our faith and kept our word. Generations will know if we seized this moment and used it to build a future of safety and peace. The freedom of many and the future security of our Nation now depend on us. And tonight, my fellow Americans, I ask you to stand with me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In the last 4 years, you and I have come to know each other. Even when we don't agree, at least you know what I believe and where I stand. You may have noticed I have a few flaws too. People sometimes have to correct my English. [*Laughter*] I knew I had a problem when Arnold Schwarzenegger started doing it. [*Laughter*] Some folks look at me and see a certain swagger, which in Texas is called walking. [*Laughter*] Now and then I come across as a little too blunt, and for that we can all thank the white-haired lady sitting right up there. [*Laughter*]

One thing I have learned about the Presidency is that whatever shortcomings you have, people are going to notice them—[*laughter*]—and whatever strengths you have, you're going to need them. These 4 years have brought moments I could not foresee and will not forget. I've tried to comfort Americans who lost the most on September the 11th, people who showed me a picture or told me a story so I would know how much was taken from them. I've learned firsthand that ordering Americans into battle is the hardest decision, even when it is right. I have returned the salute of wounded soldiers, some with a very tough road ahead, who say they were just doing their job. I've held the children of the fallen, who are told their dad or mom is a hero but would rather just have their mom or dad. I've met with the parents and wives and husbands who have received a folded flag and said a final goodbye to a soldier they loved.

I am awed that so many have used those meetings to say that I'm in their prayers and to offer encouragement to me. Where does that—strength like that come from? How can people so burdened with sorrow also feel such pride? It is because they know their loved one was last seen doing good, because they know that liberty was precious to the one they lost. And in those military families, I have seen the character of a great nation, decent, idealistic, and strong.

The world saw that spirit 3 miles from here when the people of this city faced peril together and lifted a flag over the ruins and defied the enemy with their courage. My fellow Americans, for as long as our country stands, people will look to the resurrection of New York City and they will say, "Here buildings fell. Here a nation rose."

We see America's character in our military, which finds a way or makes one. We see it in our veterans, who are supporting military families in their days of worry. We see it in our young people, who have found heroes once again. We see that character in workers and entrepreneurs, who are renewing our economy with their effort and

optimism. And all of this has confirmed one belief beyond doubt: Having come this far, our tested and confident Nation can achieve anything.

To everything we know there is a season, a time for sadness, a time for struggle, a time for rebuilding. And now we have reached a time for hope. This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting liberty abroad, we will build a safer world. By encouraging liberty at home, we will build a more hopeful America. Like generations before us, we have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom. This is the everlasting dream of America, and tonight, in this place, that dream is renewed. Now we go forward, grateful for our freedom, faithful to our cause, and confident in the future of the greatest nation on Earth.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 p.m. at Madison Square Garden. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California.

Remarks in Moosic, Pennsylvania
September 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thank you for coming. I appreciate so many people getting up so early. Laura and I are here to ask for the vote. We're here to let you know that I understand there's more to do to make this country a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every American. So we're here; we're pleased to be in Lackawanna County in this beautiful setting. Thanks for having us.

Before I begin, I do—I do know you'll join me in offering our prayers and best wishes to those in the path of the Hurricane Frances. There's been some devastation in the State of Florida. There's likely to be more devastation. And so I've ordered Federal teams to be in position to help the good people of that State, but the best thing we can do here is to offer our prayers.

Audience member. I can't hear you! [*Laughter*]

The President. Maybe it's because I gave—maybe it's because I talked too much last night, you know. [*Laughter*] I enjoyed giving that speech last night, and I am so proud that your State made my nomination official. And with your help, your State of Pennsylvania will be a significant reason we are reelected for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Laura set the bar pretty high when she gave her speech at the convention. She is—what a great First Lady, a wonderful mom, a terrific wife. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He doesn't have the longest and prettiest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him for his judgment, experience, and because he can get the job done.

I appreciate the fact that Senator Arlen Specter is with us today. Put him back in

for 6 more years in the Senate. Look who is next to him, Rick Santorum, United States Senator. Congressman Don Sherwood is here as well. I appreciate you being here, Congressman—good man.

Mayor Lou Barletta is with us from Hazelton, Pennsylvania. Hey, Lou, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate David Wenzel, the former mayor of Scranton, who is with us here today. David, thank you for coming. My friend Bill Scranton is with us here. I appreciate him coming. I want to thank all the candidates who are here.

I want to thank my friend Mark Chesnutt. He's great, isn't he? Bubba Shot the Jukebox. He's from Beaumont, Texas, and I appreciate him lending his talent to come. I hope you enjoy him as much as I—I love his music.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and encourage people to register to vote. See, I think we have a duty in this country to vote. In a free land, we have a duty to vote. And I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. Register Republicans, register independents, register discerning Democrats—like Zell Miller of Georgia, he's a discerning Democrat—and then kind of head them to the poll. And when you get them there, remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, we're coming down the stretch in this race. We got less than 2 months to go. And this is a historic national election. It's a time for choosing. It's going to come down to the records we've built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. Over the next 2 months, I'm looking forward to traveling our country, telling people where I intend to lead our country, and telling people what I believe.

I believe every child can learn in America, and then I believe every school must teach. That's why we passed important education reform that challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations, that says we must measure to determine whether a child can read, and if not, correct problems early before they're too late; that says that local folks ought to be in charge of the schools. It's a plan—we're making good progress across this country, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to our seniors. That's why I've worked with Republicans and Democrats to strengthen Medicare. Our seniors now get help buying medicine, and soon every senior will be able to have coverage for prescription drugs. It doesn't make any sense to pay $100,000 for heart surgery and not pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. We're making progress in honoring our commitment to our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe the role of Government is not to try to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur, the small business, the farmer, and the rancher can survive. I believe in the spirit and innovative power of the American worker, and that is why we unleashed the energy of our economy with the largest tax relief in decades.

Because we acted, our economy is growing again. Because we acted, we've overcome recession, scandal, stock market decline, and a terrorist attack. This morning, we received jobs report for August, and it shows that our economy is strong and getting stronger. We added 144,000 new jobs, plus revisions of about 60,000 for the previous month, which means we've increased jobs over the last 2 months by over 200,000 jobs. Overall, we've added about 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The unemployment rate is now down to 5.4 percent. That's nearly a full point below the rate last summer and below the average

of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Pennsylvania is 5.3 percent. Our growing economy is spreading prosperity and opportunity, and nothing will hold us back.

I will continue to travel our country telling people what I believe, and I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that says Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. As I travel this country, I know that this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win 4 more years.

Last night I spent time talking about how the world in which we live is changing. Women now work outside the home as well as work inside the home. Many people change jobs. It's a changing world, and the role of Government is to take the side of our workers and families in a time of change. Most of the fundamental systems of today, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to change those fundamental systems so more Americans can realize the great promise of our country.

My plan begins—any good plan begins with making sure our economy continues to grow. The global market is expanding and creating new markets and new competition. My view is, to create more jobs here in America, this has got to be the best place in the world to do business. That's why we will expand trade in a fair way. Look, we open up our markets, and it's good for you that we do. See, if you have more choices, you're likely to get a product you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying when it comes to trade to other countries is you treat us the way we treat you. We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the playing field is level.

But we've got to get rid of these junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. We've got to trim back needless regulations that make it hard for people to employ people. In order to make sure that the economy expands, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low.

We have a difference in this campaign on low taxes. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion of new spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. And we're just coming down the stretch. By the way, 2 trillion is a lot of money to promise, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. And now they said—so they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, I'll pay for it all by taxing the rich." Two things wrong with that: One is you can't raise enough money by so-called taxing the rich to pay for his promises, which means somebody else is going to get stuck with the bill. But the other thing is, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes, tax the rich. You know what that means. They dodge; you pay. But we're not going to let him, because we're going to win in November.

A drag in our economy is the Federal Tax Code, which is a complicated mess. You know, it is filled with special interest loopholes. Our people spend 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. The American people deserve and our economic future depends on a simpler, fairer, progrowth Tax Code. In a second term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal taxes.

I'll tell you what else we need to do. We need to help our workers train for the new jobs of the 21st century. In a changing world, the jobs change, and oftentimes, there's a skills gap. And so we're going to make sure our community college system works better for our workers. We're going to provide more money to help workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, and yet only about one in four of our students gets there. And so in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We will place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we will require exit exams from high school because we want the high school diploma to mean something. By raising performance in the high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

There's more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. More than one half of the uninsured in America are small-business employees and their families. In order to make sure small businesses can afford health care, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will help small businesses and low-income Americans set up and purchase health savings accounts. In a new term, I will ensure that every poor county in America has got community health centers to make sure that people get preventative and primary care, not in the emergency rooms of America but in these clinics for low-income Americans. In all we do, we'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patient, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I want to talk about a national issue that is of concern to millions here in Pennsylvania. Too many good doctors, too many really fine healers are being forced out of practice because of the high cost of junk lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. We want medical liability reform—now.

Let me give you a quick story about what I'm talking about. I'm telling you, this is a national problem that requires a national solution. And there is a clear difference in this campaign on this issue. Today I met with Dr. Neal Davis from Carbondale. [*Applause*] He told all his patients to come—[*laughter*]—and Mary Coar, one of his patients. I want you to hear this story because it's happening all across America.

Last November, after 15 years of practice in Pennsylvania, Dr. Davis learned that his insurance company would no longer insure physicians in this State because of the junk lawsuits, because the law system here in terms of medicine is like a lottery, is what it's like. It's unfair to patients, and it's unfair to doctors. It's unfair to taxpayers. He found a new policy, but it said he had to give up delivering babies as part of the coverage. That's what's happening to ob-gyns all across the country.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That forced Mary, 4 months pregnant, to start driving 50 miles each way to see different doctors—a different doctor. When Mary's daughter arrived this summer, she was delivered by a doctor Mary had never met. She said, "I started to cry when he told me he was going to have to stop delivering." This is happening because the legal system is gone awry. We need medical liability reform now.

Another priority for my administration in a new term will be an ownership society. See, I believe when you own something, your life is more secure; you have more dignity; and you have independence. And

so we'll help more people own their own homes, own their own health plan, and gain the confidence of owning a piece of their retirement. There's nothing better in America than somebody opening their door saying, "Welcome to my home." Today, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We will expand more homeownership over the next 4 years.

Listen, we will keep the promise of Social Security for baby boomers and older—I happen to be a baby boomer. But younger workers need to worry about the fiscal solvency of Social Security. We will strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, an account they can call their own, and an account that Government can never take away.

In a world of change, there are some things that won't change, the values we try to live by, the institutions that give our lives meaning and purpose. Because family and work are sources of stability and dignity, I support welfare reform that strengthen family and require work.

I support a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against those programs. I support marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

When he was campaigning out—I think it was in the Midwest, my opponent announced he was the candidate of "conservative values."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Which must have confused a lot of his supporters. [*Laughter*] See, if you say you're—if you say that the heart and soul of America is found in Hollywood, I'm not—I'm afraid you're not the candidate of conservative values. If you voted against a bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act, which my predecessor signed, you are not the candidate of conservative values. If you consistently vote against the rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment as my opponent has, you are not the candidate of conservative values. There is a clear difference of philosophy in this race. He is for expanding Government. I am for expanding opportunity.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, we have fought the terrorists across the globe, not for pride, not for power—because the security of our country depends on it. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. I want to thank you for helping raise Tom Ridge. He's doing a fine job in the Department of Homeland Security. We're transforming our military. We're reforming our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And we will continue to work to advance liberty—liberty in the broader Middle East—because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all want. If America stays strong and resolute and determined, we will prevail.

And our strategy is succeeding. We're making progress. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for the terrorist groups. Saudi was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a gathering threat, and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Now, after we acted, now after the United States led—and many have joined—the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror. Pakistan is capturing terrorists. Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests. Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. The army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom, and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's members and associates have been detained or killed.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

[*At this point, an audience member fainted.*]

The President. Get another doc. Get a doctor.

This progress involves careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must confront threats before they fully materialize. In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and came to the same conclusion. Saddam Hussein was a threat. My opponent, in 2002, looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and he came the same conclusion. See, he was one of the Members of Congress that voted to authorize the use of force because Saddam Hussein was a threat.

The last option for the Commander in Chief is to commit troops, and so I went to the United Nations. See, I believe we ought to try diplomacy before we commit troops. The United Nations passed a unanimous resolution demanding that Saddam Hussein disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. The free world spoke loud and clear. Yet Saddam Hussein, as he had for over a decade of diplomacy, ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors—or when the U.N. sent inspectors in, he systematically deceived the inspectors.

We gave Saddam Hussein a final chance to meet his responsibility to the civilized world. And when he refused, I faced the kind of decision that comes only to the Oval Office, a decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make. Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. Because we acted to defend our country, the murderous regimes of Saddam and the Taliban are history. More than 50 million people now live in freedom.

Democracy is on the march in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. You realize that over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Afghan Presidential elections. It's amazing, isn't it? Think about what life was like 3 years ago for the people of that country. They were run by a group of barbarians, and today, they're showing up in the thousands to exercise their right as free men and women.

In Iraq, there's a strong leader; there's a national council; and elections in that country are scheduled in January. See, our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

But as importantly, we're serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies do not export terror. Free societies do not feed the resentment of their people. Free governments will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them, and that helps keep America more secure and the world more peaceful. Our mission and goals in Afghanistan and Iraq are clear: We will help new leaders train their armies so the Iraq and the Afghan people can defend the freedom within their borders. We will get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

At bases across the country, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country. I've seen their decency and unselfish courage. I assure you, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. I am

proud of our military. They deserve—and I want to thank the vets who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear our uniform.

I made a commitment to our troops and their loved ones, they'll have all the resources they need to do their jobs. That's why I submitted a supplemental funding request to the Congress last September for $87 billion, money needed for fuel and spare parts and body armor and equipment, ammunition, hazard pay, health benefits, to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan, see. And that proposal received bipartisan support, strong bipartisan support, except for 12 Members from the United States Senate who voted against the funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those four are my runningmate and his opponent.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him how could he have done that. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, we've got some motorcycle drivers here? [*Applause*] Yes. I suspect you guys don't talk that way. They pressed him further, he said he was proud of his vote, and then he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter"—his words. Here are my words: There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We'll continue to work with nations around the world. We have some 40 nations in Afghanistan, nearly 30 in Iraq. These are strong, fine allies, who are making the same sacrifices we are to send their troops to secure the world and make the world more free. During the next 4 years, I'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom. You know, I spend time with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. He's a friend. Not all that long ago, though, his country was at war with us. Matter of fact, my dad, I'm sure your dad or granddad fought a bloody war against the Japanese. But because my predecessor Harry Truman and others believed in the power of liberty to transform lives and nations, after World War II, we worked with Japan to develop a democracy, and today I sit down at the same table with Prime Minister Koizumi to discuss the peace.

Liberty can change nations from enemies to friends. Liberty will change—liberty will help transform Iraq from tyranny to a free and just society. Some day an American leader will be sitting down at the table with an elected Iraqi leader, saying thank goodness this generation of Americans had great faith in the value of liberty, and they will be discussing the peace. I believe this because I know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

With the right leadership, this young century will be liberty's century. It will be a century of freedom. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. See, there are quiet times in the life of nation when little is expected of its leader. This is not one of those times. This is times where we need firm resolve and great faith in the values that make us a wonderful country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. As I mentioned last night, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September

the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there, yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was thanking—I was trying to thank people as best as I possibly could. I guy grabbed me by the arm. He looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Every day I wake up thinking about how better to protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

I am so proud so many came out today. Laura and I thank you for coming. When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made this pledge, that if you honored me with the great responsibility of serving the American people, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, we will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:35 a.m. at Lackawanna County Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to former Lt. Gov. Bill Scranton of Pennsylvania; entertainer Mark Chesnutt; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in West Allis, Wisconsin
September 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I've got the vision, the desire to lead this country for 4 more years. I want to thank you all for coming. Before I thank you for the work you're going to do and before I talk to you about why I want to be your President for 4 more years, I do want to address several situations in the news that call for our concern and prayers.

En route here we just received news that President Clinton has been hospitalized in New York. He is in our thoughts and prayers. We send him our best wishes for a swift and speedy recovery.

In Florida, our citizens are bracing for yet another hurricane. Many people there are being displaced from their homes. The Federal Government stands ready to help the people of Florida in any way we can, and the people there need to know all America is praying for their safety.

And finally, in Russia, hundreds of agonized parents are worried about the fate of their children. This is yet another grim reminder of the lengths to which terrorists will go to threaten the civilized world. We mourn the innocent lives that have been lost. We stand with the people of Russia. We send them our prayers in this terrible situation.

And finally, I'm here to thank you for your help, thank you for registering people to vote, thank you for working hard. There is no doubt in my mind, we will carry Wisconsin and carry this country.

We love coming to Wisconsin. It's the home of some really fine people. It's a beautiful State, and you play great football. You know, it's traditional when politicians come to your State that they talk about the Packers. And I understand my opponent did it the other day, and he even mentioned the legendary stadium in Green Bay. [*Laughter*] Listen, I've got some advice for him: If someone offers you a cheesehead, don't say you want some wine. [*Laughter*] Just put it on your head and take a seat at Lambeau Field.

I'm going to give you some reasons to put me in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. Man, she gave a great speech. You know, when I asked her to marry me, it was in Midland, Texas. She said, "I'll marry you so long as I don't ever have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay," but fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. The country got to see that she is calm, steady, compassionate, and a great First Lady.

I want to thank—the other night I had a chance to thank publicly my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine man. You know, I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race. I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and his ability to get the job done.

I want to thank three Members of the United States Congress from Wisconsin who are here today. Jim Sensenbrenner, the chairman, is with us today—appreciate you. Tom Petri is with us today. Congressman, thank you for coming. And Congressman Mark Green is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Mark.

I want to thank my friend Scott Walker, who is here today. If he plays his cards right, they may just start calling him "W." I appreciate Mary Panzer and John Gard. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here.

I want to thank the Democrats for Bush national cochairman, who is with us, Brian Lunde. You know, Brian and Zell Miller—they're leading—they're on to something. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of discerning Democrats who understand that 4 more years will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And this campaign welcomes all Democrats and independents. Our vision includes everybody. Our message is for every single citizen in this country.

I appreciate my friend Jim Klauser and all the grassroots activists who are here. Thanks for putting up the signs. Thanks for making the phone calls. Thanks for registering the voters, and thank you for turning out our voters, come November, to the polls.

I am honored that Greg Gracz is with us today. He is the president of the Milwaukee Professional Firefighters Association, Local 215. I received the endorsement from 215 and the firefighters. I proudly accept your support. Bradley DeBraska is with us. He is the president of the Milwaukee Police Association. I thank them for their endorsement as well. I am proud to stand with the police and firefighters of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

I want to, finally, thank West Allis Central High School band. Thank you all for coming.

Listen, we're approaching an historic national election. The time for choosing is coming close. This election will come down to the records we have built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm looking forward because I understand a Presidential contest is a contest for the future. Over the next 2 months, I will tell you where I stand. I'm going to tell you where I'm going to lead this country. I'll tell you what I believe.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors. That is why we strengthened Medicare. And one of the most important partners I had in accomplishing this political promise I made to the American people was Tommy Thompson, the great former Governor of Wisconsin. He's a good one. He's a great member of my Cabinet and a very close friend. Thanks for training him. [*Laughter*]

I believe now, and I will believe forever, in the energy and innovative spirit of the American worker, the American small-business owner, the American farmer and

rancher. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

We have overcome a recession, corporate scandals, a terrorist attack. Our economy is growing, and it is getting stronger. This morning, we received the jobs report for August, and it shows that our economy has added 144,000 new jobs, plus revisions of upwards of 60,000 for the two previous months. We gained 22,000 manufacturing jobs last month. The national unemployment rate is down to 5.4 percent. That is nearly a full point below the rate last summer and well below the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 4.7 percent.

By supporting our small-business owners, our entrepreneurs, and our workers, the economy of Wisconsin is strong, and it is getting stronger.

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative agenda that says Government should help people improve their lives, not give people orders on how to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to retain the White House in November of '04.

This world of ours is changing. I want you to know I understand that. We're changing jobs. Many people have many careers and jobs during their lifetime. That's not the way it used to be. Women are now working inside the house and outside the house. The workforce is changing. And it's a time of great opportunity here in America, but Government must stand side by side with the American people during times of change.

I want you to hear this. Many of the fundamental systems of our society, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In order to make sure that the American people have a chance to realize their dreams, we must change these fundamental systems to enable people to better realize their own hopes and aspirations. Any plan begins with making sure this economy stays strong, and my plan does that. See, to create more jobs in America, we must have an atmosphere in which America is the best place in the world to do business.

That means we must have an energy policy in this country. I submitted a plan to the Congress 2 years ago that encouraged conservation, encouraged the development of renewable sources of energy, encouraged clean coal technology, encouraged using our resources at home more wisely. In order to keep jobs in America, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We open up our markets from goods and services from overseas. They need to open up their markets. The best trade policy is to create a level playing field, because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, as long as the rules are fair.

To keep jobs here, we must reduce the regulations on our small businesses. We must get rid of these frivolous and junk lawsuits that are making it hard on employers. We must be wise about how we spend your money, and we must keep your taxes low. We have a difference in this campaign. My opponent already has promised $2 trillion of new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. And we've still got the rest of September and October to go. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it? How are you going to pay for all these promises?" He said, "Oh, don't worry, I'll just tax the rich."

You've heard that before, haven't you? You know how that works. The rich dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November.

One of the systems that needs to be changed is our Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It is full of special interest loopholes. We spend about 6 billion hours to try to fill out forms. In a second term, I will call together Republicans and Democrats to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Our worker training programs need to be updated and modernized. Listen, there are new jobs being created, but oftentimes, workers don't have the skills to meet those jobs. There's a skills gap. We will close that gap by making sure the worker training programs work, by expanding access to community colleges, by giving our workers a chance to be able to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In order to make sure that people realize their dreams here in America, we got to make sure our education system works well. Listen, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet, in this country, only one in four students gets there. We can do a better job than that. We'll fund early intervention programs in high schools to make sure children don't get discouraged and fall behind. We'll place a new focus on math and science. We'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. What I'm telling you is, by raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their careers with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we must do more to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured in America are small-business employees. Many small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts big companies get.

Last night I proposed new steps to encourage small businesses and employees and low-income Americans to set up health savings accounts. These accounts give workers the security of insurance against major illness, the opportunity to save tax-free for routine health expenses, and the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you whenever you change jobs. Under my plan, small businesses will receive a rebate when they contribute to their employees' health savings accounts.

I met with Judy Geiger today. She is a small-business owner. She is from Cudahy. She used to provide her employees a PPO. The rising cost of premiums made her change. Last month she signed up for a health savings account. She's saving about $300 a month on her personal premiums and $2,000 a month on the premiums for her employees. Here's what she said. She said, "It's wonderful to have this opportunity for our people." What I'm telling you is, there are ways to hold down costs, ways to help small businesses, ways to make sure people have got insurance. And we have got a plan to do that.

A big problem in America is the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine and running docs out of business. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

I'm for an ownership society because I know in changing times, if you own something, it brings stability to your life. You know, one of the most fantastic statistics today is the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We'll continue to promote homeownership. As I said last night, there's nothing better than somebody opening their door and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

Our retirement systems must change with the times. If you're a baby boomer,

Social Security is just fine. If you're older than being a baby boomer, you're in great shape. Nothing is going to change. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen carefully to the debate in this campaign. I believe younger workers ought to be able to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg they can call their own. A clear difference in philosophy in this campaign—if you listen carefully, you'll understand my opponent is running to expand Government. We're running to expand opportunity.

In a world of change, some things don't change: the values that we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity; the institutions which are important to our society, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. Because family and work are sources of dignity and stability, I support welfare reform that strengthens family and requires work. I support a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We strongly support the religious charities that are providing hope to millions. Government should never discriminate against faith-based programs. We support family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorist across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we're working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East, because we know freedom will bring hope and peace, the peace we all want. Our strategy is working. Just remember this: Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, because we were resolute and strong and firm, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom. And more than three-quarters—three-quarters—of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led, many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest one of all was in Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. Terrorist organizations were in and out of his country, people like Zarqawi and his network or Abu Nidal and his network. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, this Nation must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I did, remembered the same history of Saddam, and they saw a threat. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence, and when asked to vote on a resolution that authorized the use of force, he voted "aye."

The last choice of the Commander in Chief is to put troops in harm's way. So I felt it was important to try diplomacy. I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence, and the United Nations Security Council

resolved—unanimously resolved—that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The world had spoken, but as he had for over a decade, he ignored this resolution as well as over 10 resolutions. He had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he deceived the inspectors that were going in to try to get him to adhere to the demands of the free world. We had given him a choice, a final choice. It was his decision to make, and he clearly made his decision. So I had a choice to make: Trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend the country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted, because we took action to defend ourselves, more than 50 million people have been liberated. I like to tell people these are historic times. I truly believe they are. One reason I say that is because I've seen what's happened in Afghanistan. This is a country that has gone from darkness to light, a country where the Taliban wouldn't even let young girls go to school. They'd whip their mothers in the public squares or kill them because of their beliefs. They were backward, and they were wrong. And yet today—yet today, 3 years after the liberation, 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote.

Freedom is powerful. In Iraq, there's a strong Prime Minister, a national council. National elections in that country are scheduled for January. Our strategy is clear. We will stand with the people to help them start their political process. We will train Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens so they can defend themselves against the few who are trying to stop the march of liberty. Our troops will stay there as long as necessary to finish the mission, and they will come home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great United States military. I want to thank all the veterans who have set such a fine example for those who wear our uniform. I have made a commitment to our troops and their families. They will have all the support they need from the Federal Government to complete their mission. That is why I went to the Congress last September and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support them in their missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. This money was for fuel and spare parts, ammunition, hazard pay, health benefits. It was a vital funding request. We got great support. As a matter of fact, all but 12 United States Senators voted to support the funding. Two of those who voted against it were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, "Why did you vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That's what he said.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Then he said he's proud of his vote, and then he said the whole thing was a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

During the next 4 years, I'll continue to build alliances. You know, there's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations in Iraq. I'm proud of their service to the cause of freedom and peace. We'll continue to build those alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've seen it happen throughout history, and so have you. We've seen nations in our own hemisphere become free

nations and allies in the sake of peace. Our parents' generation saw the transformational power of liberty when, after World War II, Japan, because we believed in democracy, Japan became a friend. You know, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi and discuss North Korea and other issues, on how to keep the peace. I'm able to do so because my predecessor and other citizens of this great country believed that liberty could convert an enemy into a friend.

There was a lot of cynics and doubters in those days. You can understand why. Japan was a fierce enemy. I mean, people couldn't envision how liberty could transform a society. But there were fellow countrypeople of ours who did believe that then. And today we sit down with an enemy and talk about the peace. See, that's what's taking place. Liberty is powerful. Someday an American President is going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about keeping the peace, talking about—[*applause*].

A free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will set powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Women who long for freedom in the Middle East will see examples of a free society in their neighborhood. Young men will realize a free society is one in which they can realize their hopes and aspirations; they don't have to strap suicide belts on. Freedom is powerful. I'll tell you why I believe so strongly in freedom. I understand it's not America's gift to the world; it's the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I believe we're living in a century that will be called the century of liberty. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work hard for the American people to reform those institutions that need to change to make you more free. We'll spread ownership to every corner of this country. Opportunity will abound. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We'll be steadfast in our pursuit of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and an unshakeable belief in the values that make us a great country.

When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made a pledge to you. I said if I was honored to be able to hold this great office, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, for 4 more years I will continue to uphold the honor and the dignity of the White House.

God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:38 p.m. at the Wisconsin Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker; Wisconsin State Senator Mary E. Panzer; Wisconsin State Representative John Gard; James R. Klauser, chair, Wisconsin Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
September 3, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. What a spectacular day. Thank you all for being here. It's great to be in the land of kind people and tall corn. Laura and I are proud to be here. We started early this morning in Pennsylvania, then went to Wisconsin. We're ending our day in this beautiful and important State. You might remember it's the State that started me on the way to the nomination 4 years ago.

We have a—we've got a real soft spot in our heart for Iowa. It's going to be even softer—with your help, we're going to carry Iowa this November. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe you got to get out and tell the people what you believe and ask for their help, and I'm here to ask for it.

And I'm thrilled to be traveling with Laura. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in there, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is a—he's a fine guy. You know, it's pretty clear he wasn't the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] It's not why I picked him. I picked him because of his experience, his steady judgment, and because he can get the job done.

I'm proud to be standing up here with Chuck Grassley. He's a great United States Senator. Every time I talk to him he says, "Remember Iowa." You're lucky to have him in the Senate, and I hope you keep him there. I'm proud also to be here with your Congressman, Jim Leach. He's a fine, honorable, decent citizen of the State of Iowa, and I'm proud to call him friend.

I appreciate all the statehouse people who are here, the local officials who are here. I want to thank Majority Leader Chuck Gipp for being here.

I want to thank my friend Dave Roederer, who is the statewide chairman for this campaign here. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who are going to put up the signs, make the phone calls, and register your friends and neighbors to vote.

We have a duty to vote in this country, and as you get out to register friends, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats. You might remember Zell Miller. There's a lot of folks like Zell who understand, with 4 more years this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

We are approaching an historic national election, and the time for choosing is almost here. This election will come down to the records we have built, the convictions that we hold, and the visions that guide us. I look forward to campaigning in Iowa a lot. I look forward to coming—I'll tell you where I stand. I'll tell you what I believe, and I'll tell you where I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe that every child can learn, and I know that every school must teach. Because we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations, because we've raised the bar, because we believe we ought to measure so we can solve problems early, before it's too late, we're closing an achievement gap in America, and nothing will hold us back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors with good health care. And I appreciate working with Chairman Chuck Grassley on strengthening Medicare. It made no sense to have a Medicare system where the Government would pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. Beginning in 2006,

seniors will have prescription drug coverage. Rural hospitals in Iowa will now be taken care of. We're not turning back.

I believe strongly in the innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. We have been through a lot together in this economy. We've been through a recession, corporate scandals, and an attack on our country which cost us dearly. But because we acted, this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

This morning, we received the jobs report for August. It shows that our economy has added 144,000 new jobs, plus revisions upwards of about 60,000 for the previous 2 months. We've added 22,000 manufacturing jobs last month. We've added over 1.7 million jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 4.4 percent. This economy is strong. The farm economy is strong, and we intend to keep it that way.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The world in which we are living is changing. Just think about what's happened after a generation. Most people had one job for their entire career, and most of those people were men. Today, women make up a significant portion of the workplace. They work inside the home and outside the home. And yet, most of our fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so, to make sure that citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices, we will transform these systems to make our country a better place.

Any plan has got to begin with making sure that we have a growing economy. This global market is expanding. It's creating new markets and new competitions. To make sure that we have jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To make sure jobs are here in America and this economy continues to grow, Congress needs to pass a sound energy plan and get it to my desk, an energy plan that says we'll encourage conservation, that we'll have clean coal technology, that we'll be wise about how we explore for resources here at home, but an energy plan as well that understands the great promise of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. In order to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to get rid of the needless regulations that harm our small businesses, and we need tort reform so people can keep their doors open. To have jobs here in America, we need a level playing field when it comes to trade. We opened up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. You see, when you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying to the world is, "You treat us the way we treat you." You see, we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair.

And one reason this economy is strong in Iowa is because we're selling Iowa farm products all around the world.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here in America, we need to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. It would be a big mistake to run up the taxes on the American people. To keep the economy strong, we've got to keep your taxes low.

I tell you, we've got an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has thus far promised $2 trillion in new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, we've still got a couple of months to go. [*Laughter*] It's awfully tempting out there to tell people what they want to hear, particularly when it comes to spending your money. So they said, "How are you going to pay for all that money—all that spending?" He said, "That's simple. I'm just going to tax the rich."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes, we've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to support all his programs. Secondly, the rich figure out a way to dodge it, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

A drag on our economy is the Tax Code, which is a complicated mess. It is filled with special interest loopholes. Our people spend 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year on the Tax Code. The American people deserve better, and our economy needs a different Tax Code. So in a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

One way to make sure we've got jobs here is to make sure our worker training programs work. We're going to reform the WIA, the Workforce Investment Act. We'll make more money available to our community colleges to make sure we're able to match the workers with the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

To make sure people can cope in a changing world, we've got to make sure our kids get a great education. Most new jobs are filled by people with 2 years of college, yet only about one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance at our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to do more to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You see, more than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

I met with Marshall Petersen today. He runs—he and his family run Hawkeye Company. It's a small business here in Cedar Rapids. He said that the insurance costs have been rising rapidly over the next years—over the last years. He's worried about making premiums for his employees. He supports association health plans, the pooling efforts, because he believes his business can reduce costs. He said, "This is going to allow small businesses to have lower risk. It's going to allow me to retain quality employees." We must change our way of thinking about small-business insurance in America.

To help more Americans find affordable coverage, we'll offer tax credits to encourage small businesses, employees to set up health savings accounts. To make sure medicine is available to all, we will expand community and health centers all across the country. Every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. And to make sure health care is available

and affordable, we got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running your costs up.

We have a national problem when it comes to medical liability. I've talked to docs all over the country who are worried about staying in business, who are anxious about being able to practice their science of healing. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, in order to bring stability to people's lives, we must encourage an ownership society in America. One of the great statistics of the recent times has been the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. Think about that. The minority homeownership gap in America is closing. More and more of our fellow citizens are opening up the door to their home saying, "Welcome to my house."

Over the next 4 years, we'll expand homeownership in America. And to make sure that people have confidence in the future, we must allow younger workers to take some of their own tax money and set up personal savings accounts. We'll protect Society Security. Nothing is going to change, as a matter of fact, for older citizens and baby boomers like me, when it comes to Social Security. The fiscal solvency of this system is in question for younger workers. We must think differently. We must allow younger workers to build their own nest egg that they can call their own, that they can pass on to the next generation. Social Security reform needs to be strengthened now.

What I'm telling you is, we have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. My opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand freedom and opportunity for every American.

In a changing world, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, the institutions like family and marriage and religious congregations that give our society purpose. Because family and work are sources of stability and dignity, I support welfare reform that strengthens family and requires work. I support a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. Religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must support those charities. It must never discriminate against faith-based programs.

Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning, September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We're working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring the hope and the peace we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Today, because the United States and our friends

and allies acted with firm resolve, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. Because we have led, America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize. In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat.

I went to the United States Congress. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence I looked at, remembered the history of Saddam Hussein, and came to the came conclusion: He was a threat. And they authorized the use of force—one of whom was my opponent. He looked at the very same intelligence I looked at. He came to the same conclusion I came to, and when it came time to authorize the use of force, he voted yes.

The last option of a President is commit troops into combat. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would deal with this threat. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I did. They had a lengthy debate, and they came to a conclusion with a 15-to-nothing vote that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. The free world spoke again.

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. He was not about to disclose or disarm. As a matter of fact, when inspectors were sent into his country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make. I had to make a decision, a decision that only comes to the Oval Office, a decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, because we acted in our self-interest, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq have been liberated. Our world is changing. Freedom is on the march. Think about this. In Afghanistan it wasn't all that long ago that the people of that country were living in darkness under the rule of the Taliban, a barbaric group of people who wouldn't even let young girls go to school, who would whip their mothers in the public square because they weren't toeing the line completely. Today in Afghanistan, a brief period after the Taliban have been removed, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's an amazing statistic, isn't it? People love freedom around the world. Liberty is powerful.

In Iraq, the country now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. We're standing with the people in those countries. We're standing with them because they long for freedom, and we're standing with them because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

As importantly, we're serving a vital and historic cause. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps our Nation become more secure. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies. We'll help them stand up their own armies so they can defeat the few who are trying to hold back the demands and the desires of the many. We

will help those countries move toward elections and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

At bases across our country, I've had the high privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I have made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress and proposed $87 billion of funding for body armor and fuel and spare parts and ammunition, that which was necessary to help our troops in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We received great support for that initiative. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain why, you might remember he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." He then was asked—he said he's proud of his vote, and he just finally said, when pressed, it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We put together an alliance to help us. There's nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 nations in Iraq. I appreciate the contributions these countries are making. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies in the cause of freedom and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I'll tell you why I believe so strongly that societies can change: I've seen it firsthand. I've spent time at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's a friend. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. Yet it wasn't all that long ago, when you think about it, that our dads and grandfathers were at war with the Japanese in World War II. And yet here we are, sitting at a table, talking about the peace. Here we are, talking about how to deal with Kim Chong-il in North Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other troubled spots around the world. I doubt my conversations would be happening if Harry Truman and Americans right after World War II did not believe in the power of liberty to transform a society from one with which we were at war to one that we're now friends with.

Liberty can transform societies. One day, an American President will be sitting down with the duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. I've heard the skeptics and the doubters, but I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be the century of liberty. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to a new

generation. We will continue to lead the world to promote freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that needs firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. Workers in hardhats were screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I was doing my best to comfort those who had been in the rubble, and a guy grabbed me by the arm and he said, "Don't let me down." As I wake up every morning, I think about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote, and I made a pledge that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:28 p.m. at Noelridge Park. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Representative Chuck Gipp; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who gave the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in a Discussion in Broadview Heights, Ohio
September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Go ahead and be seated. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. I appreciate you coming today. Thank you. Okay, be seated. We got some work to do here. Thanks for coming. I've got an interesting way to describe to you how we're going to make America a safer world and a more hopeful world. And today I'm going to do so by talking to some of your citizens about some interesting ideas as to how to improve life throughout America, throughout Ohio, and throughout the Cleveland area. Then I'd like to take some of your questions, if we've got time. Then I've got to get back on the bus. [*Laughter*]

See, I'm out—I believe you have to go ask people for the vote, and that's what we're doing in Ohio again, asking people for the vote.

Before I begin, before I talk about issues that are on your mind, I do want to talk about something that's on my mind and, I know, on your mind as well. Today on our TV screens, last night on our TV screens, we saw the horror of terror in Russia. And I can just imagine the heartfelt anguish of the moms and dads of those Russian kids. Our prayers are with those families, and yesterday is a grim reminder of the nature of the terrorists we face. That is why this country must be strong and diligent, never yielding. We must bring them to justice before they harm us.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you'll never have to." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. What a fabulous speech she gave, and she's a—

you need to put me back in so she can have 4 more years as First Lady.

So I'm up there giving the speech, and I'm staring right at Janet Voinovich. What a comforting feeling that was. I appreciate George and Janet being here. Thank you all for coming. George Voinovich is a great United States Senator, and he needs to be reelected.

And then when I could tell Janet was tired of me looking at her, I switched over to Fran DeWine. She's not with us, but her great husband, Michael DeWine, the United States Senator from Ohio, is with us, and Alice, sweet Alice, Alice DeWine, a student at Miami University, Miami of Ohio. Alma mater, I want you to know, of my grandfather Marvin Pierce. You know, they always say politics is local. My grandfather Marvin Pierce went to Miami of Ohio. My other grandfather, Prescott Bush, was raised in Columbus, Ohio. You know, as I told them in Columbus the other day, "Why don't you put a home boy back in the White House."

Ralph Regula is with us, a great United States Congressman. Thank you for coming, Mr. Chairman. It's fitting we're here in a high school, and Ralph being here. He's a—he's got a lot to do with the Federal funding of schools. I really appreciate Steve Farnsworth, who is the superintendent of the Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School district. I want to thank Brian Wilch, who's the principal. If he thought bringing order to a high school with a bunch of high school kids was hard, he learned there's something harder, and that's welcoming a President. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your hard work; appreciate your hospitality.

Part of making sure America is a more hopeful place is to raise the standards in all schools, is to measure whether or not children are achieving those standards, is to correct problems early before it's too late, is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, is to trust local people to make decisions for their schools, and that's what we're doing. And schools are improving around America because of it.

Mayor Glenn Goodwin is with us. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Mayor Jerry Hruby is with us. I'm honored the two mayors are here. Where are they? Oh, thank you, Mayor. Thank you, Mayor. One time somebody said, "Did you ever give the mayor advice?" I said, "I did. Fill the potholes." [*Laughter*] Works every time. [*Laughter*]

Michael Hargrove—Mike, yes, thanks for coming. He's a—he's not going to believe I know this, but he's from Pampa, Texas. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right? Pampa, Texas, it's part of the panhandle. That's where they raise really fine people, good, solid, down-to-earth people who perform, and I appreciate Mike. He's a great baseball player for the Rangers. Thanks for coming.

In order to make sure America is a more hopeful place, we've got to make sure our economy grows. We've been through a lot in this economy. We've been through a recession. When you're out gathering people up for vote, remind them. If you've got the undecided person out there, just tell them the facts. The country has gone through a recession, went through corporate scandals which affected the confidence of our economy—the people in the country, which affects the economy. And we endured a terrorist attack, and that attack hurt our economy. In other words, there was great obstacles to growth, yet we're overcoming those obstacles today. The economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

One reason why it's strong and getting stronger is because we've got great workers. Another reason why is because the entrepreneurial spirit in America is alive and well. The small-business sector of our economy is really good. Our farm economy is strong. The ranchers are making a living. We're overcoming the obstacles. I also think one of the reasons why is because of tax relief.

We're going to talk to some people who have benefited from the tax relief, small-business owner and a family. They can tell the story better than I can. But the facts are real. This month—last month, we added 144,000 new jobs. People are getting back to work. And when you look at June and July and revise the numbers upwards like they did, it means 200,000 new jobs were added in the last monthly report, over 1.7 million new jobs added since August of '03. The economy is growing. I understand there's places in America where—that lag behind the national growth rate. Ohio has got pockets of unemployment that are unacceptable. But the unemployment rate nationally is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

We have got a plan to make sure that people who want a job can find one. The plan says that in order to keep jobs in America, we've got to keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the people right now would hurt the economic vitality and growth.

There's a difference of opinion in this campaign, by the way. [*Laughter*] My opponent has already promised $2 trillion of new spending, and we've still got a little ways to go in the campaign. [*Laughter*] It's awfully tempting out there to tell people what they want to hear, and there's no telling how much more he's going to promise. But they've asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry, we'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? You know what that means, "just tax the rich." First of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2 trillion of new spending. Second of all, the rich hire accountants for a reason. He's not going to be taxing anybody in '05, because he's not going to win. We're going to win Ohio, and we're going to win the country.

A couple of other things. The—so here's how you keep jobs here in America. You're wise about—we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. We've got to keep your taxes low.

Congress will get an energy plan to my desk that encourages conservation; that encourages the use of renewables such as ethanol, biodiesel; that explores for ways to make sure that we use technology to leapfrog the current problems we have, like hydrogen-powered automobiles; that works on clean coal technology; that says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan, though, that recognizes that we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want to keep jobs here in America.

Our vision of economic vitality and growth says, we'll cut down on needless regulations and we support legal reform. We believe that lawyers—we believe these lawsuits are making it hard for small businesses to keep their doors open.

We believe, in order to keep jobs here in America, that trade ought to be free and fair. In other words, we open our markets for products from overseas, and that's good for consumers. See, if a consumer has got more to choose from, he or she is more likely to get the product you want, at a price you want, and at the quality you demand. So the only fair thing to do is to say to other countries like China, "You treat us the way we treat you," and that's precisely what this administration is doing. We are holding them to account when it comes to trade laws. We're making sure that trade is fair. That's why I took the action I did on steel, and the steel plants are up and running here in the Cleveland area and all around the State of Ohio because of the firm action this administration took.

A couple of other points I want to make right quick, and then we'll start talking to some people here. In order to make sure jobs stay here, our health care systems have to work well. See, health care is costly, and I think the role of Government is to address the root causes of high cost. We

must allow small businesses to pool together, to pool risk together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do. And that's important. That's an important policy, because 50 percent of the uninsured in America work for small businesses. So if we can help small businesses address the cost of health care, it will help people get insurance.

Another thing we need to do is to make sure that we expand community health centers to every poor county in America. We want people, the low-income and the poor, to be able to get preventative health care in community health centers, not in emergency rooms in hospitals all over America.

Finally, in terms of health care, there's a lot of things we're going to do. We'll make sure the Medicare reforms we've got in place continue to work. Seniors, by the way, it makes no sense in old Medicare to say, "We'll pay for the hospitalization for a heart surgery and not pay for the prescription drugs that would have prevented the heart surgery from being needed in the first place." That's why we reformed and strengthened Medicare, so it worked on behalf of our seniors, and it made sense for American taxpayers.

Beginning in 2005, seniors will get free preventative screenings in Medicare. It never happened before. It's now happening because of our leadership, and I want to thank the Senators who are here and the Congressman who is here. You see, it makes sense to give seniors screening so you can detect problems early and begin to address them before they become acute. In 2006, seniors will have prescription drug coverage in Medicare. We went to Washington, DC, with the idea of solving problems. We have done the job when it comes to improving health care for our seniors.

Finally—one other point I want to make on health care, and if you got some other questions, I'll answer them. But listen, these frivolous lawsuits are running docs out of business and running the cost of medicine too high. This is a national problem. It's a national problem. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care because premiums are up, because doctors are being sued and they practice defensive medicine. The frivolous lawsuits hurt you as consumers. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC—now.

This is—there is a big difference on this issue in this campaign. There is a fundamental difference in this campaign. You cannot choose between being pro-doctor, pro-hospital, and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney. I mean, you have to choose. You can't be for both. You can't be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You've got to choose. My opponent chose, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice.

One of the things, we're living in changing times. That's one of the points I tried to make the other night. It's a very important part of this campaign. It's who recognizes the times we live in and who's got a plan to help America; it's not dictate to Americans but help Americans realize their dreams. The systems that we now live under, the Tax Code, the health care plans, the worker training programs, and the retirement programs, were all designed for yesterday, if you think about it. And what I told the American people Thursday night is, the next 4 years we'll design the systems for tomorrow to help people realize their dreams, and we're going to talk a little bit about that today.

They say, "What do you mean?" Well, take a look at Social Security. Social Security is solvent for boomers like me and old guys like Voinovich—[*laughter*]—older guys like Voinovich. [*Laughter*] If you're retired or near retirement, you have nothing to worry about in Social Security. But if you're a younger worker just getting started, you better listen carefully to the rhetoric of this campaign. See, I believe we ought to strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to take some of their own

tax money and set up a personal account that they can call their own.

It's a different attitude. It's a different way of looking at things, but it means the younger worker is going to get a better rate of return on the money. It means the younger worker will have a nest egg they can call their own. And it means the younger worker can take that nest egg and pass it on to another generation. It's a way to make sure Social Security fulfills its promise to the young people of America and encourage ownership at the same time.

I believe this country ought to set up opportunity zones. An opportunity zone says that if you've lost manufacturing jobs, if you've lost plants, if you've lost retail sales, you qualify. An opportunity zone is different from an empowerment zone. Empowerment zones are the old zones that said it just—all that matters is the poverty levels. We're saying that matters too—poverty levels count—but if you've been affected by the changing times, you ought to be allowed to set up an opportunity zone. Parts of Ohio will qualify. These are changing times. The job base is changing.

Here's what an opportunity zone means. It means that the local governments will come together and present a transition plan that says, "We're going to reduce regulation. We're going to create an environment for economic growth." And the Federal Government will provide significant tax relief to businesses that provide businesses in those opportunity zones, will direct Federal monies to community colleges, will help with housing money. In other words, it will be an intensive, holistic effort to address the fact that the economy is changing, and that's what I want to spend some time talking about, as well as working some other issues.

We've got a small-business owner, Frank Piunno, with us today. There he is. Get up here, Frank. Frank is a—he's an entrepreneur. That means he's a dreamer, that he creates jobs because he has got a start—he started his own business or owns his own business. By the way, there's nothing better than a society in which more and more people are saying, "I own my own business." That's why we believe in an ownership society in America.

Frank, tell us what you do.

Frank Piunno. My company is Marketing Communication Resource, and we do confidential data printing and mailing. We do things like your patient—hospital patient bills. We print and mail those. We personalize printing for universities. We do work in the manufacturing segment. We do pricebooks and catalogs, mostly confidential information, printing it.

The President. Good, good. How many employees you got?

Mr. Piunno. We have 20 employees, 2 of which are my sons.

The President. Really? Good. Well, they probably want us to make sure the death tax is gone forever. So did you add any employees this year?

Mr. Piunno. Yes, we've added three employees this year.

The President. Why—why have you added three employees?

Mr. Piunno. Well, we've been able to take advantage of the tax credits to invest in equipment. But we've also been able to keep equity in the business, which has allowed us to add people.

The President. Yes. Interesting, isn't it? One of the things that sometimes these numbers really don't reflect is the fact that the small-business sector is adding people. See, he's added three this year, and that happens all over the country. One of the things that you like to hear, if you're a fellow like me, is that the small-business sector is thriving because most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And when you hear Frank say, well, he's added three, that's good because there's a lot of Franks around adding 3 here, 10 there, 15 there. One of the other things—Frank is called an S corp. Right?

Mr. Piunno. Yes.

The President. That's a legal term. I'm not a lawyer either. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Piunno. Neither am I.

The President. That's why I said "either." See, here's something interesting about the tax relief we've provided that nobody—or very few people focus on, except for Frank. If you're an S corp or a sole proprietorship—these are legal terms for small businesses—you pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Most small businesses are S corps, like Frank's, and sole proprietorships. So when you heard us say we're going to reduce taxes on everybody who pays taxes, reduce the individual income-tax rates, nearly a million small businesses benefited because they got more—they've got more money in their coffers. The tax relief helped him. It gave him a different frame of mind—putting words in his mouth. I'm not even a lawyer. Anyway—[*laughter*]

So one of the things, when they say they're going to tax the rich, think about small businesses. That's what they're talking about. When they run up the top rate, they're affecting S corps and sole proprietorships. It would be bad for our economy to take money out of this guy's small business. He's growing. Just when he's beginning to add people, why would you want to tax him? It makes no economic sense to tax people like Frank.

What did you invest in?

Mr. Piunno. We—where? We invested in equipment, digital printing equipment, black equipment, and full-color equipment.

The President. See, he got extra tax benefits. We provided incentives for small businesses to invest. Why? Because most small businesses—most new jobs are created by small businesses. Secondly, when a company is investing, it means somebody has got to make the product that they're purchasing. So somebody has got to make this machine he bought. When we increase demand for goods and services through tax relief, the economy grows. Somebody has got to be working on the machine that he wants to purchase. More importantly, his workers become more productive, so they're more likely to keep a job.

Accurate?

Mr. Piunno. Yes.

The President. Good, yes. If this county is declared an opportunity zone, here's how Frank's business will benefit. First, because he's a small business, he'll receive additional tax savings. In other words, they'll say, "Here's more incentive to expand." Secondly, because he's a small business, he will receive more expensing allowance when it comes to purchasing equipment. Right now, the limit's at 100,000. We'll double the amount he can expense when he buys equipment. That will be helpful for this part of the world. Thirdly, the—he will get wage credit for hiring people who live in the opportunity zone. In other words, the opportunity zone says to a small business, "Stay here and expand, and there will be economic benefits if you do so." I'm pretty confident he would like this to be an opportunity zone here.

Mr. Piunno. Yes, I would.

The President. Yes. Well, it's got a very good chance of being one, because this part of the world is changing. That's what we're talking about. And so the question is, what do you do about it? And what we do about it is we create opportunities, new opportunities, by streamlining regulations and focusing tax relief to expand the job base in the community in which it has been affected. And a good way of doing that is to help the small-business owners around this part of the world. And that's what we're going to do.

Thanks, Frank. Good job.

Mr. Piunno. Thank you.

The President. Claire Rosacco. Claire Rosacco is the vice president of public affairs and information with——

Claire Rosacco. Cayahoga Community College.

The President. Cayahoga Community College. Tell us about your community college.

Ms. Rosacco. Cayahoga Community College, as I hope many of you are aware, we also call Tri-C. It's our nickname. And we are the largest and first——

The President. Kind of like W. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. We're the largest and first community college in the State of Ohio. We service all of northeast Ohio. And I'm excited to tell you about some new initiatives we have that we think will complement your opportunity zone. We started in this past year what we are calling corporate college, and I hope some of you have heard of corporate college. It's really—[*applause*]—thank you—it is to help all of us hone on our skills for professional development and upscaling our own skills as we go through this new knowledge-based economy.

The President. Yes, can I interrupt you? Sorry.

Ms. Rosacco. Sure.

The President. Obviously, can't stand to have her have the mike the whole time. [*Laughter*] Look, I just want to reflect on what she just said. Jobs change. This is a changing world. The worker training programs must reflect the fact we're in a changing world. Workers need new skills in order to fill the new jobs in a changing world. That's what she's saying.

Go on.

Ms. Rosacco. Thank you. [*Laughter*] We also believe that human development is one of the drivers to help us with economic development, and again, that is what you're getting back to. We work with small, medium, and large companies, and really, we are a lifelong learning institution, as many community colleges are around the country, and that's what makes them so fun to work with and to be a part of. As many of you know, we have child care centers, so we get the very young. We offer early childhood education. We offer traditional college for the associate's degree. And then we go on to job retraining and training, and we do certification programs. We're one of the largest certification programs in the allied health field in the country. We rank about eighth.

The President. One of the—you know, one of the most unsettling things that happens in a changing economy is a person says, "Oh, no, I don't have the skill set. The job that I can do has changed." It may have left. And Government has the responsibility to help ease those anxieties. And one of the ways to do so is to pay for a person going to community college to learn a new set of skills, and one of the—for example, the health care field she just mentioned, there's a lot of good, high-paying jobs in health care, but there's a skills gap. And the community college system is a great way to provide the skills necessary to fill those jobs.

I met a lot of people around the country who have lost a job, gone back to community college, and made more money after having got an associate's degree at a community college than they did in the last year of their previous job. In other words, skills raise productivity levels, and productivity levels means higher pay, and the community college system is a great place to do that.

I notice you're training people for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. Absolutely. We have——

The President. A couple of guitar players. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Rosacco. We support the guitar players. [*Laughter*] We have a great recording arts technology program that is phenomenal, and so we really do support that industry by teaching people all of the electronics that go along with, for instance, producing a CD or producing a video. And we are blessed, because we have some of the finest equipment that our students can work on if they would like to do that. And in fact, we had a student project last year where they produced their own CD with local Cleveland entertainers coming in, and we pressed their CD for them.

The President. Great. I appreciate you coming. But let me say one thing about how community colleges fit into an opportunity zone. There are streams of Federal money; a lot of it is grant driven, formula-driven grants. And a community college in an opportunity zone would be first in line for the money. In other words, there would be an intense focus on Federal funding.

When the strategy is in place, there will be a Federal Government effort, along with State and local governments, to focus resources to help a community which has been affected by changing times rise up and get back on its feet and become a viable, productive part of our national economy. And a community college system and the community college in that opportunity zone will play an integral role.

I want to thank you for coming. I want you to know that I believe community colleges are an integral part of helping people during changing times, and that's why we invited Claire here.

We've got a homebuilder with us today, Rob Myers. There he is. He's an entrepreneur. He's building homes. By the way, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. It is a hopeful statistic to be able to say, more people are opening up their own door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property," and we intend to keep it that way—we intend to keep it that way.

Tell us, you know, besides interest rates, tell us what else is on your mind when it comes to building homes. If you've got problems, what are they? If you don't have problems, sit down. [*Laughter*]

Rob Myers. Mr. President, we're about the most overregulated business there must be.

The President. Yes, see, people don't understand this about homebuilding.

Mr. Myers. Every city we work in has their own building code. It's different in every city. Every city requires that we file tax forms for every employee working in that city with that city. So if you've got 5 employees working in 10 different cities, that's 50 local tax forms we've got to fill out just to do one job. It's unbelievable.

The President. Yes. I presume the Federal Government might pile on a little bit too.

Mr. Myers. Well, I don't know how much time you've got here. [*Laughter*] The cost of land is more because the requirements to develop land are just getting higher and higher and higher as we're trying to deal with the paperwork, which is so vague that they can't even define things that are wetlands, which you'd think wetlands should be wet, but a drainage ditch is a wetland today.

The President. Yes. See, here's—what he's talking about is that we've become a regulatory society at all levels of government. And that damages not only the homebuilder, but really it really affects the homebuyer. If it's harder to build something, it makes the product more scarce, and therefore, price goes up. What we're trying to do is reduce price on homes. We want more homes to be built so people have a chance to realize their dream of ownership. And therefore, one of the advantages of an opportunity zone is we're going to say to local folks, "If you want to qualify for an opportunity zone to get priority in Federal funding and good tax relief, streamline your regulations."

In other words, before an application is accepted, they've got to listen to people like this good man, Frank—or Rob—Joe—[*laughter*]—Rob, so as to streamline regulations. It makes no sense if you're trying to revitalize a part of the country and the regulatory burden is so heavy that there can't be a plethora of affordable homes. So one of the reasons we asked this good man to come by was to be able to talk about homeownership but, as significantly, is to remind people about the burdens that stand in the way between the homebuilder and the homebuyer, and that's needless regulations at the local, State, and Federal level. Good job.

Joe Goletz. So one of the things that needs to change in a society where people change jobs is the concept of owning your own health care plan. It makes sense in a changing world for people to have a health care plan that they manage, that they own, and that they can take with them from job to job. It's a little different from the way the old health systems were set up, and so one of the things that we did in the Medicare bill was establish what's called health savings accounts. The principle of a health savings account is it says that an individual is in charge of his or her health decisions, that the decisions for health are made between doctor and patient, not by distant bureaucrats.

And so here's—we're going to talk to an owner of a health savings account. These are new. They're necessary. They're going to be really necessary to help small businesses afford health care, and let me let him describe to you how they work.

Joe Goletz. I'll do my best on that. Well, being a small-business owner—I started a business about 2 years ago. That's what caused me to look into other options, pooling with other small businesses, and the medical savings accounts that used to—that preceded the health savings accounts were out there at that time too. But knowing the new law that's coming down beginning the first of this year, we read through it, and it made a whole lot of sense. My wife is a stay-at-home mom with four young kids at home, so this is—this had to be a plan that could cover all of us.

The President. Right.

Mr. Goletz. And it does.

The President. Let me describe how it works, and then you can tell us whether it worked for you.

A health savings account says that somebody will purchase a catastrophic health care plan with a large deductible. So in other words, say it's got a $3,000 deductible associated with the plan, which is less costly than regular insurance, by the way. The family or the person will be covered from $3,000 and above with medical expenses. So the fundamental question is what happens between zero and 3,000. A health savings account says to a small-business owner, small-business employee, sole proprietorship, "You can put money in that aspect of your health savings account tax-free. You earn money within the health savings account tax-free. You can take money out for health reasons tax-free. And if you don't spend all you've got in your account, you roll it over to the next year tax-free." In other words, it says—[*applause*].

So he and his family have got a $5,000 deductible, zero to 5,000. He's responsible, in his case, for the money between zero and $5,000. In other words, if he goes to the doctor's office, he pays for it. If he buys a prescription drug, he pays for it. By the way, small businesses can set these up, and they can pay for their employees from zero to whatever the deductible is, to the top of the deductible.

Anyway, what was your—give us a sense of savings.

Mr. Goletz. Well, before the plan, we were paying roughly $700 a month for family coverage. And now, we're paying $225 a month. And——

The President. Well, he's saving $475 a month on his insurance, and he's out of pocket from zero to 5,000. But he's putting money in the account tax-free. It's earning money tax-free. And if they don't spend any money this year, it rolls over, so it's a savings account for health purposes. It's a way for somebody to say, "This is my health care plan. I own it for all my life, and I can pass it to my kids for their health care plans as well."

Go ahead.

Mr. Goletz. Just one more thing on that, too, is we didn't have to switch doctors. We were with Cleveland Clinic Doctors, and that was very important to us. And this plan allows us to stay there and do that, so our kids have the same pediatrician, and we have the same doctors. It's been a very good plan for us.

The President. Yes, see, and by the way, just to complete the story, because of the tax relief we passed, this family saved $2,900 in the year '03, and 2,900 in '04, to help him with those health care costs if they arise. Tax relief helps American families.

Thanks for coming.

Where are the Dotsons? Right here in front of me, Julie and Carl Dotson. They're—what do you do?

Carl Dotson. I'm a C&C machinist at Luke Incorporated in Wooster, Ohio.

The President. Fabulous. Julie?

Julie Dotson. I'm a stay-at-home mom.

The President. Very good.

Mrs. Dotson. We have two sons.

The President. Very good. Look at these little guys. The reason I've asked them to come is because a lot of times when we talk about tax relief, you just hear slogans and numbers. And I think it's important to put a face on tax relief so that the people who are deciding whether or not you're going to keep your taxes low actually hear what tax relief means for families.

The tax relief we passed, by the way, reduced all rates. We said, "Let's be fair about it. You pay taxes; you get relief," as opposed to playing politics with tax relief. But we also did some other things. We helped small businesses. We raised the child credit. If you're a mom or dad raising kids, raising the child credit helps. We reduced the marriage penalty. See, the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage.

How much money did you save?

Mrs. Dotson. We saved $2,000.

The President. Yes, see, that's probably not a lot for some of them in Washington. It's only got three zeroes attached to it. [*Laughter*] What did you do with it?

Mrs. Dotson. We used our money to upgrade and renovate our home, to upgrade our plumbing and also to remodel our boys' room to give them a desk and to make their room more conducive to doing their schoolwork.

The President. Yes, that's a good thing, isn't it, guys? You will do your schoolwork, and we're remodeling your room so you'll do so. Did you do the work yourself?

Mrs. Dotson. No, actually, we did part of it ourselves, but we also hired a plumbing contractor to do our plumbing.

The President. Yes, see, here's the way the economy works. We increase demand for a service. Tax relief caused these people to make a decision that enabled a plumbing contractor to find additional work. No telling whether the plumbing contractor needed to expand his job base because of your demand, but nevertheless, money starts moving. See, the role of Government, in my judgment, is to set priorities, fund those priorities, and let people keep as much money as we can, because you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can.

Okay, real quick. That bus is beginning to warm—I can smell its diesel fumes—[*laughter*]—and I've got a little more to say.

One thing, though, is that they're talking about permanency in the Tax Code. You might have heard me say it the other night—if we don't make the tax relief permanent, these people's taxes are going up, and that's a mistake. It affects their family. It affects their planning. It affects their comfort. It will also affect the economy. Congress needs to listen to people like these good folks and keep that tax relief that we passed permanent.

Before I answer some questions, I do want to talk about how to keep America safer. I just want to give you some principles on which I'm making decisions. First and foremost, you cannot negotiate with the enemy. These people are—you can't hope for the best with them. You cannot sit down and rationalize with them. That's not the way they are. These are people who have adopted an ideology of hatred and used terror to shake our will. They use terror as a tool to try to drive us out

of the world and stop the march for freedom. That's just the stakes of the world we live in, and therefore, we must be resolute, firm, never yielding. We must find them in other countries so we do not have to face them here at home.

Secondly, second point is, when the President says something, he better mean it, for the sake of peace and freedom. I just had a couple of things I want to share with you. I said if you—this is a different kind of war. By the way, I never wanted to be the war President. If they would have said, "Here's a list of things that you can be when you're President," it would have been my last choice. This war was brought on us. This war came to our soil. We didn't ask for it. We didn't ask for it, but we'll deal with it. That's the hand—that's what—history has called us to act.

It's a different kind of war. It's a war that—where we've got to find people who are buried in caves and hiding in cities. And therefore, the doctrine that says, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as a terrorist," has been and will continue to be enforced. I said that about the Taliban in Afghanistan. They're no longer in power. America is safer for it because Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for Al Qaida. And the Afghan people are better off, and that counts.

I also told the families of our troops and, more importantly, those who wear our uniform, "When we put you in harm's way, you'll have all the resources you'll need to fight and win the war against the terrorists." Obviously, there's a difference of opinion about that in this campaign.

I went to Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding for our troops in harm's way—body armor, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, equipment that was necessary to uphold the promise to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones that we'll support them in their mission—and we got great bipartisan support. That means Democrats and Republicans voted for this initiative. All but 12 people in the United States Senate voted for the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. Do you know that there was only four United States Senators who voted for the authorization of war but against the funding for our troops in harm's way, and two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "Well, why did you make this decision?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." And then they kept pressing him, and he finally ended up saying it was a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Third point—two more points—2½ more points, and I'm going to answer your questions. When we see a threat, we must deal with it before it materializes, before it comes to hurt us. That's a lesson of September the 11th. It's a vital, vital lesson that our country must never forget.

The world changed on that day. You see, we used to see threats prior to September the 11th and say, "We might deal with it. We may not deal with it, but surely it's not going to come to harm us here at home." And that all changed, and it's really important for people to understand the consequences of what happened on September the 11th. I understand it.

And that's why, when I saw a threat with Saddam Hussein, I went to the Congress and said, "There's a threat." They understood it. They looked at the same intelligence I did, and they remembered the same history of this guy. He's an enemy of America. He used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He killed thousands of own citizens. That's the definition of a threat. And Congress looked at that intelligence and said, "Yes, Mr. President, we agree with you. He's a threat." And they authorized the use of force. My opponent voted yes when it came time to authorizing the use of force. He looked at the very

same intelligence I did and came to the same conclusion I did.

The last choice of a Commander in Chief is to put his troops—put the troops in harm's way. So I went to the United Nations. We tried diplomacy to deal with the threat before it fully materialized. The U.N. Security Council voted overwhelmingly to say to Saddam, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." He wasn't about to listen. As he had for over a decade, he just—he ignored the demands of the free world. They sent inspectors into his country, and we knew that he was systematically deceiving the inspectors. Why would you do that?

And so I have a choice to make at this time in our history. As I told them the other night, it's a choice that only comes to the Oval Office. It's a choice no President wants to make but better be ready to make. And I made the choice to remove Saddam Hussein from power because I remembered the lessons of September the 11th. I knew he was a madman. I knew we couldn't trust his word. And I knew my most solemn duty was to defend the American people. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America is safer with Saddam Hussein in a prison cell.

Finally, one other point, and I'm going to answer some questions. One final point really quickly, and it's important you know this about me: I believe that liberty can transform nations. I believe that liberty has got the power of helping the world be peaceful. I believe that freedom can convert enemies into allies. I believe that freedom is how you promote peace. That's what I believe. And so long as I'm your President, I will strongly believe that.

I believe it for a couple of reasons. I believe it because I've had conversations with the heads of—head of a country who was—which was a former enemy, Prime Minister Koizumi. Sixty years ago or so, my dad and your dads were at war with Japan. They were a sworn enemy. A lot of blood was spilled over that war. And yet today, 60 years—it seems like a long time if you're 58 years old like me, but it's not so long in the march of history—60 years later, I'm sitting down at the table with this man, talking about keeping the peace. Liberty has transformed Japan into—an enemy into an ally. It's a powerful force in history.

Liberty and freedom are powerful. They're powerful. I believe every heart longs for liberty. I think it's wrong to condemn people to tyranny. I don't think it upholds the ideals of our country to say, "Certain people can be free, and other people can't be free. Certain people want to be free, and other people don't want to be free." I believe everybody wants to be free, because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world; that's what I believe. [*Applause*] Okay, I've got some more work to do here. Thank you all.

But what I'm telling you is, we've done the hard work, and now we can see a peaceful world coming our way. I long for peace, and I know you do as well. We've done the hard work to defend our country, and by staying firm and resolved, this world is going to be more peaceful for our kids and grandkids. It's the legacy we'll leave behind, a legacy of a freer world and a more peaceful world.

Now, let me answer some questions from you, and then I'm going to head on the bus, up the road, shaking those hands and kissing those babies. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Salute to the President

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I can tell you're a veteran. Thank you for your service.

Q. Thank you.

The President. I may even be able to guess the branch of service.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm also the proud father of a Navy pilot who flew in Operation Iraqi Freedom for 10 months.

The President. There you go. What carrier?

Q. He was flying off with the *Abraham Lincoln.*

The President. Yes.

Q. And on behalf of my son, I was wondering if you would permit me the honor of giving our Commander in Chief a real Navy salute and not a flip-flop.

The President. God bless you. Thank you. That's great. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Okay, yes, sir, you got a question? Thank you, made my morning. Tell your son thanks.

Jobs/President's Legacy

Q. Mr. President, I have a comment and a question. My comment is that since last summer, my company, Ohio Cat, which is headquartered here in Broadview Heights, has added 100 jobs.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And those jobs are union jobs, nonunion jobs, hourly, salary, and they're throughout Ohio. So I'm proud of that, and I think you can be too.

The President. I am proud of that, thanks.

Q. As you look backwards and forwards over your two administrations, what do you see as your most important legacy to the American people?

The President. Yes, thank you. Peace; that after 8 years of a Presidency, the country is more secure, and the world is a more peaceful place. There will be more countries that understand the great value of unleashing the hopes and aspirations of their own people.

See, the foreign policy of the country for a while had been, let's just hope for the best in the Middle East, that they really don't care for freedom, that stability is what is important. But underneath what appeared to be a stable environment was brewing resentment. And the long-run solution in dealing with these ideologues who have got a really dark vision of the world, is to spread the light of freedom, is to hold up the hopes and aspirations of its people.

And we're making progress. Remember, Afghanistan is now heading to freedom. Iraq is becoming free. That will serve as a powerful example for other countries in the neighborhood. My hope and dreams are that the Palestinians shirk leadership that had denied the—this kind of path to free democracy and find reformers, young reformers who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people so that a free and peaceful society can co-exist with Israel. I think that would be a great legacy, of moving liberty to—around the world.

At home, the legacy will be that the school systems responded and challenged that soft bigotry of low expectation and raised the bars and standards, corrected problems early before they're too late, and made sure that every child has a chance to realize his or her dreams. I can't think of a better legacy than a school system which responds to the deepest desire of every parent that his or her child has a chance to realize the promise of America.

As well I think it's very important for our society to be a society based upon personal responsibility, that each of us must be responsible for the decisions we make in life.

Let's see. Let me get this lady here and then you. Yes, ma'am.

Voting for the President

Q. When I vote for President, I'm voting for the man that I'm willing to leave my children and my grandchildren to. And I just want to say that I'm proud that I'm going to be voting for you.

The President. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

You got a question? You're next. Be thinking of a question. [*Laughter*]

Tax Reform

Q. I was hoping you could comment on some of the tax reform you're referring to,

as it applies to revising the IRS and maybe even going as far as looking at a flat tax.

The President. No, I appreciate that. One of the antiquated parts of our society is the Tax Code. It's complicated. It's full of loopholes, and I believe it needs to be simplified. I know that Senator Voinovich—needs to be simplified. When I said it in my convention speech, I thought he was going to fly right up on the stage and give me a hug. I was hoping he wouldn't. [*Laughter*] But we've talked about this before.

And we're going to bring Republicans and Democrats together. I'm not going to prejudge the outcome. It's certainly one option. I've been asked in a variety of venues, "Are you in favor of the sales tax? Are you in favor of the flat tax?" What I'm in favor of is changing the Tax Code to make it easier to understand and more simple. I think by simplifying the code, we will encourage economic growth. A complex code that is hard to understand and requires enormous amounts of paperwork and time and lawyers and accountants is really counterproductive to economic growth.

So it's going to be important for me not to prejudge the outcome, but I am not going to prejudge—I will not hold back in saying that I'm adamant about bringing these people together and to present a plan to the Congress that will make it easier for you to fill out your taxes and make it easier for you to realize the system is fair. And that's the best thing we can do with tax relief.

Yes, ma'am.

Broccoli

Q. Do you like broccoli?

The President. Do I like broccoli? It's okay. I'm not nearly as turned off by it as my dad is. [*Laughter*] If you really want to get into it, I kind of like the top of the broccoli. [*Laughter*] I don't like the stalk itself—not that good.

Yes.

2004 Election/Afghanistan

Q. What can we do in the next 60 days to ensure that you win Ohio and get re-elected?

The President. Yes, thank you, sir. I was hoping he'd ask that question. That's the kind of question I was hoping to get. [*Laughter*] First, register people to vote. It's—we have a duty to vote. Did I tell you—talk about the 10 million people in Afghanistan today yet? No. Okay. It's hard to believe, isn't it? Ten million people in Afghanistan have registered to vote. It's amazing—it's amazing, isn't it? Really think about that. Prior to September the 11th, 2001, these people were living in the—well, prior to later on in 2001, they were still living in the clutches of the Taliban. These barbaric people would not let young girls go to school. They would whip their mothers in the public square if they didn't toe their dark vision of Islam, you know, toe the line. They were the opposite of the kind of people we are in America. We respect human rights. We respect human dignity. We value the freedom to worship the way you want to. They're the opposite, and yet, 3 years later, people are lining up to vote, 10 million people. This is in spite of the fact that the Taliban is jerking people off a bus and executing them because they're holding registration cards or they were workers trying to get people to register. You cannot stop liberty. It's a powerful force. People want to be free.

Now, the reason I bring that up is, we shouldn't take that liberty for granted in our country, and we have a duty to vote. And I would ask you to find friends and neighbors and register them to vote: Republicans, independents, discerning Democrats, like Zell Miller, for example.

Secondly, talk up the campaign. Get on the web page, georgewbush.com, and if you've got questions about issues, if you've got questions about this agenda I laid out last Thursday night, read up on it. And then talk to a friend or neighbor and say,

"Here's what he believes. Here's why I believe America will be a more—a safe place and a hopeful place under 4 more years of George Bush. Here's the specific agenda item." If you get stuck, just tell them he's the kind of guy who does in office what he said he was going to do on the campaign trail. You might remind them that I—anyway.

And then, come election time, help find people and turn them out. This is a matter of encouraging people to vote and then seeing to it that they do vote. It's really important. It's called grassroots politics. And I want to thank you for asking that question. I was supposed to say that right off the bat. [*Laughter*]

Let's see, a couple of more. Yes, sir.

Candidates' Philosophical Differences

Q. Mr. President, thank you for your leadership, first of all. Can you highlight the stark difference between the policies of Kerry's camp versus yours with respect to the individual psyche? It's clear that the economic policies of, "We'll take care of you because you can't take care of yourself"——

The President. Right.

Q. ——are much different from yours, which is, "We'll create an environment to support you as an individual," not to mention the right-to-life issue, which doesn't value the individual in the womb.

The President. Right, yes. Let me talk about that. There is a—we have a philosophical difference. I believe that Government ought to unleash the creative talents of the American people, ought to stand by people, that we need to transform the systems of Government so as to help people realize their dreams. In other words, that's why health savings accounts are important. That's why, in the Medicare reform, seniors were given more choices. That's why, on the education reform, we raised standards. We said, "You measure, but correct problems early before they're too late. If not, give parents additional options." That's why we, on the tax relief, said that you can spend your money far wiser than the Federal Government can.

In other words, it's the philosophy that drives much of what we're doing, as opposed to a philosophy that says, "Here's another program"—like on health care—"Here's a program that will empower the Federal Government. The Federal Government will decide this. The Federal Government will decide that. The Federal Government will make this decision," as if the people can't decide for themselves as to what's best for them.

And so it's a—I like to put it this way. My opponent is for expanding the role of the Federal Government; we are for expanding opportunity for individuals. And I look forward to the philosophical debate.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge/Energy Policy

Q. Ohio loves you. I had to say that.

The President. Thank you. I accept that.

Q. I support drilling in ANWR, and I just wanted to know what your position is on that.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that very much. The question is whether or not we should explore for much-needed reserves in what's called ANWR, which is a part of Alaska. I believe we should, and I know we can do so in environmentally friendly ways. Let me explain it to you now so you understand—that the drilling area would be the size of an airport in Cleveland, Ohio. In other words, it would be on what would be like your airport, and the rest of the entire area here would have no exploration at all. In other words, the pad, the place at which they would place the equipment to drill for much-needed crude oil and natural gas, would be the size of the airport region here inside your entire county. It's a very small part of the world.

Secondly, I know we can do it in environmentally friendly ways.

Thirdly, it's important. They say that had we been exploring there a decade ago, we'd

have an additional million barrels of oil coming into our country. That is necessary when we're in a world of tight supply. In other words, there's—the demand for energy has gone up primarily because of China's growth. And the supplies of crude around the world are not keeping up with demand. And so if you're dependent on foreign sources of energy, like we are, you get affected at the gas pump. That additional million barrels of oil a day would have affected world price and would have helped America become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

People are concerned as to whether or not we can explore without ruining the environment. I believe we can. I believe we can do so. I know we have the technology available.

Now, there are—listen, I've said we shouldn't be exploring off the coast of California. I meant it. There are some parts of Florida where we'll not explore. But there are some places where, in this country, where there's ample reserves, we can do so without endangering the environment. And it's a rational policy based upon the realities of the 21st century.

George and I have talked about this before. I think one of the things we ought to do is to expand nuclear power in America. We can do so with new technologies. We can do so in a way that improves the quality of our air, and it certainly makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we need to continue to explore clean coal technologies, and we're doing that. We've got ample money in our budget so that we can use coal in environmentally friendly ways. We're using more ethanol than ever before, and that makes sense. It seems like to me that we ought to be using our great research and development capacities to expand ways to be able to use soybeans and corn as energy sources. Nothing better than some President sitting down some day, and they come in with the crop report, and they say, "Corn is up. We got more bushels than ever before, and therefore, we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

I know we can encourage more conservation, and we do so. I fully believe that we're in a period of transition here in America, and that technology is going to solve much of our energy needs. And that's why we've got ample research and development in our budgets to look for different ways in which we can use hydrocarbons or not even use hydrocarbons at all. And one such initiative is the hydrogen-powered automobile. We believe we're less than a decade away from getting that on the market, which will change the whole nature of how we travel in America. We'll be able to meet the consumer demands, and at the same time become less dependent on energy.

Thank you for asking a simple question with a long, complicated answer.

Last question. Yes, ma'am. And then we're going to get on the bus.

Military Absentee Ballots/Service to America

Q. Yes, Mr. President. My grandson is serving as a U.S. Marine in the Middle East. And if I heard correctly, the last election, some of their votes weren't counted.

The President. Yes.

Q. The military—are they going to be counted this year?

The President. As far as I'm concerned, they will be. I appreciate you saying that. It's—I think that, yes, I think they're going to be counted. I certainly hope so. We learned some lessons in the last campaign that we've got to be—that we needed election reforms. We passed good law to encourage good, honest elections and to make sure that the registrations are good and honest, to make sure that every ballot is counted. And I'm confident that there will be a greater awareness when it comes to counting these ballots.

I want you to—where is he?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—don't know——

The President. Okay, good. Well, you're not supposed to know then, if you don't know. [*Laughter*] And I'm not going to tell you. No, I don't—[*laughter*]—I don't know either. But find him and tell him the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of his service. He's serving in historic times.

Okay, one more thing, yes.

Q. We haven't heard from him in around 7 to 8 weeks, so we're really concerned.

The President. Yes. Well, maybe you ought to just give us his name. Give it to that ugly-looking guy right there—[*laughter*]—Todd. Yes, he'll be fine.

I mean, look, for those of you who've got a loved one in harm's way, they're serving in historic times. This world is changing. It's changing because the United States of America is leading. We're leading because of our own self-interest. We're leading because we've got a duty, and that's to secure the homeland. It's a solemn duty of protecting the American people. But we're also leading because we love liberty.

We have no desire to occupy territory. We're not interested in conquering anybody. We're interested in protecting ourselves in the short run by finding these people where they hide, disrupting their plans, bringing them to justice. And we're interested in securing ourselves in the long run, because we know the power of liberty can transform societies to be peaceful and hopeful societies.

Your son, grandson—grandson—grandson is serving in historic times. Sometime—I fully believe this—he'll look back and say to his grandkids, "You know, I had the honor of serving America during this time of transition, and the world is better for what I did."

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:58 a.m. at Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School. In his remarks, he referred to Janet Voinovich, wife of Senator Voinovich; Brian D. Wilch, principal, Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School; Mayor Glenn R. Goodwin of Broadview Heights, OH; Mayor Jerry N. Hruby of Brecksville, OH; former professional baseball player Michael Hargrove; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Todd Beyer, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Advance.

The President's Radio Address
September 4, 2004

Good morning. America is the home to the most dedicated, innovative, and decent workers in the world. And thanks to their effort and enterprise, America's economy is strong and growing stronger.

This past week we learned that we added 144,000 new jobs in August and nearly 60,000 more jobs in June and July than previously estimated. Overall, we've added about 1.7 million new jobs since last August. And the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.4 percent, nearly a full point below the peak last summer and lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our Nation is proud of all our workers, and on this Labor Day weekend, we say thank you.

The world is changing dramatically for American workers. The global market is expanding, creating new markets for our goods and new competition for our people. Workers are changing jobs more often, and they need new skills to stay ahead. This time of change can be a time of great opportunity for American workers, and Government must take their side.

To create more jobs in America, we must make sure that America remains the best place in the world to do business. That starts with encouraging investment and expansion by restraining Federal spending, reducing regulation, and making tax relief permanent. We also need to make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy, to expand trade, and to level the playing field for American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect workers and small-business owners from the frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across America.

Another drag on our economy is the Tax Code, which is a complicated mess filled with special interest loopholes and saddling our people with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. American workers and their families deserve a simpler, fairer, progrowth system, so I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In this time of change, many workers want to go back to school to learn new or different skills, so we will double the number of people served by our principal job training program and increase funding for our community colleges. We will change outdated labor laws to make the workplace more family-friendly and give workers more control over their schedules through comp-time and flex-time.

I also have a plan to create American opportunity zones to help communities that have lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. In these areas we'll provide tax relief, investment incentives, and regulatory relief specifically designed to attract new businesses and create new jobs. We will also improve housing, job training, and education in opportunity zones so these communities in transition have all the resources they need to succeed.

We'll also work to build an ownership society in America. Our Nation is stronger when more people own their homes, their own health plans, and a piece of their retirement. We will strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg they can call their own and Government can never take away.

With all these proposals, we'll provide American workers with a path to greater opportunity, more freedom, and more control over their lives.

American workers built this country, and they continue to build our prosperity today. They have our gratitude and our confidence. And all Americans have my best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:25 p.m. on September 3 at the Crowne Plaza Five Seasons Hotel in Cedar Rapids, IA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Kirtland, Ohio
September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Listen, there's nothing better than taking a Saturday bus ride with your family—[*laughter*]—especially in Ohio. Thanks for coming out today. It's great to be in Lake County. I appreciate so many people turning out. It looks like Lake County and Ohio is Bush-Cheney country.

I believe you got to get out with the people and ask for the vote, and that's what we're doing today. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. She is a terrific First Lady for the United States.

And I'm so proud of Barbara and Jenna. I really appreciate them coming out on the campaign trail with us today. Campaigning like this is kind of like going on the family camping trip—[*laughter*]—I promised, but never took them on. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate my friend Steve LaTourette. He's a great United States Congressman. You need to put him back into office. And while you're putting me back in and putting him back in, put George Voinovich back in as well. I appreciate you being here, Senator. I also appreciate Senator Mike DeWine and his daughter Alice joining us today. Michael, thank you for coming. Congressman Ralph Regula from Ohio is on the bus trip with us today. Thanks for being here, Ralph.

I appreciate Mayor David Anderson coming today. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the Sonny Burgess Band for coming today.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for setting up such a fantastic rally. I appreciate your hard work. I appreciate what you've done and what you're going to do. I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. Remind your citizens—your fellow citizens to do their duty. And when you're registering voters, register independents and discerning Democrats. You heard Zell Miller the other night. He represents a lot of folks who understand that with 4 more years, Dick Cheney and I will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

We're approaching an historic national election, and the time for choosing is getting closer. I'm looking forward to campaigning in your State. You've got a great State full of great people. I'm looking forward to talking about the records we've built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. I fully understand a Presidential contest is a contest over the future. And so as I travel your State, I'll tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And that's why we passed the most important Federal election reform in history. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're using accountability system to figure out who needs help early, before it's too late. We believe in local control of schools. We know reading is the new civil right. We're making progress in America. The achievement gap is closing, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. That's why I brought Republicans and Democrats together. Seniors now get immediate help buying medicine. Soon, every senior will be able to get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers, and that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing. Yesterday we received the jobs report for August. It shows that our economy is strong and getting stronger. We added 144,000 new jobs last month, including 22,000 new jobs in manufacturing. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since last August, a year ago last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is a full point below last

summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. There's more work to be done here in the State of Ohio. I understand there's people looking for work and can't find a job. We will not rest until they do find a job. We're making progress, and we're not turning back.

I believe the job of the President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why, with your help, we're going to carry Ohio and win a great national victory in November.

One of the things I talked about the other night in New York was how this world of ours is changing. People are changing jobs. Women are working not only inside the house but now outside of the house as well. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents, yet most of the fundamental systems of our country haven't changed. The Tax Code, the health coverage, the pension plans, the worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not for tomorrow. We're going to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your dreams.

Any good plan starts with making sure people can find work. Any good plan makes sure that we expand hope and opportunity with a growing economy. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs in America, Congress must get my energy plan to my desk so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create more jobs in America, we must open up markets around the world for U.S. goods and services. We open up our markets—my message to other countries like China is, "You open up yours." We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. To create more jobs in America, we must get rid of these junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. To create more jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money.

See, I believe Government can set priorities and fund those priorities and let you keep more of your own money. My philosophy says, "We're good at some things, but once we fund those things, you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can."

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And there we have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of new Federal programs if he's elected.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot. That's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. So they asked him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said that old line we've heard before, "Oh, don't worry, we'll pay for it by taxing the rich." We have heard that line before. First of all, you can't raise enough money to pay for all those programs by taxing the rich, and secondly, you know how it works. They get accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him. We're going to carry Ohio and the country.

Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Today, a little earlier, I talked about creating what's called American opportunity zones. These will help communities recovering from lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. For example, an area like greater Cleveland will be able to apply for tax relief and investment incentives and regulatory relief, specifically designed to attract new businesses and new jobs.

Another drag on our economy is the Federal Tax Code. Yes, that Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's filled with special interest loopholes. You realize it takes 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year to comply with the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In a new term, we'll help our workers by expanding access to community colleges so they can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Let me tell you what else we need to do. In a time of change, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's the realities of the 21st century. Yet one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants to low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college education.

In changing times, we've got to do more to make quality health care available and affordable. One-half of all the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. So in a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get.

We're going to offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. In a new term, I'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. And to make sure we improve health care for you in Lake County, we've got to get rid of these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running your docs out of practice. We've got a national problem when it comes to these frivolous lawsuits. I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, and pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In changing times, there's nothing like owning something to bring stability to your life. We're going to continue to promote homeownership in America. The homeownership rate in our country is at an all-time high. Nothing better than knowing more people are opening the door to their house and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well if you're a younger worker, you better look at that Social Security system very seriously. Older guys like me are just fine when it comes to Social Security. But the fiscal solvency of Social Security is in doubt, if you're a younger worker. We'll strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account they can pass on from one generation to the next.

In this world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that bring us stability must not change, our families, religious congregations. They deserve our support. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every

person counts. We believe religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, and our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Our strategy is clear. We are defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We are working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring hope and the peace we all want. By being resolute and strong, we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, today, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more then three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He harbored Abu Nidal and his organization. He let Zarqawi run free in Baghdad, and his crowd. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

And so I went to the United States Congress. I saw a threat, and I said to the Congress, "Do you see a threat?" And members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at and came to the same conclusion we came to. And they authorized force, including my opponent. He looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion. And when they said on the Floor of Congress, "Do you vote to authorize the use of force," he said, "I do."

The last commitment of the Commander in Chief has got to be to put troops in combat. The first commitment has got to be to try to resolve problems diplomatically. And so I went to the United Nations. I said to that body, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence we had looked at and again concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. They passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The free world had spoken. But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. He wasn't about to listen to the collective voice of the world. As a matter of fact, he deceived inspectors that were sent into his country.

So I had a choice to make. It's the kind of choice that only comes to the Oval Office. It's the kind of decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make. The decision was: Do I trust a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people have been liberated. Think about this, young women, young girls could not go to school in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Their mothers were whipped in the public squares. Yet, because we acted, we're not only more secure, but 10 million people have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election in October. Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister and National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing. Freedom is on the march.

We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're also doing so because we're serving a historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free societies change people. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. That helps us keep the peace.

Our mission in those countries are clear. We'll help new leaders train their army so they can do the hard work of defending themselves against a few who want to deny the hopes of the many. We will help those countries head toward elections. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a fabulous United States military full of decent, honorable, and courageous people. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their families, we'd give them all they need so they can do their job. And that's why I went to the Congress last September, proposed—and the Congress overwhelmingly passed—$87 billion of funding needed for our troops for body armor and fuel, spare parts, ammunition, hazard pay, health benefits, all that's necessary to support them in their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I was pleased that we received strong bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. Two of them are my runningmate and his—my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him why, and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." That's a——

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I bet you they don't speak that way on the town square in the cities here in Lake County. They pressed him further, and he said he's proud of the vote. Then he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies in the cause of freedom and peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'm proud of their contributions. I appreciate working with the leaders of those countries for making us all more secure. But I will never

turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I've been spending time with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We sit at a table and discuss a lot of things, and one of the most important things we discuss is peace. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting Japan in a brutal war. They were our enemy. And here today, because my predecessor and others believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally, because they stood strong in the face of the skeptics, because they believed that freedom is the deepest desire of every human heart, that Japan is a democracy and an ally. And here I am talking about the peace, talking about North Korea, how to make it work on the peaceful peninsula, talking about Iraq, talking about how to bring terrorists to justice. Some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given a chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world but because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I believe that the 21st century will be the century of liberty. By promoting freedom here at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this land. We'll pass the enduring values on to another generation. We'll continue to lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep abiding faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I'll never forget those workers in hardhats at the top of their lungs yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking hands with people who just came out of the rubble, the firefighters and the police who set such an incredibly powerful example for bravery and courage and compassion all across the country. The guy looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." And since that day, I wake up thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State and asked for the vote, I made a pledge. I pledged that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon at Lake Farmpark. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor David E. Anderson of Willoughby, OH; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Erie, Pennsylvania
September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. I appreciate you all coming out. There's nothing better than taking a bus trip on a Saturday with your family. [*Laughter*] Nothing better than ending the bus trip in Erie, Pennsylvania.

I'm so honored so many came out to say hello. Thank you. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe it's important to get out amongst the people, tell them what's on your mind. And that's what I'm here to do. But perhaps—I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. Laura is a great mom, a great wife, and a great First Lady. I'm proud of the job she's doing. I'm also proud of our daughters, Barbara and Jenna. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud of my runningmate too. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his sound judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

It's good to be in old Tom Ridge's hometown. He's a good friend. He's a good man, and he's doing a heck of a good job in reorganizing the Department of Homeland Security. Thank you for raising him the right way. [*Laughter*]

Glad to be here with Senator Arlen Specter. I hope you put him back in the United States Senate. He's a good friend. I'm looking forward to working with him just like I look forward to working with Rick Santorum, the other Senator.

I'm proud to be in the district of another friend, Phil English, Congressman Phil English. Thought he'd have got a better seat. [*Laughter*] And Congressman John Peterson is with us as well. Thank you for coming, John. I appreciate you being here.

Jean Craige Pepper too—she's running for treasurer of the State of Pennsylvania. My friend Jane Earll is with us today from right here in Erie. John Evans is with us.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials who are here. Thanks for serving your State and your community. I thank my friend John Connolly, the country music singer, for being here today. I appreciate him coming. Most of all, thank you all for taking time out of your Saturday to come by and say hello. I appreciate you being here. It means an awful lot. Somebody said, "Well, maybe a couple hundred will show up to say hi." [*Laughter*]

I'm here also to ask for your help. I know many of you are involved in grassroots politics, which means putting up the signs or making the phone calls. I want to thank you for that, and I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch run here. I urge you to encourage your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to participate in the democratic process, to register people, convince people that we have an obligation in a free society to exercise our will at the ballot box. And when you're registering people, make sure you register independents and discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. And when you get them headed toward the polls, remind them 4 more years of George Bush and Dick Cheney will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

Over the next 2 months, I'm going to spend a lot of time here in Pennsylvania. Now, I know what the pundits say, but let me tell you something. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry this great State. I'm going to tell you where I stand. I'm going to tell you what I believe, and I'm going to tell you where I'm going to lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. We're making progress. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're testing so we can solve problems early, before they're too late. We're empowering local people to make the right decisions for their schools, and the minority gap is closing in America. We're on our way to excellence for every child, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide good health care for our seniors. You might remember the old debate on Medicare. They called it "Medi-scare." But I went to Washington to make sure that we provided good health for our seniors. See, the old system, we'd pay $100,000 for heart surgery but not the medicine necessary to see to it that the heart surgery wasn't necessary. It didn't make any sense for you, the taxpayers. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. Starting in 2006, seniors will get prescription drug coverage in Medicare.

I believe in the energy and the innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing. Last—the jobs report yesterday showed that we increased jobs by 144,000 in the month of August. And when you couple that with the upward revisions of the two previous months, we added 200,000 new jobs, which is 1.7 million since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, 1 percent lower than last summer. The national unemployment rate is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our economic recovery plan is working.

I believe I have the duty as your President to lead. A President must confront problems, not pass them on to future generations or future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

I have a positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a philosophy called compassionate conservatism. It says that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I also understand the world we're living in is changing. People are changing jobs and careers. Years ago when our fathers and grandfathers were in the workplace, it was mainly men working. Today, women are occupying a lot of the important jobs in America. This is a changing world we live in. And yet—I want you to hear this—our most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your own dreams.

Any good plan means we've got to keep growing our economy, and I've got a plan to do that. To keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk so we can become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets overseas. Listen, our markets are open, and it's good for you as a consumer. See, when you have more choices to choose from, you're likely to get a product that you like at a good price. And so I've told countries like China and elsewhere, "You treat us the way we treat you." American workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To keep jobs here, we've got to get rid of these junk lawsuits that are threatening our small-business owners in America. To keep jobs here, I propose what's called opportunity zones to help places like Erie, where you've lost manufacturing jobs, to be able to apply for tax relief and investment incentives and regulatory relief, all

specifically designed to attract new businesses and new jobs. To keep jobs here, we must be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

Running up the taxes on American workers and American small businesses is bad economic policy. And we have a difference in this campaign about taxes. I'm running against a fellow who's proposed already $2 trillion of new programs, see. And so they said to him, they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Oh, that's easy. We'll just tax the rich." The problem is we've heard that before, haven't we? Yes. You know what happens. They hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him get away with it. We're going to carry Pennsylvania and the country in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me tell you what else needs to change. Our Tax Code needs to change; it's a complicated mess. Americans spend 6 billion hours on paperwork and headache when it comes to this Tax Code. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I will bring Democrats and Republicans together to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

We'll make sure our workers have got the skills for the 21st century jobs. That's why we're going to expand access to our community colleges. We'll make sure we're able to—make sure the kids of this country are able to be able to compete in a competitive world. Listen, most new jobs are filled by people who have been to college for 2 years. That's the reality of the world we live in, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll expand math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income Americans, we will help more Americans start their career with a college degree.

In changing times, we've got to make sure health care is available and affordable. Most of the uninsured in America—about 50 percent of the uninsured are small-business employees. These small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In the new term, we must allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to get.

We'll expand health savings accounts to help our workers and small businesses. We'll expand community and rural health centers to poor counties all across America. We will improve health care, but as we do so, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

There's another big issue in this campaign as far as health care. There are too many frivolous lawsuits that are running up the costs of your health care and running good docs out of business. You've got a problem here in Pennsylvania with medical liability, and we've got a problem around the Nation. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

In a changing world, if you own something, you can bring stability to your life. One of the most hopeful statistics of the modern age is the fact that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. More minorities own a home than ever before in our country. More people are opening up their doors saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand homeownership.

I want to talk about one other aspect of ownership that's important, and that's

Social Security. If you're an older citizen today, nothing's going to change for Social Security. You're in good shape. If you're a baby boomer like me, the Social Security trust will take care of us. But if you're a younger worker, you better listen carefully to the debate on Social Security. I believe to make sure the Social Security system is around for younger workers, they should be able to save some of their own taxes in a personal account that they can call their own, that Government cannot take away.

Now, this is a changing world. We've got plans to stand side by side with the people and the families of America so they can realize their dreams. But in a changing world, some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must support the institutions that give us purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We support marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We support our religious charities that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must never discriminate against faith-based programs. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's history of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, this country must think differently. After that horrible day, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress, and members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history that I remembered, and came to the same conclusion that my administration had come to: He was a threat. My opponent looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion and voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to solve a problem. That's why I went to the United Nations, in the hope

that diplomacy would work. The United Nations Security Council looked at the same intelligence we looked at, remembered the history we remembered, came to the same conclusion that we came to: Saddam was a threat. And they pass a resolution that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." In other words, the free world, after more than a decade of diplomacy, gave Saddam Hussein another chance, a final chance, to meet his responsibilities.

But as he had for over a decade, he wasn't interested in what the free world said. He ignored resolution after resolution after resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them.

So I had a choice to make, the only—the kind of choice that comes to the Oval Office, a choice no President wants to make but better be prepared to make. And the choice was this: Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted—because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million people have been liberated. Because we acted in our own self-interest, democracy is now on the march * in the greater Middle East. Think about this. In Afghanistan, 10 million citizens have registered to vote in a Presidential election which will take place next month. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January.

We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, it must keep its word. As well we're serving a vital and historic cause that will make us safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that helps us keep the peace.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help the new leaders train their armies so they can stop the few who are trying to prevent the many from living in a free society. We will move toward elections. We will help those countries get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great military. Our military is full of courageous and decent and honorable people. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for setting such a great example for those who serve. We will make sure our troops have all that is necessary to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress last September and proposed fundamental—supplemental funding, which is money for armor and spare * parts and ammunition and fuel—necessary, money necessary so they can do their work. And we received great bipartisan support. That means both Democrats and Republicans supported it—except for 12 Members of the United States Senate voted no.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And two of those were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they said—they kept pressing, and he said he was proud of his

* White House correction.

vote. And finally he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Our allies know the historic work we're doing. We've put together a broad coalition; nearly 40 countries in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq are working with us to bring peace to the world. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to build our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. The wisest use of America's strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the story about my discussions with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We sit around the table, and we talk about peace. It's an amazing conversation, when you think about it. Wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And yet, because my predecessor, citizens of this great country believed that liberty could transform enemies into allies, we worked with the Japanese after World War II to build a democracy, a self-governing nation. Someday, if we're strong and resolute and keep faith in our beliefs, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, talking about security.

I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom in this new century. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The 21st century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work hard to reform systems that need to be changed so the American people can realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our Nation on to a young generation. We'll continue to lead the world to make the world more free and peaceful.

You know, for these years—for all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

Four years ago—well, none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console people as best I could. A guy grabbed me by the arm and he said, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:45 p.m. at Erie Veterans Memorial Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Pennsylvania State Senator Jane M. Earll; John R. Evans, member, Pennsylvania General Assembly; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who

made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Parkersburg, West Virginia
September 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for taking time out of your Sunday to say hello. I appreciate you giving me the chance to come and tell you I want your vote. I believe you got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote, and that's what I'm doing.

It's great to be back in West Virginia. It seems like I'm making a habit coming here. It ought to be clear to the people of this State that I want to carry West Virginia again. And it's clear to me, having been here a lot and seeing the enthusiasm and the size of the crowds, with your help, we will carry West Virginia again.

I like this State. It's the home of really good people, beautiful scenery, and good hunting and fishing.

I wish Laura were traveling with me today. She's at home. She's been on the road a lot and—what a great speech she gave the other night in New York City. I'm really proud of her. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife, a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Dick Cheney for working so hard. He's a great Vice President. I'm proud to be running with him. You know, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] But I picked him because of his experience and judgment and because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Shelley Moore Capito for joining us, the fine Congresswoman from West Virginia. I appreciate you coming, Shelley Moore.

I want to thank your Mayor, Mayor Jimmy Colombo. Thanks for coming, Jimmy. I'm proud you're here. I'm honored you're here, sir. Next time I come back, we'll make sure you got a seat. [*Laughter*] But I'm proud you're here. Thank you, sir, for coming.

You know, there's a—like Jimmy, there's a lot of Democrats here in the crowd, and I want to thank you all for coming. See, my message is for everybody. A safer, stronger, better America is for every citizen of this country. I think old Zell Miller set a pretty good tempo for Democrats all across the country. He made it clear it's all right to come and support the Bush ticket. So if you're a Democrat and you're here, welcome. If you're an independent and you're here, welcome. If you're a Republican and you're here, thank you for your help.

I want to thank all those who are running for office who are here, but most importantly, I want to thank you all. I also want to thank the folks at Parkersburg High. I want to thank Ralph Board, the principal, and the students at Parkersburg High. I want to thank the community band that is here. Thank you all for coming.

Looks like you all take high school football pretty seriously, kind of like where I was raised. There's nothing like Friday night football. I want to thank—did you win last night—or last Friday? You did? Good. That's great. Now go do your homework. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the West Virginia Army National Guard 1092d Engineer Combat Battalion. Thanks for the good job you did in Iraq. I'm proud of your service.

Not only am I here to ask for your vote, I'm here to ask for your help. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. And I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors and remind them that in a democracy, free citizens must participate. And then when you get them headed toward the polls, just remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, I'm looking forward to campaigning in West Virginia and Ohio and all around this country. And as I do so, I'll tell you where I stand, I'll tell you what I believe, and I'll tell you where I'll lead this country. I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. That's why we passed Federal education reforms to raise the bar, to trust local people with the decisions in the schools, to measure early so we can correct problems before it's too late. We're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. That's why I went to Washington, DC, to strengthen Medicare. The old system said, "We'll pay for heart surgery at $100,000 or so, but we won't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place." Beginning in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage in Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of America, workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

We've overcome a recession, corporate scandals, terrorist attack. Our economy is growing, and it is getting stronger. Just this past week, we received the jobs report for August. America added 144,000 new jobs last month. Plus 60,000 jobs upward revision for the previous 2 months, we've added over 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, and the unemployment rate in the great State of West Virginia is 5.2 percent. Our economic plan is working.

I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy: Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, principled, consistent leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to score a great national victory in November.

The other night when I was speaking in New York, I told the American people I understand we're living in a changing world. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents. People are changing jobs quite frequently. The workplace has changed. Many women work not only inside their homes but outside the home as well. It's a changing world. And yet, the fundamental systems of America were built for yesterday, not tomorrow. Our Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training were all set up for a bygone era. And I believe we need to change those systems to help the American people realize their dreams.

But any hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. To create more jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to have—that means we need legal reform so our small businesses don't have to shut their doors because of

frivolous lawsuits. That means we need—Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk, which encourages conservation, renewables, but also encourages clean coal technology. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets overseas for our entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers and ranchers. We open up our markets, and that's good for you. What I tell other countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we got to keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion on taxes in this campaign. My opponent has promised to raise some taxes. That's a promise politicians tend to keep.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. This Labor Day weekend, it is important for America's workers to know that my opponent wants to tax your jobs. His plan to raise taxes on those at the top end of the income tax scale will raise taxes for the 900,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs who pay at the individual rate and who are creating most of the new jobs in our changing economy. Raising taxes will stifle job creation. The way to get more Americans working is to support the small businesses who are creating 70 percent of the new jobs in America.

I'll tell you what else we've got to fix is the Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year on the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify and make fair the Federal Tax Code.

We will expand access to our community colleges so workers will have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You know that most new jobs in America are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we'll do more to make quality health care available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In order to make sure these families get help, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. I will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

Talk about an issue that's important here in West Virginia and around our country, and that is, these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care, and they're running good docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice: I am for medical liability reform—now.

In a new term, we'll continue to promote an ownership society. Listen, in changing times, if you own something, you bring stability to your life. We're going to expand homeownership in America. Do you realize homeownership is at an alltime high in

America? There's nothing better than more American citizens opening the door to the place where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well we've got to make sure our retirement systems work well, particularly for younger workers. If you're a baby boomer or older, Social Security will take care of you. It will meet your promise. But if you're a younger worker, you better take a good look at the balance sheet of Social Security. I believe young workers ought to be able to take some of their own taxes and put it in a personal account in order to make sure the retirement system is around for them, a personal account they'll call a nest egg of their own that Government cannot take away.

We have a different philosophy in this race. If you listen carefully to the fellow I'm running against, he's talking about expanding Government. He wants to increase Government and the role of Government. That's different from our philosophy. I believe the proper role of Government is to increase opportunity, so citizens can realize their full potential and realize the great dream of the United States of America.

In a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must support the institutions that are important to our society, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. Because a caring society will value its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, we have fought with the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens depend on it. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We'll stay on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we'll work to promote liberty around the world, particularly the broader Middle East. And if we're strong and if we got faith in our values, we will prevail.

Listen, our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Now, because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew that. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently about how to defend our country. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence, looked at the same history of Saddam Hussein, and

came to the same conclusion. They saw a threat, including my opponent, who looked at the same intelligence I looked at and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And the Congress voted the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must exhaust all other options to solve a problem. And so I tried the diplomatic route. I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The free world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world said. See, he got used to ignoring the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when they sent weapons inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free—50 million people. You know, it's amazing what's happening in Afghanistan. That was a country where the Taliban would not allow many young girls to go to school and take their moms out in the public square and whip them if they didn't like the way they were thinking or behaving. These people were barbaric. It's hard for the American mind to comprehend how backwards and barbaric these people were. Today, over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Freedom is powerful—freedom is powerful. Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled there in January. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also doing because it's in our interest. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. Our mission in those two countries is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so the Afghan people and the Iraqi people can stand up for freedom in their own societies. We'll help elections come forward. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country here at home and around the world. We have got a fantastic United States military. And I want to thank all of the veterans who are here today for having such—set such a great example for the men and women of the United States military.

We made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones—and to their loved ones—that we'll support them in their missions. That's why I went to the Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, that which is necessary to support our men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's an $87 billion request. It was necessary. As a matter of fact, the Congress believed that. It was—there was overwhelming support, and so overwhelming only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "You know, why didn't you vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then they pressed him further, and he said he's proud of his vote, and then he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends to promote freedom and peace. We've got a great coalition put together; nearly 40 countries are involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's why I say these are historic times. The world is changing. As liberty moves on, so will peace, the peace we all want. You know, I like to tell about my business with Prime Minister Koizumi; he's the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, we sit at a table together, and we're talking about peace, talking about North Korea and how to keep the peace, talking about Iraq and how to keep the peace—an interesting conversation when you think about it, because it wasn't all that long ago that my dad and your dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And yet because, after World War II, Harry Truman and others believed that liberty could transform countries and transform people, because they held firm to the values of America, Japan today is no longer an enemy. It's an ally in keeping the peace. Someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq; they'll be talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I believe that. I believe people long to be free. I believe people, if given a chance to be free, will choose freedom. I believe that because America is not—freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep, abiding faith in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm and said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've got a vision and a plan to make America a safer place and a more hopeful place for every citizen. Four years ago, I traveled your State and I said if you gave me the great honor of holding this office, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. at Parkersburg High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jimmy Colombo of Parkersburg, WV; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricane Charley
September 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On August 27th, I announced that I would submit a supplemental request to the Congress of approximately $2 billion to pay for comprehensive response and recovery efforts after Hurricane Charley. This was in addition to response and recovery efforts being undertaken by federal government agencies using existing resources and programs.

Because of the severity and timing of Hurricane Frances, I ask the Congress to consider expeditiously the enclosed request, totaling $2.0 billion, for an emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriation for the Department of Homeland Security.

I hereby designate this proposal in the amount requested herein as an emergency requirement. This request responds to urgent needs associated with Hurricanes Charley and Frances in Florida and other affected areas, and will enable the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to additional disasters should they occur.

The enclosed request requires immediate action by the Congress to ensure that the immediate response efforts to these recent disasters continue uninterrupted. I anticipate making a further request in the coming days that will provide for a comprehensive response and recovery effort addressing the impact of both of these hurricanes. In addition, federal government agencies will continue their response and recovery efforts using existing resources and programs.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks in Poplar Bluff, Missouri
September 6, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm glad to be here celebrating Labor Day with you. It's good to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. Thanks for coming. You know, you might have heard I got an interesting invitation to come here to Poplar Bluff, Missouri. I get a lot of invitations. I've never gotten one with 10,000 signatures on it. But I was somewhat surprised when we choppered over here, because it looks like there's a lot more people than 10,000 that have come today.

Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me. It's a beautiful part of the world. People are good people here. I'm proud to be here to ask for your vote. You sure know how to make a President feel welcome.

And I know you will join me in wishing President Clinton the very best wishes in the recovery from his surgery. His surgery went well, which is good news. And we just pray for a speedy recovery for the former President.

My one regret today is I wish Laura were here to see the size of this crowd. You know, she was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. She was working at an elementary school, and she

said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, it's not a promise she held me to. She gave a fantastic speech. She's a great mom. She is a wonderful wife. She is a great First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm proud to be running for a second term with my friend Dick Cheney. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he has good judgment, great experience, and he can get the job done.

I appreciate my friend Jo Ann Emerson, the fine Congresswoman from this district. She's a pleasure to work with. Every time I see her, she says, "Remember Missouri." And so does your Senator, Kit Bond. I'm proud to be here with Kit. I'm asking you to put me back in there, but make sure, as you do, put him in too. He's a great United States Senator. Give him 6 more years.

And Jim Talent—Jim Talent is a fine Senator as well. As they say down in Crawford, he's making a good hand—[*laughter*]—smart guy, good, honest man. I appreciate being with him.

It's good to be here with your next Governor, Matt Blunt. I appreciate my friend Peter Kinder here. He's representing the State senate. It looks like his cousin came. [*Laughter*] House Speaker Catherine Hanaway is with us. I'm proud you're here.

I want to thank Mayor Loyd Matthews. Mr. Mayor, thank you so very much for this very generous and kind introduction—invitation to be here. It means a lot. And I also want to thank Hardy Billington and David Hahn. These are local veterans. These boys sure know how to throw a party. I want to thank the Sho-Me marching band. Thank you all for coming. Poplar Bluff High School, I appreciate you all being here.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming on Labor Day. It means a lot.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, I'm glad to be here. But I'm not only asking for the vote; I'm asking for your help. I think it's really important in our society to vote. I believe in a free society, we have an obligation to participate in our elections.

So I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors. Don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. Zell Miller knows. There's a lot of good Democrats in this part of the world that understand that Dick Cheney and I will make this world safer, stronger, and better for every single American. And if you're a Democrat or independent, you're welcome here. We're glad you're here.

And then when you get people heading to the polls, after you register them, get them leaning our way. Get them to come our way. I want to thank you for your help. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, coming down the stretch run. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we'll carry Missouri again and win the big election in November of '04.

I'm looking forward to this race. I am. I like to get out with the people. I'm looking forward to telling the people of this country where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and that every school must teach. That's why we passed important reforms of our schools in Washington. See, we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe if you lower the bar, you're going to get lousy results. I believe if you believe in the best and worth of every child and raise that bar, you're going to get excellent results. I believe it's important to measure early, so you can solve problems early, before it's too late. We've got to stop this practice

of just shuffling kids through school whether they can read and write and add and subtract or not. I believe in local control of schools. And I know we're making progress closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. You might remember the old Medicare debate. They called it "Medi-scare." [*Laughter*] People would talk about it; then they would beat you over the head politically with the issue. But I went to Washington to fix things. I went to Washington to solve problems. Listen, the old Medicare system, which worked well for a lot of seniors, got outdated. After all, it would pay $100,000 for heart surgery but wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. So we strengthened and modernized Medicare. Our seniors got choices. And beginning in 2006, there's going to be prescription drug coverage for our seniors. And we are not going to turn back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of our farmers and workers and small-business owners and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out there gathering up the vote, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we have been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a terrorist attack, all of which affected our economy. But we're overcoming those obstacles.

This economy, because of our tax relief and because we've got great people in this country who refuse to be intimidated, who believe in a future, is strong, and it's getting stronger. Last Friday, we showed we added 144,000 new jobs in August—1.7 million since August of '03. The national unemployment rate has fallen to 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy. Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to score a great national victory in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, the world we live in is a changing world. You know, when our dads were coming up, a person was likely to have one job at one company, and mom was going to stay at home. That's just the way it used to be. It's changed here in America. A lot of women not only work inside the home; they're working outside the home. Our workforce is changing. People are changing careers more often these days.

And yet, the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus free to be able to realize the great promise of America.

Listen, any hopeful society has got to have a growing economy. And that's why I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. In a changing world, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that are hounding our small-business owners in America. It means we've got to reduce the regulations on those who employee people.

To create jobs here in America, we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted one to the Congress over 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that encourages clean coal technology. It's a plan that encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for natural gas. But it's a plan that says, "If we expect to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

We're going to keep opening up markets. Listen, this farm economy is strong. You might remember what it was like in 2000. Now, look, I understand the farm economy is never strong enough—[*laughter*]—and the weather is never good enough. [*Laughter*] The price of beans and corn are pretty high. And one reason it's high is because I made a pledge to our farmers here in Missouri and around the country that I would do my best to open up markets. We want you feeding not only the American citizens; we want you feeding everybody around the world.

To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington and keep your taxes low. Listen, there's a difference in this campaign about taxes. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion of new Federal spending. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, I'm going to pay for it by just taxing the rich." Let me tell you two things wrong with that: One, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for the $2 trillion in new spending. You can play like you can tax the rich enough to do it, but the numbers don't add up. Secondly, you've heard that business, haven't you, in politics, about "tax the rich?" That's why they hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Another drag on our economy is the Federal Tax Code. The Tax Code today is a complicated mess. It's more than a million words long and filled with loopholes for special interests. This Tax Code weighs heavily on our economy. It weighs heavily on every American family. Sitting down to do your taxes shouldn't require wading through more than 1 million words of complicated rules.

This current Tax Code burdens hard-working Americans with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. That's about as much time as all Missouri's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers spend at work in an average year. This Tax Code needs to be changed.

The Tax Code is so complicated, even the short tax form requires more than 11 hours to prepare. That doesn't sound very short to me. For the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness, I will lead a bipartisan team to simplify and reform the Federal Tax Code.

We need to do more to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'll double the number of people served by our principal job training program and expand access to our community colleges all across America.

Most new jobs are now filled by people with at least 2 hours of college—2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance at our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to make sure that we've got health care that's available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Yet small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To make sure they get the help they need, we will allow small firms to join together

to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We'll expand health savings accounts. We're going to make sure that every poor county in America has got a health center—a health community center or a rural health center, so people can get the primary care they need, so we can help people with their health care.

But let me tell you what else we need to do. We need to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your health care and running good docs out of business. We've got an issue in America. Too many good docs are getting out of business. Too many ob-gyns aren't able to practice their love with women all across this country. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you've got to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We'll continue to promote ownership in America. In a changing time, ownership can bring stability to your life. There's nothing better than hearing the fact that more and more people are owning their own home. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. We'll continue to expand homeownership across this country. There's nothing better than somebody opening up their door saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well our retirement systems must reflect the changing times. If you're an older citizen, or a near-older citizen like me, a baby boomer, nothing is going to change with your Social Security. It's a solemn pledge this Government has made. It's a pledge that will be kept. But we better worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to put some of their taxes aside in a personal savings account to enhance their Social Security benefit.

There's a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric of my opponent, he's going to expand Government. Ours is a campaign that is going to expand opportunity. I believe Government ought to trust the people of the United States of America.

In a changing world, there are some things that won't change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. In a changing world, we will stand by the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for religious charities and community-based organizations that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. Our Government must never discriminate against faith-based programs. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend our homeland. We'll transform our military. We'll reform and strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world by staying true to our beliefs and being resolved and firm. We will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. I want you to listen to this. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

Progress involved careful diplomacy and clear moral purpose and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he housed Abu Nidal and his crowd. He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. Zarqawi and his bunch—he's the guy that beheads people—he paid the families of suiciders. He subsidized them. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. It's a lesson we must not forget. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history I remembered. And they voted overwhelmingly to use—to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He voted for the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to solve a problem. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history of Saddam Hussein that we remembered. And they voted 15 to nothing, and the U.N. Security Council said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke again.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein refused the demands of the free world. He wasn't interested. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make at this point in our history: Do I trust the word of a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted in our own self-interest, because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. In Afghanistan, a country which has been brutalized by the Taliban, a country in which many young girls didn't get to go to school, a country in which their moms were whipped in the public squares because they didn't toe the line to these barbarians running the country, has now registered 10 million people to vote in the upcoming election. Freedom is powerful. Freedom is powerful. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a very strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in Iraq in January.

We're going to stand with the people in those countries because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. And we're serving a vital cause. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that

keeps us safer, and it makes the world more peaceful.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help new leaders to train their armies so Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens can defend their country against the few who want to thwart the hopes of the many. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them to the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting many who serve. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform.

I've made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have all the resources, all the tools and support they need for them to do their missions. That's why a year ago, September, I went to Congress and proposed $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, other supplies needed for our troops in combat in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And that really important funding request received bipartisan support. It was so overwhelming that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force, and then voted against funding our troops—only four—and two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate. When asked to explain his decision, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I suspect here in Poplar Bluff, not many people talk that way. They then pressed him, and he said he's proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "It was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

After voting for the war but against funding it, after saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today, my opponent woke up this morning with new campaign advisers and yet another new position. [*Laughter*] Suddenly, he's against it again. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. No matter how many times Senator Kerry changes his mind, it was right for America then, and it's right for America now that Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends to promote freedom and peace. There's about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. And I appreciate their service and sacrifice, and so do our troops. Over the 4 years, we'll build these alliances and make them stronger, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe America is called to lead the cause of freedom. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government every devised by man. I believe all these things because I understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We'll reform our systems to help our people, to help people realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We

will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace, the peace we all want.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that needs—when we need firm resolve and clear vision and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there, yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to do my best to comfort people, and a guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." He took that day personally. Everybody there took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all. Thanks so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. at Ray Clinton Park. In his remarks, he referred to Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri House of Representatives; Mayor Loyd Matthews of Poplar Bluff, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government.

Memorandum on the 2004 Combined Federal Campaign
September 6, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: 2004 Combined Federal Campaign

I am delighted that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Michael O. Leavitt, has agreed to serve as the Chair of the 2004 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 support thousands of worthy charities. Public servants not only contribute to the campaign but also assume leadership roles to ensure its success.

Your personal support and enthusiasm will help positively influence thousands of employees and will guarantee another successful campaign.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 7. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks in Lee's Summit, Missouri
September 7, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all very much for coming this morning. We're starting a bus trip here in your important State, and a great place to start right here in Lee's Summit. I appreciate you coming out.

And I want to thank the good folks here at Lee's Summit High for opening up this beautiful facility. I want to thank Tony Stansberry, who is the superintendent, and John Faulkenberry, who is the principal. I want to thank all the teachers who are here for teaching. I want to thank the students who are here. Listen, study more than you watch TV.

Thanks for coming out to say hello. I'm here to ask for your vote. I think you've got to get out amongst the people and give them a reason why, and that's what I'm here to do today and to ask for that vote. We carried Missouri last time, and with your help, we'll carry it this time.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know. [*Laughter*] When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, I will, so long as I don't ever have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. She did a magnificent job last week in New York City. I'm not surprised. She's a great person, a wonderful wife, great mom. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine guy. I admit he doesn't have the prettiest hairdo in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank my friend Kit Bond, the United States Senator from the State of Missouri, for his leadership. Put him back in there for 6 more years. Reelect this good man. And he's working with a good fellow in Jim Talent, the other United States Senator from Missouri. I really appreciate working with him. I also appreciate working with Congressman Sam Graves, who is with us today.

I wish Jeanne Patterson all the best in her run for the United States Congress. Chris Byrd is here. Madame Mayor is with us today, Mayor Karen Messerli. I appreciate her coming. Madame Mayor, I'm honored you're here. Thanks for taking time to be here today. Appreciate your support. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Mark Wills for being here, the country and western singer.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. These are the people who are out putting up the signs and making the phone calls and registering the voters. I particularly urge you to register people to vote over the next weeks. See, it's really important in this country to vote. I want the high school kids who are here to understand, if you live in a free country, I believe you need to vote. I believe you need to participate. So make sure you go register to vote, and I want to thank the people here who are registering people to vote.

And when you register people to vote, remember that example Zell Miller set the other night. There are plenty of Democrats who are coming our way, plenty of people who understand if you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm looking forward to continuing to travel your State and all across the country. I'm going

to tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we believe we ought to measure early and correct problems before they're too late. That's why I believe we ought to stop this practice of just shuffling kids through school whether they can read or write or not. We're closing the achievement gap here in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. When I got elected, I told the people that I'd try to strengthen Medicare. See, the old system was working fine for a while, but medicine changed and Medicare didn't. For example, they pay about $100,000 for heart surgery but not the prescription drugs necessary to prevent the heart surgery from happening. That didn't make sense for our seniors, and it certainly doesn't make sense for our taxpayers. So I led the United States Congress. We strengthened Medicare. We're helping our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers and small-business owners, farmers and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that spirit with the largest tax cut in a generation. We've overcome a lot. You know, I like to say this economy is strong and getting stronger. I say so because I know where we have come from. We've endured a recession, corporate scandals, a terrorist attack. And yet, this economy is growing. It's growing because our workers are great. It's growing because the small-business sector of America is strong. It's growing because our economic stimulus plan is working.

Last Friday, the jobs report for August showed we added 144,000 new jobs. That's 1.7 million over the last 12 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's fully a point below the peak last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live and work is a changing world. You know, the generation of our dads and granddads was one where the male worked outside the home and generally at one job and one career, therefore, had one health care plan and one pension plan. This world of ours has changed. The workforce has changed. Many women not only work inside the home; they work outside the home. And people are changing jobs quite frequently here in America, and they're changing careers.

Yet the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not the world of tomorrow. We're going to transform those systems. We will change those systems so all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your dreams.

Any hopeful society must be a society that keeps the economy moving forward, and I've got a plan. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create more jobs, we must reduce the regulation on our small businesses. To create more jobs, we

must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten small businesses. The cost to our economy of litigation is conservatively estimated to be over $230 billion a year.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, listen, I understand my opponent changes positions a lot, but for 20 years he's been one of the trial lawyers' most reliable allies in the Senate. We have a difference of opinion. He's consistently voted against legal reform that would protect workers and entrepreneurs. His fellow lawyers have responded with millions of dollars in campaign donations. I have another view. I disagree with his position. I am for ending junk lawsuits. Personal injury lawyers should not get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans.

To keep jobs here in America, Congress must get my energy plan passed. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It is a plan that encourages clean coal technology. It's a plan that uses our resources wisely. It is a plan that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets for our products. See, we open up markets for foreign goods. It's good for you we do. When you have more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. But we want countries to treat us like we treat them, because America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the playing field is level.

In order to keep jobs here, in order to make sure people can work, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we must keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised $2 trillion of new money, see. And we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. It's awfully tempting, coming down the pike, to tell people what they want to hear. It's awfully easy to spend your money. And then they say, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, just don't worry about it. We'll just tax the rich."

First of all, you can't raise the money, enough money to pay for his promises, by taxing the rich. Secondly, when you tax the rich, you're taxing nearly a million small-business owners, because they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Thirdly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. "Oh, don't worry, we'll tax the rich." Well, that's why the rich hire accountants and lawyers. Yes. They dodge; you pay. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win this election in November.

I'll tell you what else we ought to do on taxes. We need to simplify the Federal Tax Code. It is more than a million words long. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to make the Tax Code simpler, more fair, and good for the workers and the small-business owners of America.

Listen, we've got to do more to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I know we need to double the number of people served by our job training programs and increase funding for our community college systems.

One other issue that's important, in terms of education, is that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet, one in four students gets there. That's why I believe we need early intervention programs to help students in high school. We want everybody to have the skills necessary to move on. We'll place a new focus on math and science in our high schools. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low-income and middle-income families, we will help more

Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In times of change, we've got to have a health care system that is available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees. That's because small businesses are having trouble with the cost of health care. To make sure that these families get the help they need, small firms must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We want more people to own and manage their own health care plans, so we'll offer tax credits to expand health savings accounts. We'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center, to help those who need help with their primary care. And to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running docs out of business and running up the cost of your health care.

Right before I came in here, I met with a fellow named Steve Reintjes. He's a neurosurgeon from Kansas City. In 4 years, his premiums have increased from $27,000 to about $90,000. That's because he's having to practice defensive medicine. In other words, he's practicing medicine so that—just in case he gets sued. That's what docs are having to do all over this country. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit in America. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care. They're making it harder for good docs to practice medicine. That's why we need medical liability reform—now.

There is a clear difference in this campaign on this issue. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients all across America. In all we do, we'll make sure that the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it will help people have stability and hope in their lives if they own something. That's why we'll continue to expand homeownership in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America? More and more people are owning their own home. More and more people are opening the door to where they live, and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well we've got to make sure our pension plans reflect the realities of the world in which we live. Senior citizens do not have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change for you. Baby boomers like me don't have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change. But if you're a younger guy, our children and grandchildren, they'd better be worried about Social Security. There's not enough payers into the system to take care of those of us who are going to be receiving. They better worry about it. I believe younger workers ought to have the option of taking some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account to help them with Social Security. It's a nest egg they call their own. It's a nest egg the Government cannot take away from them.

In this world of change, there are some things that aren't going to change, the beliefs that we—the values we try to live by, our basic beliefs, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support institutions which give us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We support the religious charities and community-based organizations that provide a safety net of mercy and compassion. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing threat of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll spread freedom and hope and opportunity throughout the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was a home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

Progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's records of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. Members of the Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered, and they came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Any time the Commander in Chief uses force, he must have exhausted all other options. I was hoping diplomacy would have solved this threat. So I went to the United Nations. I said, "You know, we see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and concluded that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. That was a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world, see. He had been told this before. And he said—as a matter of fact, when they sent in inspectors, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make at this time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted to defend ourself, because we took action to make America a safer place, more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free.

You know, it wasn't all that long ago, in Afghanistan, where many young girls didn't get to go to school because the leaders there were so backward. And their moms could be hauled out in the public square and whipped or killed because they didn't toe this barbaric line of reasoning. And yet, today, 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election in Afghanistan.

Freedom is powerful, isn't it? It's powerful. In Iraq, there's a strong Prime Minister. There's a National Council. National elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing. We're standing with the

people of those countries, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. When a President says something, he must mean it.

In serving this vital and historic cause that makes our country safer, we're changing the world. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which will no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. That makes us safer.

Our mission in Afghanistan is clear. We will help the new leaders train their armies so that citizens of Iraq and Afghanistan can defend themselves against the few who are trying to stop the march of liberty for the many. We'll help them get to elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. I assure you, the cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here, who have set such a fine example for the men and women of our military.

I made a commitment to our troops and our loved ones: They will have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress a year ago, a year ago this month. I proposed $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and other supplies needed by our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. We received great support in the Congress. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Only four people did that, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, what—you know, "How can you explain that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then they said, you know—and he said, well, he's proud of his vote. And then he said, "Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] Nothing complicated—there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I think this country wants consistent, principled leadership. My opponent has now voted for the war and against supplying our troops. When he got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. More recently, he switched again, saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today. And he woke up yesterday morning with yet another new position. [*Laughter*] And this one is not even his own. [*Laughter*] It is that of his one-time rival, Howard Dean.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He even used the same words Howard Dean did back when he supposedly disagreed with him. [*Laughter*] No matter how many times Senator Kerry flip-flops, we were right to make America safer by removing Saddam Hussein from power.

It's also wrong for my opponent to denigrate the contributions of America's allies, who were standing side by side with our men and women in uniform risking their lives for freedom. There are over 40 nations in—nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to build and strengthen our alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe that because I've looked closely at our history. You know, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi from Japan. He is, obviously, running a country that—with whom we were at war, not all that long ago in the march of history. You know, my dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure your dads and granddads did as well.

But because we believe in liberty, because we believe that Japan could self-govern and become a peaceful nation, because Harry Truman, of Missouri, stood strong in the belief that freedom could transform lives, because the American people had faith in our values, Japan became an ally. Liberty changed an enemy to a friend, and today, we sit down at the same table talking about how to keep the peace. Someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace, how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I also believe in the power of liberty to transform lives—I understand—because I understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By transforming necessary systems that were designed in the past, we'll help Americans realize their dreams. Over the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to a young generation. We will continue to make the world a more free and peaceful place.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there, yelling, "Whatever it takes." I was trying to do my best to thank and comfort the firefighters and policemen and the rescuers. A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. at Lee's Summit High School. In his remarks, he referred to Jeanne Patterson, candidate for Missouri's Fifth Congressional District; Chris Byrd, candidate for Missouri State Attorney General; Mayor Karen Messerli of Lee's Summit, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in a Discussion in Sedalia, Missouri
September 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. It's such an honor to be here. Thanks for coming. I don't know if you know it, but we're on a bus tour. I'm out asking for the vote. I believe—I like coming directly to the people, and say, "I want your vote, and here's the reason why I think you ought to vote for me." And that's what we're going to do today.

I thought we'd do it a little differently. I've got some things I want to share with you about what I'd like to accomplish during the next 4 years. And so we've asked some citizens to come and share some of their stories with you. I think that will help you understand why we have made decisions we have made and why we'll continue making certain types of decisions.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You betcha. And then I'd like to answer some questions. Some of you may have a question or two on your mind, and I'd like to answer them for you.

Before I begin, I wish Laura were here. She is a wonderful lady. If I don't get too long-winded, I'm going to have dinner with her tonight. [*Laughter*] She was a—she was raised in Midland, Texas. That's where I was raised. And she was a public school librarian when I married her. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't—I said, "Fine, you don't ever have to give any speeches." And so, fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise that she wouldn't have to give any. She gave a magnificent speech in New York City the other night. I wasn't surprised. I wasn't surprised, because she's such a gentle soul. She's got a great heart. She's a wonderful mom, a terrific wife. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in there, but I think probably the most important one of all so is that Laura is your First Lady for 4 more years.

The other thing—then I'm running with a good man. We've got a great ticket. Dick Cheney has done a heck of a job as the Vice President. I like to tease him by saying, "Well, you know, I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race." [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, and the fact that he can get the job done. He's a great Vice President. And I'm proud to be running with him. Proud to be running with him.

I want to thank my uncle Bucky Bush who is with us. He's a Missouri native—or citizen, right here, from St. Louis. I want to thank Charlie Kruse—where is Charlie? Oh, Charlie, God bless you, sir. Our prayers are with you. He's a good man. I've known Charlie for quite a while. He said—when I was campaigning in 2000, he said, "Whatever you do, do not forget the Missouri farmer." He said, "You keep that river open for our products." And we did. And I hadn't forgotten the Missouri farmer. The farm economy is strong, and we intend to keep it that way. I'm going to talk a little bit about that as we go on.

I appreciate the mayor being here, Mayor Wasson. Thanks for coming. Where are you, Mayor? I appreciate you. Glad you're here. Thanks for your hospitality. Tell your fire and policemen—firefighters and policemen how thankful we are for their service to your community.

And thank all the people who are involved with politics, the grassroots activists. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and register people to vote. I'm here to ask you to—at this stage of the campaign, I'm going around to your State today and around our country asking people to participate in the political process. In a free society, I believe

people have a duty to vote. And that's what we're doing.

We're asking people to vote, you know. And we're—in order to vote, you've got to register to vote. And I'd like you to register your friends and neighbors and explain they have a duty. And when you're out registering them, don't overlook independents and discerning Democrats. You heard Zell Miller the other night. He said loud and clear, "If you want a better America, a safer America, and a stronger America, vote for George Bush and Dick Cheney." We welcome everybody in this campaign.

Today I met Bill Dugan. Where are you, Bill? There he is. Thanks for coming. Bill's a soldier in the army of compassion; that's what he is. He's a fellow who has worked for Habitat for Humanity. He volunteered time out of his life to help people with a home, and that's an important part of our society, when you think about it. The strength of America is the hearts and souls of our citizens. Government is limited in its capacity. We can pass laws, and we will. We can enforce justice, and we will. But Government can't make people love one another. Love comes from something higher than Government. And when people like Bill are moved to help somebody, it makes society a better place.

One of the most important initiatives of the previous 4 years—and it will be an important initiative for the next 4 years—is the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative, which will rally the armies of compassion.

People say, "Well, what exactly do you mean by that? What do you mean by that?" I'll tell you what I mean by that. I mean this, that when it comes, for example, to helping the—to heal the addicted, that we've got to recognize that sometimes Government programs work, but sometimes, in order to help a fellow get off drugs, you've got to—or alcohol, you've got to have a change of heart. And therefore, a faith-based program is the kind of program that could be effective at helping somebody change the heart and, therefore, change the habit. We ought to welcome programs which work. We ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs. We ought to welcome faith-based programs to help Americans realize the full promise of our country.

I want to thank Bill for being here. I want to thank you for the example you set. Thank you for loving a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

I tell people I'm for a more hopeful America, and that means our job base has got to grow. We've overcome a lot, when it comes to our economy. When you're out there gathering up the vote, remind people about what this country has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. It's now clear, by the way, because of the law we passed, that we'll not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We've been through a terrorist attack, and that hurt us. We're overcoming these obstacles because of the hard work of the American people; we've got great workers; because the small-business sector is strong; the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in America. We've overcoming them because we've got great farmers and ranchers.

And we're overcoming it because of tax relief. The tax relief we passed is working. Do you realize the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent? That's lower than the averages of the—average, national average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The question is, how do we make sure jobs stay at home and the economy continues to grow?

I'll give you some ways to make sure it continues to grow. First, this has got to be the best place in the world to do business, which means we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are threatening these small employers. In order to make sure jobs stay in America, we have to have a national energy plan. Listen, I submitted one to the United

States Congress. They need to get it to my desk. It's a plan that encourages conservation. That makes sense, doesn't it? We want to encourage people to conserve more. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewable sources of energy. I'm talking about corn and soybeans, is what I'm talking about. See, we need to spend research dollars so that someday, somebody is going to walk in and say, "Here's the crop report, Mr. President, and it looks like corn is up." And the President will say, "Gosh, that means we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy."

We need to use clean coal technology. We need to explore in our own lands in sensitive ways. What I'm telling you is, to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on energy from overseas.

To keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets to U.S. products. Listen, we open up our markets to goods from other countries, and that's good for the consumer. That's how the market works. If you've got more things to choose from, you're more likely to get a product you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the economy works.

So what this administration is saying to places like China and elsewhere, "You treat us the way we treat you." And that's why the price of soybeans is doing pretty good, because we're selling soybeans all around the world. My job for the next 4 years is to open up markets. We can compete with anybody, anyplace, anytime if the rules are fair.

In order to make sure that we've got jobs here at home, we need a health care system that functions well. That means health care has got to be available and affordable. Let's talk about health care right quick. First, we started by strengthen—my administration started on health care by strengthening Medicare. I told the people when I was running, "Give me a chance, and I'll go to Washington and try to make sure Medicare worked well." You might remember those old Medicare debates. They called it "Medi-scare" for—because people were scared to talk about it. I went up there for a reason. See, the Medicare system had done great work for our seniors, but it was beginning to get antiquated. Medicine was changing. Medicare wasn't.

And the system was designed that so that any new procedures has to be approved by bureaucracies. We would pay, for example, for heart surgery, which would cost maybe $100,000, but we wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from having to occur in the first place. That didn't make much sense to the seniors. It certainly didn't make much sense to the taxpayers, since the cost of prescription drugs is a heck of a lot less than the surgery.

And therefore, I worked with Congress. I said, "Why don't we make the system work better." Right now, seniors can get prescription drug coverage, and if you're a low-income senior, you get your drugs paid for, up to $600 a year. Next year, seniors, when they enroll in Medicare, are going to get preventative screening for the first time ever, which makes a lot of sense, doesn't it, for seniors to get—and in 2006, prescription drugs will be available in Medicare.

There's more to do in health care. My philosophy is, is that the health care decisions need to be made between doctors and patients, should not be made by bureaucrats in Washington, DC. So a lot of what I'm talking about is to strengthen the ability for people to make decisions. Small-business owners are having trouble with their health care, because the cost is going up. We're going to talk to a small-business owner who just told me that a while ago.

The way to help small businesses deal with rising health care costs is to allow them to pool together, pool the risk together, so that they can be able to buy insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do. Those are called association health plans. We need to expand health savings accounts, which will allow

workers and/or small businesses to put money aside on a tax-free basis, to earn money tax-free, to use your money tax-free for health care needs. There's all kinds of ways to make sure that health care is vibrant and alive and well without nationalizing health care.

We've got a doc here today with us, and we're going to talk about medical liability reform, which is going to make sure that we—when we get it, it's going to help you on your costs and the availability for medicine.

I want to talk a little bit about pensions. I told the people the other night, we have a changing world, and yet the institutions, fundamental institutions of our Government haven't changed with them. In other words, the pension plans were designed for the 19—in the 1930s. They haven't changed. The health care systems haven't changed. The Tax Code hasn't changed much since—you know, we need to change these systems. Job training programs haven't changed much to reflect the world in which we live in.

The next 4 years, we're going to change these aspects of Government to help people realize their dreams. It's another one of my philosophies. Government ought to help people, not dictate to people, and Government ought to trust people.

One way to trust them is to make sure the Social Security System works well. If you're an older citizen, you just don't have to worry about Social Security. It's not going to change. You're in good shape. There's ample money in the trust fund to take care of you. If you're a baby boomer like me, it's going to be okay, but we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. That's who we need to worry about when it comes to Social Security. And I believe we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their taxes and set them aside in a personal savings account that they can call their own to help make sure Social Security is available for a younger generation.

I think you have to think differently. Let me talk about education right quick. We have—I went to Washington with the idea of expanding the role of the local folks when it comes to schools but, at the same time, saying, "In return for extra money, why don't you show us whether or not your children can read." It doesn't seem like too tough a request to me. It seemed like a reasonable request.

And the reason why I thought that was necessary is because you know what I know: Too many of our kids were just moving through school, grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics, and that's not right. That's setting the bar too low. I believe the role of all of us is to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe every child can learn to read, and I expect every child to read, and so should you.

And that's the philosophy behind the No Child Left Behind Act. It says, "Let us measure early so we can correct problems early." See, you can't solve a problem until you diagnose the problem. And so we're now diagnosing problems in education, and we're raising the standards. And the achievement gap in America is getting better. You know how we know? We measure. We can show you that more and more children are learning to read and write and add and subtract because we take time to measure. We use the measurement system to support our teachers and principals. We use the measurement system to determine whether or not the curriculum being used at the local level is working. We use our measurement system to heap praise on those who are doing a fantastic job in the public schools, and there are thousands across our country who are. And we use the measurement system to correct early, before it's too late.

There's more to do. There's more to do. We need early intervention—or intervention programs in high schools. We need to make sure that children have got the basics. We need to emphasize math and

science in our high schools. Do you realize that most new jobs now require 2 years of college, yet one in four students in America gets there? That's why we need to expand access to our community college systems. We need to increase Pell grants to help low- and middle-income families. We want more and more of our children starting their careers with a college diploma.

There's more work to be done in education, and I'm looking forward to continuing to lead the country in that direction. Let me talk to some of the folks with us. Perhaps they'll help me make our points that I'm trying to make today. One of the things I love about our society is people own things, an ownership society. You know, we want more people owning their own home. Do you realize the homeownership rate is at an alltime high during my administration? I think it's an incredibly hopeful statistic. I like to put it this way: More and more people are opening up the door in the places in which they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

Ownership is a part of a hopeful America. When you hear me say "a more hopeful America," it means I'm going to encourage ownership in our society. And one of the things we also—I like about America and I think one of the things that's really interesting about our country is more and more people own their own small business. Do you realize 70 percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners—70 percent of jobs. Therefore, all policy or good policy is aimed at helping the small-business sector of America remain strong and vibrant. If 70 percent of all new jobs are created by small businesses and we want to continue to expand our job base, policy ought to focus on small-business owners.

Today we've got one with us. Wayne Lamb is with us. [*Applause*] Sounds like some of them know you.

Wayne Lamb. I guess so.

The President. Okay. The name of your company?

Mr. Lamb. Sedalia Steel Supply.

The President. Sedalia Steel Supply. And what do you do?

Mr. Lamb. We're a steel service center, and we service the Midwest—we service all the mid-part of Missouri with—we buy steel from large mills, break it into smaller quantities, take it to schools, manufacturing companies, maintenance fabricators. We process it. Just pass the savings on that way.

The President. Yes, good. And let me ask you, when did you start—did you start the business?

Mr. Lamb. Started it in 1976, so we're almost 28 years old.

The President. This wasn't one of those deals that started in your garage, was it?

Mr. Lamb. No, it started just about like that. I had a degree——

The President. Kitchen table.

Mr. Lamb. Yes, there you go. I had a degree in accounting—in fact, it was in economics—and didn't know a piece of steel from a two-by-four.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Lamb. That's how it started.

The President. I'm glad you learned. How many employees do you have now?

Mr. Lamb. We presently have 40 employees.

The President. Forty, good.

Mr. Lamb. We have grown—for 27 years, we have grown every year. We've had an increase in sales for 27 years, and we've increased our employees in that kind of direction.

The President. That's great. So did you add employees this year?

Mr. Lamb. We've added three new employers this year.

The President. Great. Here's what's happening in America: Small businesses are adding employees all across the country. He's put on three. I suspect some of you ought there who has got a small business might have added some. This economy—

when you hear me say, "It's strong and getting stronger," it's because the small-business sector is alive and well and it's vibrant.

Let me tell you something interesting about Wayne's business. He is called a Subchapter S corporation. That is an accounting term, or legal term—legal term.

Mr. Lamb. Yes, it's a legal term.

The President. Legal term, yes. You and I aren't lawyers.

Mr. Lamb. No, sir.

The President. A Subchapter S corporation, like a sole proprietorship, pays taxes at the individual income-tax level. So when we reduced all rates, individual income-tax rates, we're helping Subchapter S corporations like Wayne's.

Now, did it help you? The tax relief help at all? I'm sure—that's called leading the witness. [*Laughter*] "Yes, it helped, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lamb. Yes, it helped. [*Laughter*]

The President. Let me tell you something. Listen to that rhetoric of this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised about $2 trillion—well, I think maybe a little more than $2 trillion thus far—of new spending. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich. We're going to raise the top two brackets." That's called taxing the rich.

And guess who he taxes? He taxes Wayne. By running up the top two brackets, he's taxing nearly a million, about 900,000, Subchapter S corporations and sole proprietorships. Just as our economy is gaining strength, my opponent wants to run the taxes up on nearly a million small businesses, which is going to make it hard for this guy to add employees. If you're taking money out of his treasury, if he's sending money to Washington, not reinvesting in his company, it's less likely he's going to add people. Raising taxes is the wrong thing to do right now in America.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, got a little work to do. Hold on here. We've got work to do. Sorry, thanks. Thanks for the "4 more years." We can do that at the end. [*Laughter*]

One of the things we did in the tax relief act was to encourage investment by small businesses. We allowed for bonus depreciation and extra expensing. Those, again, are accounting terms, which basically say to a fellow like Wayne, "If you invest, there's going to be incentive for you to do so."

Are you investing?

Mr. Lamb. Yes. In the last 3 years, we have taken advantage of that $200,000 cap that we can take off immediately off the large pieces of equipment. And by doing that, we've actually been able to buy the next piece quicker. Plus, that has also improved our productivity so well, and also, it made our job safer for our employees.

The President. Yes, what did you buy, for example?

Mr. Lamb. Well, 3 years ago, we bought a Behringer saw-handling. It saws materials. It's a complete handling system. It was almost $300,000. And what we used to do in a week on our other saw, which we thought was the cat's meow, what it would do then, this saw will do in less than a day.

The President. Yes, so he buys a saw. The tax relief says, "Why don't you go think about buying new equipment." He makes the decision to go buy new equipment. Somebody has to make the new equipment. See, when—what we've done is we've increased demand through good tax policy. So Wayne says, "I need a piece of new equipment." He files an order, and the guy who takes the order says, "Okay, I'm going to make it for you." It may mean that he has to add an employee to make that equipment for Wayne. That's how the economy works.

When you hear the word "investment," it means somebody is buying something, which means somebody has to make it. And

so the Tax Code encouraged decision-makers all across the country to increase demand for goods and services. That's what you're hearing in this discussion. That's what this is all about. And as a result, the economy is growing. And the fundamental question, are we going to keep the tax relief in place? I think we should. I think we ought to encourage small-business growth.

You done? You did good, Wayne. Thank you. He hired Steve Platt. Steve, thanks for coming.

Steve Platt. Thank you.

The President. Steve's brother is coming back from Iraq in 2 days. I told him when he saw him, after he gave him the hug, tell him we're all proud of him.

Mr. Platt. I will. I definitely will.

The President. Steve's with us because he's working here for Wayne. And it's an interesting story. He had a job, and then you decided to——

Mr. Platt. I went back to college.

The President. Went back to college. And where did you go first?

Mr. Platt. I went to State Fair—got my associate's degree at State Fair Community College.

The President. You're the guy who's working. You were working for——

Mr. Platt. Duke Manufacturing.

The President. Yes, and decided to go back to college. Why did you make that decision?

Mr. Platt. Well, my children—I'm on them about wanting to send them to college and the understanding of the importance of going back to school, and I didn't feel like—if I didn't finish something I started, I couldn't very well express that, that I wanted them to do it.

The President. He made a tough choice, when you think about it. And there's a lot of people in this society of ours and this changing world who are faced with the same choice, you know. "Do I make a decision to go back to a community college"—and he eventually went to a 4-year college—"and upgrade my skills?" And that's hard in a changing world. I know it's hard in a changing world. I think the role of Government is to help. It's to help people, encourage people, to go back and get an associate degree, in Steve's case, or—and he went on to a 4-year, right?

Mr. Platt. Four-year at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe.

The President. There you go. See, what he's done is, he's upgraded his skills, which makes him a more productive worker. So when you hear the talk about productivity, it means people have got additional skills, and our job base is changing.

You know, I went down to—I've been to North Carolina a lot and went down there. The textile industry has been hurting down there. They've lost some jobs in the textile industry. But the health care industry is booming. So you've got one kind of job replacing another. And the fundamental role of Government, I think, is to make college—community colleges accessible to programs which will train people for the jobs which exist.

And so what Steve has done is he went back, got a little help from some loans?

Mr. Platt. Yes, definitely.

The President. The Government is loaning money. It should. Government provides Pell grants. It will. But as well—like, you told me you're making a little more money in the new job?

Mr. Platt. Yes, I've earned more money, the benefits are better, the company pays 100 percent of——

The President. See, he upgraded his skills. He's making 10,000 more a year than he did before by going back to college, by going to the community college in his neighborhood. Community colleges work well. They work well because they take people who have got one skill set and help them with a new skill set. And people make more money when you become more productive in our society.

Tax relief helped him too. See, one of the things about the tax relief is that it helps people like Steve.

Mr. Platt. In 2003, we earned $1,800. In 2004, it will be $2,200.

The President. See, he saved 1,800. And in '04 he saved 2,200. Now, I know that doesn't sound like a lot to the budgeters in Washington, DC. But here's a fellow whose wife is working, and he's gone back to school, and I expect that $4,000 came in handy over the last 2 years, didn't it?

Mr. Platt. Yes, definitely.

The President. And the issue is—and the issue in this campaign is and the issue confronting Congress now is, do we make this tax relief permanent, or does it go away? I'm for making it permanent, so people like him can keep their money.

See, I believe Government—as a matter of fact, I know Government—if Government is wise about how we spend your money, we can set priorities and meet those priorities. But I think once we meet those priorities, people like Steve can spend his money a lot better than the Federal Government can spend his money. That's part of my philosophy.

We've got another person who saved money on her taxes, Ellyn Wilson. Thanks for coming, Ellyn. Tell us what you do, Ellyn. Interesting job she's got—interesting jobs she's got.

Ellyn Wilson. Mr. President, I work three jobs. I'm a single mom, which is a full-time job, anyway.

The President. Is that your daughter?

Ms. Wilson. Yes, this is Hannah.

The President. Listen to your mom. I'm still listening to mine—most of the time. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. And this is my son, Caleb Wilson. He's eight.

The President. Fantastic. What do you do, Mom?

Ms. Wilson. I am a music teacher. This is my 14th year starting. That's my full-time position.

The President. Thank you for teaching.

Ms. Wilson. And I made a change this year, and I'm presently at Pettis County R–12 Dresden School District, one of the best schools in the State of Missouri.

The President. That's good. She's a marketer. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. And my part-time job is out of my home. I'm a Mary Kay consultant, and I'm working my way up to a star recruiter and working my way up in the business.

The President. Running her own business. She's a sole proprietor. Got her own business—kind of the American way, isn't it? Started her business out of her own home. Keep going.

Ms. Wilson. And I love to serve the Lord at what I do, and I'm church pianist at First Baptist Church, Sedalia, Missouri.

The President. There you go. She saved $1,000 on tax relief. A single mom—by the way, being a single mom in America is the toughest job in our country. It's incredibly hard work to be a single mom. The tax relief helps single moms—$1,000.

Ms. Wilson. And I got braces for my kids. It's helped a lot.

The President. Let's see—oh, yes. [*Laughter*] Did you ever. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wilson. With my Mary Kay supplies as well. So it really helped out tremendous, and I'm very thankful.

The President. Helped her small—helped with the kids. She's doing her job as a mom, to take care of her kids. And then she's got a little business going. And that money helps. Someday you'll be driving that pink Cadillac. If they don't make the tax relief permanent, $300 goes out of her pocket. That's 300 she can use. Remember the tax relief, how it works? Not only did we reduce all rates, which helped everybody in our small businesses; we raised the child credit to $1,000, and we reduced the marriage penalty. The Code ought to be encouraging marriage, not discouraging marriage.

We created a 10-percent bracket, which helps Ellyn. In other words, we've just got to keep this in mind, our country's got to keep in mind, what tax relief has meant

to working people, to people who are trying to get ahead in life. This is a perfect example of a soul who is working hard to do her duty as a mom and to realize her dreams as a small-business owner. The tax relief has helped. I appreciate you coming.

I hope you get what I'm trying to say here. See, we can get people like me running for office, and we talk about numbers and this, that, and the other. The most effective way to explain the effects of tax relief on our society is to ask people like Ellyn come and tell you why tax relief was effective. I'm honored you're here, Ellyn. Great job. Thank you.

Ms. Wilson. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Before I talk about how to make the world a safer place, I want to ask Dr. Don Allcorn, who is with us today, to stand up. I've asked Don to come today because we have an issue in this country. We've got an issue with these frivolous lawsuits that are making it difficult for people to practice medicine. And this just isn't in the case in Missouri, this is all over the country. I'm telling you, too many good docs are getting sued time and time and time again by frivolous lawsuits which, make no mistake about it, runs your cost up. It also makes it harder for you to find a good doc, and we need to do something about this in this country.

I want to—Don, what kind of medicine do you practice?

Don Allcorn. I'm in family practice in Lincoln, which is about 20 miles south of here. It's a town of about 900.

The President. Nine hundred.

Dr. Allcorn. Nine hundred.

The President. Well, that's—about 3 times bigger than Crawford.

Dr. Allcorn. That's right. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, thanks for coming. And so, give us—tell people what it's like. I mean——

Dr. Allcorn. I've always—my dream, as I was going through undergraduate and then medical school, was to practice in a small town, raise a family there. I think it's a good place to be.

The President. Is this your family here?

Dr. Allcorn. I have my family here with me.

The President. Beautiful family.

Dr. Allcorn. Four daughters and my lovely wife.

The President. She sure is.

Dr. Allcorn. My wife has a master's degree in nursing education, and she chose to be a stay-at-home mom and has done that for the last 19 years.

The President. Good. And so, what is it like to practice medicine in the modern era? I mean, you said something—he was telling me that when he first got going, he was able to practice without fear of being sued.

Dr. Allcorn. It's a real issue these days. I could not practice in Lincoln today had I not already started 19 years ago, because the cost of medicine is so high. And part of the reason for that is medical liability.

The President. Yes. So what are you paying—I mean, your premiums are high. Explain to people what it means to practice medicine defensively.

Dr. Allcorn. Defensively means that if—for example, this morning, I had a lady in the hospital that I know her pneumonia's better. I can hear it. It sounds better, but her chest X-ray didn't look that way. It looked like it had not changed. So I kept her an extra day or two just to make sure the chest X-ray is better. The reason is because if someday I ever go to court, then I will be able to prove on paper, from the chest X-ray report, that that lady is better.

The President. Yes. See, what he's saying is, is that if you practice medicine and you're afraid you're going to get sued, you will spend more than necessary to protect yourself in a court of law. That's just the reality of the society we live in.

When I first got to Washington, I said, "Well, maybe medical liability is not a national issue." Then they told me how much

the defensive practice of medicine costs our Treasury. Think about it. When you've got docs all over the country prescribing extra so in case they get sued, they've got a good case in court, it runs up your veterans' bills. It runs up your Medicare bills. It runs up your Medicaid bills. It costs the U.S. Treasury a lot of money, and therefore, I said, "Wait a minute. Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution."

We have a problem in this country, and it's a major difference in this campaign. The problem is, the trial lawyers are making it hard for people to practice medicine. This town here—this guy provides a great service to the people of his town. You don't want it so that docs feel like they've got to quit medicine because it's too expensive and can't do their practice.

Talk to an ob-gyn these days. Find out what that's like. When these ob-gyns are getting sued right and left, it makes it awfully hard for a person to be able to find a doc to deliver the baby. And that's not right in our society. So I'm for medical liability reform.

I'm running against—I don't think you can choose. Here's the way I put it. You cannot choose between and doctor and a patient and a hospital and a trial lawyer. [*Laughter*] In other words, you can't be for all of them. You've got to choose. You've got to make a choice. The fellow I'm running against made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

You've got to make choices. I made mine. I'm for medical liability reform now, so good men, like this good doc, can do his job, can practice that which loves to do, is to heal lives without fear of a frivolous lawsuit running him out of business.

Thanks for coming.

Let me talk about how to keep America safer right quick, then I'll answer questions. I want to tell you some of the lessons I have learned and the country must learn about September the 11th. One, we face an enemy which is coldblooded, an enemy with which we cannot negotiate and hope for the best. See, you cannot talk sense into these people. These people are full of hatred. They're ideologues that use terror as a weapon, and they're trying to shake our will. They're trying to play upon our conscience. They don't have a conscience. They go into a Russian schoolhouse and mow down young kids. And the only way to deal with them is to find them and bring them to justice around the world so we don't have to face them here at home. [*Applause*]

And we must be—okay, hold on. All right. Thank you. I've got to keep working. I've got to keep working.

We must be strong and focused and unrelenting. Secondly, this is a different kind of war. It is a—I know there's a lot of vets here, and this is a different kind of war than you all were in. It's a war in which these people will hide in caves and lurk around in the cities and around the world and try to find safe harbor. So the second lesson is, is that we must not only find them—by the way, we're doing a good job. As I said in the speech the other night, three-quarters of known leaders of Al Qaida have been brought to justice, and we're on the hunt. We'll stay on the hunt.

But in order to make sure that they can't find safe haven, I issued a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the President says something, I think it must be easy to understand and he must mean what he says. And I meant what I said.

And when the Taliban refused our demand for them to give up Al Qaida and to stop playing safe haven—providing safe haven, we led a coalition and removed them from power. And America is safer for it. The Al Qaida can no longer train there. They can no longer plan there. The people of Afghanistan are free. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror now. They're our friends when it comes to routing out those killers. They helped us find them.

But something else is taking place there too, as well, which will mean our children and grandchildren can grow up in a more peaceful world that we all hope for, and that is, Afghanistan is moving toward democracy. It's an amazing thing for a President to be able to say. It wasn't all that long ago that that country was run by the Taliban. These are the kind of people that would take a woman in the public square and whip her because she didn't toe the line. They were dim-viewed. They're—had a dark vision of the world, and now light has arrived in Afghanistan in the form of a free society.

Many young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago, in Cleveland, Ohio, I welcomed athletes to the International Children's Games. And right to my right was the Afghan girl's soccer team. They were there because they had been freed. Young girls are going to school there now the first—for the first time. Three years isn't very long, when you think about it. But 3 years after the Taliban were removed from power, 10 million citizens in Afghanistan registered to vote—10 million. It's an amazing thought, isn't it. They're going to have Presidential elections this October. The people are going to be allowed to go to the polls and say, who—"Here's who I want to be President in my country." An amazing thing has happened.

The third lesson is, is that we must deal with threats before they fully materialize. That's one of the serious lessons of September the 11th. You know, prior to September the 11th, we would see a threat somewhere and say, "Oh, we don't need to deal with that, because it's not going to come home to hurt us." That's what we thought. That's what the history had taught us, that we're protected. But that changed on that day, and it's really important for the American President and the American people to understand that when we see a threat, that we must have to take it seriously. We must deal with it before it comes to hurt us.

And that's what led me to go to the United States Congress about Saddam Hussein. See, I saw a threat. And the reason I saw one, because he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. And the worst thing that could possibly happen is there be a connection between weapons of mass destruction and terrorist networks that we know want to inflict harm on us. He had paid—when I say harbored terrorists, Abu Nidal, his organization, were there. He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He's a terrorist. This guy, Zarqawi, was in Baghdad. He's the guy that chops people's heads off on TV and hopes to cause us to tremble and shirk from our duty. Saddam Hussein subsidized the families of suicide bombers. It's a terrorist act when somebody goes and kills the innocent. And he invaded his neighbors. He was shooting missiles at our pilots. That guy was a threat.

And so I went to the Congress, and the Congress agreed. As a matter of fact, they passed a resolution. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, the very same intelligence. They passed a resolution that authorized the use of force.

My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at and made some pretty strong statements about the threat of Saddam Hussein. He voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Now, before a President commits troops, it's necessary to try to solve problems peacefully. I want you to know that. We spent time going to the United Nations, because I was hopeful that we could deal with this threat diplomatically. And I gave a speech there and laid out our case about Saddam Hussein being a threat. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and they looked at the history. They remembered the history I remembered and passed by 15-to-nothing a Security Council resolution that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The free world spoke loud and clear, but as he had for over a decade, he ignored the demands. It's like, "Go ahead and talk, I'm not interested in listening." He wasn't interested in the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, he deceived the inspectors that the U.N. sent into his country. In other words, they said, "Well, we'll send inspectors in," and he deceived them. And we all knew that.

So at this point in our history, after diplomacy failed, I had a choice to make. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best when it came to the decisions of a madman, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

We didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. He could have passed that capability on to the enemy, and that's a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

Fourth lesson: We put—when we put our troops in harm's way, they deserve the full support of our Government. That's why I went to the United States Congress September of '03 and asked for supplemental funding to support our troops in combat, $87 billion worth. We received great support, overwhelming support—as a matter of fact, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, my opponent and his runningmate were two of four Senators who voted for the authorization of force and then voted against funding our troops. We have a difference of opinion on this issue when it comes to supporting troops in combat. So they asked him why. And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it," you know. I don't know if they talk that way in the coffee shops here in Sedalia, Missouri. [*Laughter*] "Yes, no." And then they kept pressing him, and he said, "Well, it's a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. Let me tell you what that means. I think liberty can change societies and promote the peace. Our short-term strategy is to help these countries achieve—get on the road to democracy and stability, is to train Iraqis and Afghans so they can do the work necessary to defend freedom. And we'll get that done as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they've earned.

But the long-term strategy is to spread freedom. Let me tell you some interesting—a story about that that maybe will help illustrate the point I'm trying to make. You know, I've spent a lot of time in the past with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. And I like him a lot. He's a good guy. His favorite singer was Elvis. [*Laughter*]

So, it's interesting, though, just to remember it wasn't all that long ago—what, 60 years ago, I guess—that we were at war with the Japanese. My dad, your husbands, dads, grandfathers fought in the same war against Japan. It was a bloody war. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America, and we were fighting them. And here I am, 60 years later, sitting down with this guy, strategizing about the peace.

What happened was, is that after World War II, Harry Truman and the State of Missouri and other Americans believed in the capacity for liberty to transform societies, believed that a free society would convert the Japanese people from enemies to friends. That's what they believed. And as a result of that belief and as a result of staring down the skeptics and the critics—and you can understand why people were skeptical after World War II about Japan becoming an ally in peace. We just fought them. You know, moms and dads had lost a son in combat, and they're saying

to themselves, "You think liberty is going to transform these people?" But they—but my predecessor did and others did.

As a result of believing in the power of liberty, Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit down and talk about how to keep the peace on the Korean Peninsula. We talk about Iraq and how a free Iraq will make the world a more peaceful place. What's going to happen someday is that when America keeps faith with our belief in liberty, an American President is going to sit down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off.

It's hard work. I know there's people who are skeptical about whether or not it will happen. Just remember what I told you about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that four women were pulled off a bus by the Taliban and killed because they're—I think they were registering to vote, themselves, or helping others to register. And people said, "Oh no, there goes the elections." Since that day, millions have shown up to vote.

Freedom is a powerful—freedom is powerful. Iraq will have elections in January. It wasn't all that long ago that Saddam Hussein was torturing and killing the people of Iraq, and now they're headed toward Presidential elections—or prime—or elections for their Prime Minister. It's amazing what happens.

You know why I feel so strongly about the power of liberty? It's because I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. That's what I believe.

These are historic times we're living in. These are historic times we're living in. The free societies in Afghanistan and Iraq are going to affect the neighborhood that's desperate for freedom. Think about the example they're going to set. Women will say, "Look at the free women of Iraq. Why can't we be free?" Young boys are going to say, "Look, there's a free society in our neighborhood, and why do I want to strap bombs on as a suicider?" Reformers, political prisoners, are going to say, "Wait a minute. The United States is standing true to its belief that all people ought to be free." Free societies there are going to serve as powerful examples. They're going to promote freedom in other countries, and that part of the world needs freedom. The long-term solution, so our children can grow up in a free world, is never forget the power of liberty to transform societies.

That's why I'm running again. That's why I'm out asking for the vote. A couple of more things, then I'll answer questions. In a changing world, things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. We stand for some things. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundation of our societies. We stand for a culture of life in which everybody matters and every being counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

I'm coming today to ask for the vote and tell you there's a reason why, and I hope you got a better feel for why I'd like to serve this country for 4 more years. And if you give me the chance to do so, I'll uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I've been elected. [*Applause*]

Let me answer some questions. Not yet. I've got some time for some questions, then we've got head on the bus here. Anybody got any questions? Yes, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. All right, well, that's not a question, that's a request. [*Laughter*] I'll sign it, so long as you go out and register somebody to vote.

Yes, sir.

France and Germany/International Cooperation

Q. Do our previous allies remember us, such as France and Germany? Thank you.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. First of all, we put together coalitions. In Afghanistan, for example, there's French

Special Forces that have been helping our Special Forces find Al Qaida. We've been working together in Haiti. Haiti had a problem, and we provided some stability forces, along with the Canadians and the French. So there are places where we are working together.

As a matter of fact, I put together what's called the Proliferation Security Initiative, which is a 60-nation coalition, all aimed at intercepting the flow of technologies so that weapons of mass destruction don't get in the hands of our enemies. I don't know if you remember when we busted the A.Q. Khan network. This is a guy who was a fellow out of Pakistan that was selling technologies to North Korea and Iran. And we intercepted a ship—we, the coalition, intercepted a ship of materials aimed at Libya, which helped us make the case to Colonel Qadhafi, which caused him to make another decision about whether or not he was going to have weapons of mass destruction.

We work with Germany on a lot of causes as well. They just didn't agree with me on Iraq. They did on a first resolution, but when it came time to define serious consequences, they made a different choice. But our coalition was a strong one going into Iraq, you know. We shouldn't denigrate the contributions of our allies. My opponent called them "the coerced and the bribed." That's denigrating allies.

Tony Blair is a standup guy. The people of England are putting troops in combat. The Australians were there, Prime Minister Howard. The Poles went with us. Now there's nearly 30 nations involved in Iraq. These aren't the coerced and bribed; these are the brave and the dedicated to peace and freedom. We'll put coalitions together, and we'll work with alliances. I'll never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Yes, ma'am. Okay, we—either way. You're next. Be thinking of a good question. You already got it? Okay.

Support for Families of Fallen Soldiers

Q. Mr. President, I know a lot of our boys are not going to come home because they are giving up their lives for what we truly believe in in America. What are we going to do for their families that are left behind?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. The first thing we'll do is support them with our prayers. And there will be survivor benefits. I've met with a lot of the families to whom you refer, and I've been struck by their incredible courage and strength. My promise to them is that we will complete the mission so that their child or their husband or wife has not died in vain. And that mission is to leave behind a better world.

It's really important that our—that we never send mixed signals to our troops in harm's way or mixed signals to the Iraqi citizens who wonder whether or not we've got what it takes to stay the line, see. What I like to do is, I don't like to put artificial timetables out there because of politics. My—I say to the—I say to our troops and I say to the enemy and I say to the Iraqis, we will be there until the mission is finished, and then we're coming home.

Every life matters. And it is—there's been some incredible bravery and sacrifice made. And I will do my best to assure those loved ones that the personal sacrifice will mean this world is a more peaceful place, because I think that's what's happening.

Yes, ma'am? Fire away.

Flexibility Under the No Child Left Behind Act

Q. I have a daughter that's a fifth grade teacher just north of Columbia, and she's very concerned about your no-child-left-behind policy.

The President. Why?

Q. She says, what about behavior-disordered children and the learning-disabled children?

The President. I appreciate that. What she's asking me is, "Well, you have an accountability system. Shouldn't there be a different standard for certain children?" In other words, should the accountability system be flexible? And the answer is: Yes, it should be and is. You know, you can't expect a child that who can't speak English as a first language to immediately be able to adapt to the education system. And so the system shows flexibility, as it should.

By the way, these systems are designed by the citizens of each State. These aren't Federal tests. All the Federal Government is saying is, "We've increased your funding by 49 percent since 2001 for K through 12, and now you show us, not only Federal people, but everybody, whether or not a child can read." And you bet there's a flexibility in the assessments. So you tell her, there's flexibility in the assessment system.

But I will tell you something, I'm not going to yield when it comes to assessment. A system that doesn't assess is a system that just shuffles kids through, and that's unacceptable. It's not a—and believe me, you know, as a former Governor, I've heard it all. You know, "Oh, they're just teaching the test." I've heard that. But I—you know, when you teach a child to read, they pass the test. Or, "All they're doing is taking tests all the time." Well, that's not true. They're learning how to be able to read; otherwise they can't pass the test.

We should not allow the excusemaking to weaken accountability. Accountability saves lives. Accountability reinforces whether or not a school district is doing the right thing. Accountability will tell us whether or not there needs to be changes. Accountability will let us know that the teacher is doing a fabulous job. Accountability says to parents, "Here's the standing of your school." Accountability allows one district to compare to another. Accountability is healthy and necessary for excellence in every classroom in the United States of America.

Got a question? Yes. Future Farmer of America, there you go.

Military Draft/Reconfiguration of U.S. Forces

Q. Mr. President, if the war on terrorism continues, do you feel that there will be a need for the draft? And do you want to start the draft again?

The President. Yes, first of all, the war on terror will continue. It's going to take awhile. And no, we don't need a draft. What we need to do is—don't worry about it. What we need to do is to make sure our troops are well-paid and well-housed and well-equipped.

And that's why over the last 3½ years we've increased military pay by 21 percent. And that's why our housing is better. We've improved housing. You see, you keep a soldier in the military by appealing to his family or her family. When the housing is good, when the health is good, they stay. When the pay is decent, they stay.

And so therefore, in making a volunteer army work, it's best to treat our soldiers with the best we possibly can. And we made great progress in doing just that. No, I'm—we don't need the draft. We don't need a draft at all.

I'll tell you what else we need to do is we need to transform our military. And let me tell you what that means. A little flap came up the other day when I announced that we're going to reconfigure our troops, in Europe, for example. Now, our troop strength in Europe was set when the Soviet Union was an enemy. Well, the Soviet Union doesn't exist anymore. And so, therefore, our troop strength in Europe needs to reflect the threats of the 21st century.

We can replace people with a lighter, more mobile military. In other words, the heavy—let me rephrase it. We can replace divisions of heavy armament and, therefore, people with fewer people and equipment which can move lighter and more lethal. We've changed our military since the day

in which the Soviet was a threat. It is lighter, more agile, easier to move. And therefore, we can reconfigure, transform how we meet the threats of the 21st century.

That will take pressure off our troops at home, by the way. Cycling deployments is a strain on families. And so hopefully we'll have a more stable military so moms don't have to move their children from school to school to school and that people will be based in—more likely to stay in one base longer.

Our military is different. It is being converted into a force that can move just like that, very quickly, you know, light units but are lethal. And that's necessary to defend against the enemy which exists.

And so that's how you make sure you don't need a draft, is to make the military perform better and take care of the people in the military.

Yes, ma'am. Hold on. We've got to crank that thing up.

English Language Skills

Q. You talk about accountability in reading. Will you please require that our schools teach English? And will you rescind President Clinton's Executive order so that they can read a ballot in English and not have ballots and other driver's license and Social Security all in whatever language they—is their home language?

The President. Yes, well, listen, I think, look—no question—the accountability systems in schools are based on English. In other words, we expect kids to read English. When I was the Governor of Texas, I supported what's called "English Plus." English is necessary to be able to realize dreams in our society, plus additional language. But I think we are—I think it's pretty clear in America that you've got to speak English in order to be able to succeed here.

And so the schools are based—when he mentioned the accountability system, they are based on English. And it's going to take a while to help transition certain kids. We've got a society in which people are coming here to work. They're working the farms. They're working the meat plants. And a lot of times their children don't speak English, and so the function of a school is to help them learn to speak English. And ours is a society based on English, but we've got to recognize that a diverse society is one in which other languages are learned and spoke as well, but English is the primary language.

Yes.

Prayers for the President/Religious Freedom

Q. Hi.

The President. Hi. You're not nervous, are you?

Q. No, how can I be? This is an answered prayer for me to get to speak to you.

The President. [*Laughter*] Well, thanks for coming.

Q. This is a comment to encourage you. We here in the heartland, I think, are responsible for being the anchor, and we know that there is a lot of trends on both coasts, but we try to stay steady, and we try to do what we feel is the right thing. And I want to tell you that I believe I can be a Christian representative and say there's a whole bunch of people praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. There are those here that will know what I mean what I say that. In my prayers over the last 3 years, I am definitely impressed that you've been chosen for this time.

And finally, I don't want you to worry about those weapons of mass destruction. They're going to find them. They're there.

The President. Thank you very much. Thanks. I appreciate your prayers a lot. Let me make a comment about religion. First of all, the prayers help a lot, and I thank you for that. It means a lot to me and Laura that people would pray for us.

Ours is a society that is based upon the ability for people to worship or not worship, if that's what they choose to do. It's really an important part of the American tradition and history and future, and I believe that.

We need to be serving the example in a world that says, "If you worship, you're a patriot. If you don't worship, you're a patriot. And if you do worship, you can worship any way you see fit." It's really one of the most important traditions of our country. It serves as such a wonderful example that—around the world—we value the freedom to choose how we want to worship, and the great thing about our country is that it's that freedom, and we'll guard that. The other thing that's—about our country which is true, there's a lot of people who have chosen to pray for me and Laura, and I can't thank people enough for that. It's the sustaining aspect of our life, and we're very grateful for that. Thank you.

2004 Election

Q. First of all, I have to say, my mom said to tell you she loves you.

The President. Your mom said that?

Q. My mom said that. She couldn't be here today.

The President. Tell her thanks.

Q. I appreciate so much the choice of your runningmate. A lot was made over John Edwards' great head of hair when he decided to accept the nomination, but I would take Dick Cheney's cute little smirk over that great head of hair any day of the year. [*Laughter*]

The President. He's a steady guy, Dick Cheney. I really like him. We're close, and he's a good guy, really good guy.

Q. Any chance he'll run in '08?

The President. Pardon me?

Q. Any chance that he will run in '08?

The President. Oh, no, listen, we've got to get through '04. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's a done deal. '04's a done deal.

The President. No, no done deal. Well, I appreciate that. I have no idea about '08. I will tell you, we are—Dick and I are focused on November of '04. We're traveling hard, working hard, and balancing time on the road with time we need to spend in Washington to do our jobs. And tomorrow, I'm going to spend the morning in Washington. I'll be meeting with Members of Congress. I'll be meeting with my national security team. And then I'm going to head on down to Florida and try to comfort as best I can the people whose lives, once again, have been affected by natural disaster.

But no, I'm—thanks for talking about '08, but it's just kind of—don't forget about right now, you know? [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir. A couple of more questions, and we've got to go. Yes, sir.

Veterans' Health Benefits

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Good.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, I am. He's asking about veterans' health benefits. Let me just give you the record. We have spent more in 4 years on veterans'—we have increased veterans' benefits in 4 years by more than the predecessor did in 8 years. In other words, in the 4 years I've been President, we've increased spending by more than my predecessor did, one. Two, I told the people, I said, "If I'm in, we'll reduce the waiting time necessary for the veterans." We've done that. Three, we're making sure that the veterans' hospitals and clinics meet the needs. A lot of veterans are moving kind of—the central part of our country down to the South and the West, and those veterans' clinics and hospitals need to be upgraded around the country, where the veterans live. And so you're seeing us now match assets with need.

We've increased the number of people receiving pharmaceuticals on the veterans' list. The answer is, yes, sir, we have a duty to our veterans. We'll keep our commitment to our veterans.

Got one?

Federal Highways Legislation/Partisanship in Washington

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for your comments on the Faith-Based Initiative. I'm certainly for that.

But my family is involved in trucking here in Missouri, and I was wondering what you, as President, could do with Federal money to upgrade our highways. Our trucks are falling apart because our highways are falling apart.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. We're in the midst of a discussion on a highway bill. I just want to make sure that the highway bill is a fair bill. We've put out a number we thought was fair, and we're working with the Congress to meet the number. And hopefully, we'll get it done. You know, there's a—either get the highway bill a 6-year extension, or they may just decide to go with a 1-year extension and work it out later on. There will be a highway bill, and just want to make sure that the highway bill honors the Highway Trust Fund. The Highway Trust Fund is set up so that we use the money from the gasoline tax and not general revenues. And I think it's very important that we guard that aspect of the trust, keep the trust of the trust fund.

And that's why we're having the discussions we're having, and you know, we'll see if we can get a bill done. There will be a lot of discussions here in the next 1 month. It's hard to get things done this year coming down the stretch because there's a lot of politics in Washington. [*Laughter*] It's a town that—I've been frankly amazed at the zero-sum attitude in that town. "We can't do this because Bush might look good," or "We can't do this because so-and-so would do this, make him look bad." I mean, it's not the right way, but that's the way it is.

I've worked hard to try to change the tone there, and I admit it's hard to do. But I'm going to keep trying. The President's job is to lead the whole Nation. I understand not everybody's for me. I believe over 50 percent will be, but not everybody is. And therefore—but I still have the responsibility to be the President of everybody, and I will. And I—you know, I will try to do my best to work with people in the other party to get things done. But I can't guarantee much will get done between now and the election because it's pretty partisan up there right now. They—it's real partisan up there right now. [*Laughter*] That's just reality.

Last question, sir, and then I've got to go. I've got to get on the bus.

International Cooperation

Q. What a pleasure, Mr. President, to actually face and see my Commander in Chief.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. My question is, why are the French so ungrateful for what all we have done for that nation, especially in the past?

The President. The who?

Q. The French.

The President. Oh, yes. Yes. Well, I'm getting the picture here today of—[*laughter*]—look, we've got a—we just try to work with everybody as best we can, you know, and if they—if—I'm just not going to let anybody veto our policy, if we do what we think is right and lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace and try to work with everybody, you know, try to bring people along. And by far—a lot of nations are working with us so far. We've got good coalitions, and I'm not going to touch that. [*Laughter*]

All right, one more question, then I've got to go. Got one? Okay. Now, I promise, she's the last one.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. We've got to go down the road.

President's Autograph

Q. Mr. President, my question was on the draft. Thank you for answering that. But if at all possible, could I have your autograph, please? [*Laughter*]

The President. Tough question. Where's the guy with the hat? Oh, there he is. Okay, get the hat, get the vest.

Who's got one? Okay, go ahead.

Whiteman Air Force Base

Q. Mr. President, 20 years ago, Ronald Reagan spoke in Sedalia, right here in this building.

The President. Really? Right here? You've got to be kidding. Isn't that something. I'm honored to be following in his footsteps again.

Q. My question is——

The President. How old were you then?

Q. Me?

The President. Yes.

Q. Twenty-six. I guess everybody knows how old I am. [*Laughter*] My question is, Whiteman Air Force Base and the stealth bomber are very important to the local economy here. And we've got a pretty good Representative that's done a good job sticking up for Whiteman. Trouble is, he's a Democrat. But that's okay; he's done a good job in that. The problem is, he came to town on an alleged whistlestop tour with his buddy, who's running against you. And we're talking about the Presidential election now, folks. So how is Whiteman Air Force Base and it's impact on our economy going to be different under you than under your opponent?

The President. Well, you've seen how it is under me. You know, when I'm talking about a military that's transforming, the stealth was part of that transformation. It was the leading edge of the transformation. I remember those stories about the pilots loading up here in Missouri, flying over and delivering ordnances and coming home. Now, that's the—that's a military which has been transformed.

And so the stealth was on the leading edge of transformation. It's a new way to approach how to keep the peace, and the fact that we've got the capacity to fly long-range out of our country to deliver ordnance and come back home is—reflects what I'm talking about. In other words, the military has got to be lethal, easier to move, and stealthy, in this case.

And so I'm—people have seen how I've used our military up to now. We're going to make it stronger as time goes on by reconfiguring. It makes these home bases more important. And I appreciate you bringing that up.

Listen, I do have to go, otherwise the people will be waiting. I hate to keep people waiting.

God bless you. Thanks for your time. Get out and vote.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. at the Missouri State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Charles E. Kruse, president, board of directors, Missouri Farm Bureau; Mayor Robert Wasson of Sedalia, MO; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia.

Remarks in Columbia, Missouri
September 7, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years. It is great to be back in Columbia. It is nice to be here at the Boone County Fairgrounds. I was hoping to get a corny dog. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming.

We're taking a bus tour across your State. It's a great way to spend a Tuesday. I'll tell you why I'm here. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe we've got to get out—I'm not only here to ask for the vote; I'm here to ask for your help. I think we have a duty in this country to vote, and I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And then after you get them registered to vote, head them to the polls. And as you get them going to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer country, a stronger country, a better country, put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

And by the way, when you're registering people, make sure you not only register Republicans and independents, but make sure you include discerning Democrats too. You might remember Zell Miller. He's a discerning Democrat, and there's a lot of folks like him all across this country. I appreciate you coming. It means a lot to me that you're here.

My only regret is that Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, I know it. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately she didn't hold me to the promise. As you all saw, she is a—has got a lot of class. She is a great First Lady, a wonderful mom. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back in there is so that she'll have 4 more years as the First Lady.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney as well. He's a fine Vice President. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hairdo. I picked him because he's a man of enormous experience and sound judgment, and he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be standing up here with Kenny. Congressman Hulshof is a fine, fine Member of the United States Congress. I appreciate it. I'm proud to call him friend.

I understand that Governor Blunt was here. I know Lieutenant Governor Kinder is here. Good to see you, Peter. Thanks for coming. Pete's a good friend of mine, been a friend for quite a while.

I appreciate the speaker being here, Catherine Hanaway. And I appreciate the fact that Sarah Steelman was here. I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I appreciate your attendance.

I want to thank my uncle Bucky Bush from St. Louis, Missouri. He's here with us today.

I thank Ernie Lee, State veterans cochairman, is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Ernie. I want to thank Mark Wills, the country and western singer, for entertaining you here.

But most of all, thank you. I'm here to tell you, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm looking forward to telling you where I stand and what I believe and where I'll lead this country. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, I believe you've got to raise the bar. I believe you must assess early so you can solve problems before they're too late. I believe we've got to end this practice of simply shuffling the kids through the schools year

after year, grade after grade, without learning the basics. I believe in local control of schools. And I know we're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

We have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. Medicare is a really important program, yet it wasn't modernizing like medicine was. For example, we were willing to pay—or did pay $100,000 for heart surgery but would not pay for the prescription drugs that would have prevented the heart surgery from happening in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We've strengthened and modernized Medicare for our seniors. Beginning in 2006, all seniors can have prescription drugs in Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of the American workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. When you're out gathering the vote, remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and we've been through that attack, which hurt our economy. But we're overcoming those obstacles. We're overcoming them because we're a great country. We're overcoming them because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're overcoming them because we believe in the creativity of the workforce.

Last Friday, we received a jobs report that shows we added 144,000 new jobs in the month of August—1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent. That's a full point below the peak of last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s. Our economic stimulus plan is working.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that governments should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will carry Missouri again and win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live is changing. You know, our dads and granddads generally had one job, one career; that company they worked for provided a pension plan and health benefits. The world we're living in is different. Women now work outside the home. They work in the home and outside the home. Many people are changing careers often. Yet many of the most fundamental systems, our Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday. They were designed for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so we'll transform these systems. And we will do so so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, so you can live your own dreams.

A hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. And I have a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs in America, we must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. The cost to our economy of litigation is conservatively estimated to be over $230 billion a year.

We have a difference of opinion in this race. Now, I recognize my opponent

changes positions a lot, but for 20 years, he's been one of the trial lawyers' most reliable friends. He's consistently voted against legal reform that protects our entrepreneurs and our workers. Fellow lawyers have responded with millions of dollars of donations for his campaign. I just disagree. See, I'm taking a different view. I believe we've got to stop those junk lawsuits. Personal injury lawyers shouldn't get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans.

To create jobs here in America, Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk. I submitted a plan 2 years ago. It encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages clean coal technology and exploration for hydrocarbons in a sensitive way. To keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs here, we must reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. goods and services. See, we open up our markets to other countries, which is good for you. It means you have more choices, and when you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So what we're telling other countries like China is, you treat us the way we treat you. American workers and farmers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

And one reason our ag economy is so strong today is because we're selling soybeans around the world, and we're selling corn around the world, and I intend to keep markets open so our farmers can make a good living.

We have a difference in this campaign on taxes. See, I believe in order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. I think running up the taxes on the people now would be a mistake. It would hurt our economic growth. The fellow I'm running against has proposed over $2 trillion of new Federal spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It's awfully tempting, when you get out there, to tell people what they want to hear. So they asked him—they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, don't worry. I'll pay for it by taxing the rich." Well, first of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for all his promises. You know what that means. Secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, don't worry, we'll just tax the rich." Well, the rich hire lawyers and accountants, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me say something else about the Tax Code. The Tax Code is a drag on our economy. It's a complicated mess. It's filled with special interest loopholes. It is estimated that the Tax Code burdens Americans with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork every year. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to simplify and reform the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, we've got to do more to keep jobs here in America. We've got to help people gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system of America. And we'll help workers retrain in our community colleges. As well we will double the number of people served by our principal job training programs.

Most new jobs in America, by the way, are filled with people with at least 2 years of college. And yet, one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll provide new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools

and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In changing times, we've got to do more to make health care available and affordable. See, most of the uninsured, one-half of the working uninsured, are employees of small businesses. Yet, small businesses are having trouble affording health care. And there are some reasons why. In order to make sure our families get the help they need, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

We will expand health savings accounts to help our small businesses and families. We will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. But to make sure that health care is available and affordable, we need medical liability reform in America. Let me tell you, these frivolous lawsuits against our docs are making it harder for good doctors to practice medicine, and they're running up the cost of your health care.

I met Mike Ditmore, sitting right there. He's a doc. He's a neurosurgeon. He was, until his premiums went up to $108,000 a year. These lawsuits drove him out of business. There's one less good doctor available for help here in the State of Missouri. I met doctors all over our country. Talk to your ob-gyns. Ask them what it's like to live in a world in which these junk lawsuits are making it hard for them to practice medicine. It's not right. We need medical liability reform now in America.

By the way, Dr. Ditmore is so upset about medical liability reform and other issues, he's running for the State senate to do something about it.

In all we do to help the folks in health care, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

I'll continue to promote ownership in America. See, during changing times, if you own something, it brings stability to your life. We want more people owning their own home. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high now? More people owning their home. We've got a plan to expand ownership. We want more people opening their front door and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

Another important part of ownership is our retirement system. If you're an older citizen, you don't have to worry about Social Security. The promise our Government made to you will be kept. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I hope the youngsters listen carefully to this debate about Social Security. See, I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their tax money and put it in a personal savings account, to make sure the Social Security system is available to them.

We have a difference when it comes to policy here at home. If you listen carefully, my opponent plans to expand Government. My plan is to expand opportunity, because I trust the American people.

In a world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that bring stability to our society, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of

our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And we will advance—we will work to advance liberty around the world, because we know that freedom will bring a future of hope and peace that we all long for. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently. America must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted for the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits our troops into combat, we must try all means to deal with the threat. So I was hoping diplomacy would work, and I went to the United Nations. And I said to the United Nations, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered. And they voted by a 15-to-nothing vote in the Security Council that said, "Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the United Nations sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice, a choice that only comes to the President, a choice no President wants to make but best be prepared to make it. And that is, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Because we defended to act—because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people now live in freedom. In Afghanistan—this is an amazing thought, at least it is for me. You know, the Taliban was running this country, and they wouldn't let young girls go to school. And if their moms stepped out of line, they whipped them in the public square and sometimes killed them. These guys were brutal. They were backward. They had a dim view of the world. Light is arising in Afghanistan. Ten million people have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Amazing.

Despite ongoing acts of violence and despite the fact it wasn't all that long ago that a tyrant brutally ruled a country in Iraq, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. The world is changing, and we will stand with the people

of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We are also serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that makes America more secure and the world more peaceful.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders train their armies. We want Iraqis and Afghan citizens doing the hard work of defending freedom. We'll help them through their elections. We'll move—we'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I am proud of our military. I have had the honor of meeting our men and women who wear the uniform here at home and around the world. I've seen their courage and their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear today's uniform.

I made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones. They will have the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why in September of '03, a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and requested $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, and supplies needed for our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. And we received great support for that request. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding—[*laughter*]—2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they—do you realize this? Four United States Senators—only four—voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, "Why?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." And then they said, you know—he said, well, he's proud of it, and finally said, "It's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] That's what he said. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A Commander in Chief must be steady, must have a clear vision, must speak clearly. My opponent has now voted for the war and against supplying our troops. When he got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Most recently, he switched again, saying he would have voted for the war, even knowing everything we know today. And then in the last 2 days, he woke up with yet another new position, and this one isn't even his own. [*Laughter*] It's the one of Howard Dean. He even used the same words Howard Dean did back when he supposedly disagreed with him. [*Laughter*] Look, no matter how many times my opponent flip-flops, we were right to make America safer by removing Saddam Hussein from power.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. It is wrong for my opponent to denigrate the contributions of our allies, people who are standing side by side with our men and women in uniform, risking their lives for freedom and peace. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to build alliances. We'll work together. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. You know, I've spent a lot of time with Prime

Minister Koizumi of Japan. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that our dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese. They were a sworn enemy of America. And yet, because Harry Truman of Missouri and other folks during that period of time believed liberty could transform societies, Japan is free today.

See, there was a lot of skeptics during those days, I'm certain, that said, "How could an enemy ever be an ally? We just fought them." But people believed in power of liberty to change enemies to friends. And so today, I sit down with the head of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about how to make the world more peaceful. Someday, a duly elected leader of Iraq is going to sit down with an American leader, and they'll be talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead for liberty. I believe women want to be free. I believe that given the chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these—freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of government, the American people will be better able to realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world in freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes!" I was doing my best to thank people and comfort them, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." As we did that day, he took it personally. I took it personally. You all took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I said if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

May God bless you. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. at the Boone County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Catherine L. Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; Missouri State Senator Sarah Steelman; William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Ernie Lee, cochairman, Missouri Veterans Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Notification of Intent To Designate Iraq as a Beneficiary Developing Country for Purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences
September 7, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"), I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the 1974 Act. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Iraq.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 7, 2004.

NOTE: The proclamation of September 7 to modify the Generalized System of Preferences is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments
September 7, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendments for the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy, and the Corps of Engineers. In total, these amendments would not increase the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 Budget.

The details of these proposals are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks on Intelligence Reform
September 8, 2004

I want to thank the Members who are here. Thank—thank you all for coming today. We are going to discuss intelligence reform. I will be submitting a plan to the Congress that strengthens intelligence reform—strengthens the intelligence services. We believe that there ought to be a National Intelligence Director who has full budgetary authority. We'll talk to Members of Congress about how to implement that. I look forward to working with the Members to get a bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

It's important we get our intelligence gathering correct. After all, we're still at war. We've got to find the enemy before they hurt us. We've got to do everything we can to protect the homeland. We're still

on the offense here in this country. We're chasing down these killers overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. We're making good progress.

Ultimately, we will prevail because liberty changes countries, and liberty changes the habits of people. Liberty promotes peace. And that's why we appreciate the sacrifice of the men and women who wear the uniform. They're serving a great cause. We mourn every loss of life. We'll honor their memories by completing the mission.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House prior to a meeting with congressional leaders. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks During a Visit to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida

September 8, 2004

The President. Good afternoon. I want to thank Max Mayfield for this really interesting tour of this important facility. And I want to thank you, Max, for your service to our country.

Director Max Mayfield. My pleasure.

The President. You did a fabulous job. You did a fabulous job. It's good to be here with my brother, Jeb, as well.

A short time ago, I visited the relief efforts at Port St. Lucie, and I've just toured the National Hurricane Center. The people I met today are committed, and they are compassionate. They're doing a fantastic job, and I appreciate their dedicated service to our country.

Once again, Florida has faced the devastation of a hurricane. And once again the people of Florida are showing their character and their strength and their deep concern for their neighbors.

The damage from high winds and flooding reaches the Atlantic Coast to the Panhandle. Some have lost their lives. Many have had their homes damaged. Some have lost their homes. Families have lost power. Small businesses have suffered. Citrus growers have lost much of their crop. And all those here in Florida are in the thoughts and prayers of the American people. People all across this country know that—know what you've been through and care deeply about you.

I want the people of Florida and other affected areas to know that the Federal Government is doing everything we can to help you. This morning, I signed legislation providing $2 billion in additional funding for cleanup and FEMA relief operations and emergency food, shelter, and medical care. I want to thank the Members of Congress for their bipartisan support of this bill. I've also directed the Department of Agriculture to help compensate citrus growers for lost crops and trees, to help fund the clearing of debris, and with other agencies to help migrant farm workers find shelter. As the damage is assessed, I will ask Congress for additional resources for infrastructure repair and disaster loan assistance to businesses and homeowners.

Jeb is doing a really fine job down here, and I appreciate, Jeb, you and your staff for working so hard on behalf of the people of this State.

I want to thank Mike Brown of FEMA and the FEMA staff that have worked long hours to help coordinate efforts for—for the people of Florida. I want to thank the local officials for their outstanding work as well in preparing and responding to Hurricanes Charley and Frances. And of course,

again, I want to thank Max and his staff for doing a really fine job of helping to predict these hurricanes and watching them carefully, and using all the technology available to them to better prepare the people of the United States if a hurricane were to hit.

I want to thank the emergency operation centers all across the State of Florida, the first-responders, the police, and firefighters. People are working long hours here to help bring stability and help into the communities in this State, and they're doing a really fine job.

I want to thank the Red Cross—and I appreciate the president, Marty Evans, joining us today. It seems like every time I've been to a disaster, the Red Cross is always there first. And that means a lot to the people of our country.

I want to thank the people from the Convoy of Hope. Jeb and I had a chance today to pass out ice and water and food supplies to people who needed help. We were there because the Convoy of Hope set up an aid station of compassion, and I want to thank those people there. They're from all around the country.

I want to thank the Salvation Army. I want to thank all the faith-based groups and citizens who have showed up to help somebody who needs help.

I want to thank the power and telephone crews who have worked so hard to restore service. A lot of people lost their electricity. And thanks to the good work of people here in Florida and repair folks from around the Southeast, electricity is being restored as quickly as possible.

I know the people of Florida will always remember the nurses and others who have worked incredibly long shifts at shelters to care for the elderly and the vulnerable.

The people of this State are overcoming adversity, once again. The Government is responding with needed resources. Businesses and community and faith-based groups are helping to speed the recovery. And in tragedy, the people of this State and the people across America are responding with goodness and generosity.

May God bless those who hurt. May God bless those who mourn the loss of life. And may God continue to bless this State and our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Max Mayfield, Director, National Hurricane Center; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Marsha J. "Marty" Evans, president and chief executive officer, American Red Cross.

Remarks in Colmar, Pennsylvania
September 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for the welcome. It's good to be back in Pennsylvania—again. It just seems like I was here yesterday. [*Laughter*] I was—[*laughter*]—kind of. But I'm glad to be here. I really appreciate you all coming out. Spirits are high. I'm feeling great about life.

I really appreciate being here at Byers Choice. Thank you all for your hospitality. You sure know how to make a President feel welcome. We're here because I want to talk about the economy some and a plan to keep this economy moving forward so people can realize their dreams. And it's such a wonderful place to come because the entrepreneurial spirit here is strong.

This is a company that was formed by Bob and Joyce Byers——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We are here—I appreciate you coming to Byers. It's such an honor to meet Bob and Joyce Byers. They are—they had a dream, and they wanted to build a small company into a large company, and they've done so. They started their company in the 1960s. They found a good idea—they thought of the idea. Government didn't think of the idea. They did. They decided to take risk. They hired people wisely. They invested wisely, and their company is growing. And I appreciate the contribution they've made.

They've got a fantastic customer base, because they——

[*The disturbance continued.*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We are here because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because there is an optimism in this room that says it can remain stronger. The Byers have got a significant customer base, which means they understand how to run a business, and my mother is one of their customers. [*Laughter*]

And so what we're going to talk about today is our economy and how to keep it growing and how to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong so people can realize their dreams. Today I want to discuss with you the plan I have to keep us on the path to growth and opportunity, a plan that I'm convinced that when Americans listen to, they'll put me and Dick Cheney back in office for 4 more years.

So I told Laura I was coming here, and she said, "Give everybody my best." She's great. She's a fantastic mom and a great wife. She is a wonderful First Lady. So when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give a speech." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She gave a great speech the other night. People got to see her heart and her compassion.

I appreciate Congressman Jim Greenwood a lot. I must confess to you that when I heard he was retiring, I got a little mad at him, because I've enjoyed working with him. He is a good, decent, honorable man. And I appreciate you.

I appreciate the fact that Arlen Specter is with us today. I hope you put him back into office for 6 more years. There he is. I enjoy working with Arlen. He's a good, independent thinker, and he's a good—fine United States Senator, and we'll work well together during the next 4 years.

I want to thank Pat Toomey for joining us today as well. He's a class act. I appreciate—I told this to Pat on Air Force One, I said, "I appreciate the way he handled himself after a tough primary." He's coming together. He's working for the ticket, and that shows what kind of guy he is. And I'm honored you're here, Pat.

Where is Mayor Joe? Mr. Mayor. Thank you for coming, Mr. Mayor. I'm proud you're here. [*Applause*] Yes. I always like to stay in touch with the local power. [*Laughter*] Sure enough, there he is. Thanks for coming, Mayor. I appreciate you being here.

Mike Fitzpatrick is with us today. I appreciate you coming, Mike. Appreciate you being here. Tom Corbett is with us today. Appreciate you coming, Tom. Good luck. I want to thank all the candidates who are here and the grassroots activists. I'm traveling your State and traveling the country to ask people not only for the vote but for their help. And I hope you go register voters, find people to show up to the polls. We have a duty in America to vote and—so thanks for the work you're doing. And when you get them to the polls, headed

to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in there.

Eunice Sanchez is with us. Where are you, Eunice? There she is. Thanks. And you've got your son and daughter. Thanks for coming. I met Eunice. She works for the Amachi mentoring program in Philadelphia. I don't know if you've heard of Amachi. I have. I have been fortunate enough to be briefed by the people that run that program. Amachi is a mentoring program for children with incarcerated parents. I want you to think about what this good American citizen does. She takes time out of her life to mentor a child to show there's love, the possibility of love. I tell the people of this country that the great strength of our country is the hearts and souls of the American citizens. That's really the true strength of America. And the reason I've asked—and the reason that Eunice has kindly come today is for me to hold her up as an example for others—for others to recognize that they can help change America, one heart and one soul at a time as well, that our society is a compassionate society because people from all walks of life put their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you, and what can I do to help you?" I appreciate you coming, Eunice. God bless you, and thanks for coming.

I'm looking forward to this—I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm—there's some things I want to do for the next 4 years. [*Laughter*] And I'm looking forward to telling the people of the country where I stand and where I believe and where I'm going to lead the country. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with what I call a compassionate conservative philosophy, that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives.

I believe it's the job of a President to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In the last 4 years, we have confronted economic problems. We have got some short-term challenges that came from an economic downturn and a national emergency. We've got some long-term challenges because our economy is changing. In all these areas, we've acted, and we're moving forward. Today I want to talk to you about some of the plans we have.

Remember the history. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind the people what we have been through. When Dick Cheney and I took office in January—on January 20th of 2001, our economy was heading into a recession, and the stock market had been declining for 5 months prior to our arrival. Our Nation faced some corporate scandals that cost people jobs and savings and shook our confidence. Today, it is absolutely clear that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

America was attacked. Our economy lost nearly a million jobs after that attack in just 3 months. We acted with a clear strategy. We unleashed the energy and innovative spirit of America with the largest tax relief in a generation. The tax relief provided small-business owners the resources and incentives they need to expand and grow and hire more workers. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is strong, and the tax relief helped strengthen it.

We encouraged savings and investment by cutting taxes on dividends and capital gains. Tax relief put money in the hands of American workers so they could save for their retirement or for their home or for the education of their children. My philosophy is, Government sets priorities, funds its priorities, and lets the people keep as much money as possible. I think you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can.

We increased the child credit and reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code

ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. And the results are clear. Our country has now seen 12 straight months of job gains. Over the past year, we've added 1.7 million jobs. That is more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. Unemployment is down to 5.4 percent. That is nearly a full point below the rate in the summer of 2003, and it is below the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

Interest rates and mortgage rates are near historic lows. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in the last 20 years. The manufacturing sector is improving. When I took office, manufacturing employment had been declining for almost 3 years. In the last 6 months of the prior administration, more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs were lost. We're turning that around. Since January, America has added 107,000 manufacturing jobs, including 22,000 last month alone. We are making steady progress for American workers.

Because of the tax relief, the middle class is paying less in Federal taxes. The average family of four with an income of $40,000 got nearly a $2,000 tax cut. Real after-tax incomes are up almost 10 percent since December of 2000. People have got more money in their pockets because of the tax relief. Our economy is stronger because people are keeping more of what they earn.

Listen, we also face long-term challenges in this economy. The workers of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career, often with one company that provided health care and a pension. That's the way it used to be. This world of ours is changing. By the way, most of those workers were men. Today, workers change jobs, even careers, many times during their lives. And in one of the most dramatic shifts our society has seen, two-thirds of all moms also work outside the home. This world of ours has changed. And yet, the institutions of Government haven't changed.

Let me tell you what else has changed. Productivity has grown faster over the last 3 years than any time in more than 40 years, in part because technology is changing the way we do things. You'd rather use a computer than a typewriter. You'd rather use a backhoe than a shovel. [*Laughter*] That's productivity. But it also means that the same work can be done by fewer workers. And that creates a problem for someone looking for a job. That's why manufacturing still produces roughly the same share of our GDP but with a smaller share of the workforce. So these are some long-term challenges we face.

But it's a time of great opportunity. A time of change creates great opportunity, so long as the Government takes the side of the workers and the families here in America, so long as Government recognizes this: Our fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday—think about that—not for tomorrow. I believe in the next 4 years, we've got to transform these systems to help our citizens, to help prepare our citizens, to help free citizens so they can realize the great dream of our country.

And so you'll hear me talk a lot about changing systems to help people, not increasing Government to stifle dreams. Obviously, in order for people to realize their dreams, there has to be robust economic growth. In order to make sure that the productivity increases don't cause people not to be able to find a job, we got to grow this economy. And that's what I want to talk to you about right quick, a plan to make sure we continue to create jobs here in America.

First of all, in order to have jobs here, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want people working here, it's got to be the best place to risk capital, the best place to expand, the best place to realize dreams. One way to make sure it's the best place to do business is to reduce the regulatory burden on

small businesses. You fill out a lot of paperwork if you're a small-business owner in America. I can't promise you anybody in Government ever reads it. [*Laughter*]

We want jobs here in the Philadelphia area. We want to make sure the manufacturing sector is robust. Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk now. I submitted a plan 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation, expands renewables, uses clean coal technologies. Listen, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want jobs to remain in America.

In order to keep jobs here so people can realize their dreams, we must open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we've opened up our markets, and it's good for consumers we've opened up our markets. If you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And so what I'm saying to countries like China is, "Treat us the way we treat you." I believe American farmers and manufacturers and businessowners can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. What we will do is reject economic isolationism. Economic isolationism will hurt America's workers.

In order to make sure we create jobs here, we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that threaten employers. I believe strongly in legal reform, because I understand personal injury lawyers should not get richer at the expense of hard-working Americans and American entrepreneurs.

Finally, in order to keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes on the entrepreneurs in America is bad economic policy.

I told you there's some systems that need to change. One system that needs to change is the Federal Tax Code. It is too cumbersome. I tried to hold it the other day—[*laughter*]—when I was campaigning in Missouri. I'm in pretty good shape. It was hard to hold it. [*Laughter*] It's got a million words in it. It takes the American people 6 billion hours a year, every year, to file these forms. It is full of special interest loopholes. For the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness, we need to change the Tax Code. We need to make it simple and easy to understand.

A changing world means that the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century are changing, and it's something we've got to recognize. And a changing economy is one that creates new opportunities. But sometimes there's a skills gap. And that's why I believe we ought to expand access to our community college systems, to make sure that the workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

As well most new jobs in a changing—this changing world require 2 years of college. Yet only one in four of our students gets there. And so we need early intervention programs in our high schools to solve problems early, before they're too late. We need to have new focus on math and science. As the No Child Left Behind Act begins to fill the education pipeline with good readers, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. See, what I'm telling you is, by raising performance in high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

These are changing times, and our economy is changing. And there are communities around where manufacturing, textiles, and other jobs no longer exist. There are poor communities in our country that need help as well. And that's why, the other night at the convention, I announced American opportunity zones. These zones will provide tax relief and other incentives for new businesses to be created and to improve housing and job training and bringing hope. In other words, in changing times, there are ways to help communities that have suffered during changing times, with good tax policy, good regulation policy, and good housing policy.

Listen, in order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to do something about health care. We need to make sure health care is available and affordable. Do you realize more than half the uninsured are employees of small businesses? Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care is to allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. We'll provide direct help for low-income Americans to purchase health savings accounts. These accounts give workers the security of insurance against major illness, the opportunity to save tax-free for routine health expenses, and the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you whenever you change jobs or careers.

I'm a big believer in community and rural health centers. These are facilities where low-income Americans can get primary care. I believe every poor county in America ought to have one of these facilities in order to take the pressure off emergency rooms around the United States.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up your health care costs. I appreciate working with Jim Greenwood on this issue. He figured it out, and I hope the people of this country figure it out. These frivolous lawsuits are making it awfully hard for a lot of docs to practice medicine. You're losing good docs. Greenwood was telling me about the doctor that saved his dad's life, had to leave practice because his premiums were too high. Many doctors, in order to avoid litigation, practice defensive medicine. In other words, they run up the costs of health care so if they ever get caught—pulled in front of a court of law, they've got a defense. It's costing the taxpayers about $28 billion a year; the defensive practice of medicine costs 28 billion a year. We have a national problem, and it requires a national solution. I've submitted legislation that Greenwood got passed in the House. It's stuck in the Senate because the trial lawyers are powerful in the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

I'm looking forward to the debate on health care. I'm looking forward to it. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Our labor laws need to change. We've got a lot of moms who are now in the workplace. And yet, it's really hard for moms to find enough time to do their duty as moms, see, because the rules—the labor laws are stuck in the past. I think we need to have flex-time and comp-time to allow families to be able to have more quality time.

In a changing world, ownership can bring stability to your life. One of the most hopeful statistics of the last year or two has been that the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. There's more minority families who are opening up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Come in to my house." It's a really important part of a future, when more and more people can own their home. We've got a plan to encourage homeownership in this country.

And we've got to make sure that our pension systems work, the Social Security system works. If you're an older American, nothing will change. The Social Security trust will fulfill its promise to you. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to receiving the promise

of Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their taxes and set up a personal savings account, to make sure the Social Security promise that's made to them—an account that they can call their own, an account that Government cannot take away, and an account that they can pass on from one generation to the next.

In these proposals, we seek not to provide a Government program but a greater path to opportunity and more freedom for you to decide what's best for your life and, therefore, I believe, more opportunity for every citizen. And we got a choice in this race. I mean, it's a clear choice. See, I believe our opponent's philosophy is very different from ours. If you carefully listen, he wants to expand Government. Listen to the proposals. That's what he wants to do. What we want to do is expand opportunity. He wants to give more power to Washington by raising taxes and spending more money, and he's got a record to match his promises. [*Laughter*]

Over two decades in Washington, he has voted for higher income taxes, higher taxes on Social Security benefits. That's part of his record. He repeatedly voted for higher taxes on small businesses, higher taxes on gasoline. He voted against tax relief for married couples, for increasing the child credit, and against expanding tax-free retirement savings. We have a difference of opinion when it comes to taxation. If you drive a car, Senator Kerry has voted for higher taxes on you. If you have a job, he's voted for higher taxes on you. If you're married or have children, he's voted for higher taxes on you. The good news is, on the 2d of November, you have a chance to vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. There is a reason for supporting higher taxes, because he wants to dramatically increase Government spending. It's part of his platform. On the campaign trail, he's proposed more than $2 trillion in new Federal spending so far. [*Laughter*] And we still have 54 more days to go. Now, he says he's going to pay for all that by raising taxes on the wealthiest 2 percent of the population. There's just one problem with that. My opponent's tax increases would bring only about $650 billion in revenue over the next 10 years, see? And he wants to spend over 2 trillion. So you do the math. [*Laughter*] The plan leaves him more than $1.4 trillion short. And guess who would wind up paying the bill?

Now, one of his key economic advisers—one of my opponent's key economic advisers is saying they won't give the details on how they would raise spending and lower the deficit until after the election. [*Laughter*] Well, if they want to hold back information until the people vote, you can bet it won't be good news for the taxpayers. But America will reject the hidden Kerry tax plan.

Raising taxes will be bad for our economy. Raising taxes will be bad for the small-business sector of America. And I'll tell you why. Ninety percent of small-business owners pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Ninety percent of small-business owners are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorship. Byers Choice is a Subchapter S corporation. Now, if you're organized as a Subchapter S or sole proprietorship, when you pay your tax, you fill out the individual income-tax forms. And so when you talk about raising the top two brackets in the individual taxes, you're talking about taxing companies like Byers Choice. I don't see—and by the way, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Why does it make sense to tax the job creators? It doesn't make sense to tax the job creators.

Bob said this, he said, "That would hurt my company." When he heard the plan to raise taxes to pay for promises, political promises, he said, "That would hurt my

company. It would cut off jobs I plan to create." My opponent, by making political promises and by promising to tax small businesses such as Byers Choice, would hurt our economy. I believe in order to continue economic growth, we need an energy plan, good trade policy, good regulatory policy, good legal policy, good health policy, and we need to make the tax relief permanent.

In order to make sure we have sustained economic growth, we will also continue to protect the homeland over the next 4 years. There's a lot of good people working hard on your behalf. And we reorganized the Department—departments to create the Department of Homeland Security so we can better talk to each other, better respond to crisis, better deal with emergency, better share intelligence. And we're getting better in Washington, DC, about doing what is necessary to protect you. And there's a lot of good people working hard to do so, and I appreciate it. As the 9/11 Commission said, "America is safer but not yet safe." I agree. And so you just got to know there's some fine people at all levels of government working hard.

But the best way to protect the homeland is to stay on the offensive, is to find the terrorists. You cannot talk sense to these people. You've seen how they behave. You saw the attacks of September the 11th. You saw what happened to those Russian schoolchildren. America must continue to lead the world. We will find them overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're making progress. We're making progress. Three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leadership has been brought to justice. Because we upheld doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorists," the Taliban are no longer in power in Afghanistan. Think about the progress in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls weren't allow to go to school and their moms would be pulled in a public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these barbaric people. And today, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Amazing, isn't it? Freedom is on the march in Afghanistan, and that's good for America.

In Iraq, we removed a sworn enemy of America who had ties to terror and used weapons of mass destruction. Listen, I recognize we didn't find the stockpiles we all thought were there—all of us thought were there. But remember Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons. He could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that's not a risk we could afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam in a prison cell.

We're making progress there. I'm impressed by Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong guy who believes that democracy is the future of Iraq, and he's got hard work to do. It wasn't all that long ago that people were brutalized by Saddam Hussein. But we're making progress. There will be elections in January of next year. It's amazing, when you think about it. They've gone from tyranny to elections in a brief period of time.

Our goal in Iraq is to—like it is in Afghanistan—is to help provide enough stability so the political process can move forward, is to train Iraqis and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their country against the few who want to thwart the desires of the many, is to put those countries on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then bring our troops home.

I'm oftentimes asked what I tell those who—the loved ones of those who lost their life in combat. I tell them this, I say, "Your son or daughter or wife or husband is serving during historic times." These are times that will help make this world a more peaceful place. It's a time

for little children to be able to—when we get it right—for children to grow up in a peaceful world. I tell them that in order to honor their memory, we will complete the mission.

I say this: I believe in the power of liberty to transform lives. That's what I believe. The core of my belief is that liberty has got the incredible capacity to convert enemies to friends, tyrannical societies to free societies. And that makes the world more peaceful, a peace we all want.

You know, I tell people about my meetings with Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan, who is the Prime Minister of a country that my dad fought against, your dads and grandfathers fought against. They were the sworn enemy of America some 60 years ago. And today, I sit down at the table with him to discuss peace. He's an ally in peace. And I'm able to do so because my predecessor Harry Truman and other American citizens believed that the enemy could become a friend if democracy took hold in Japan.

Now, there was a lot of skeptics and doubters during those days, and you can understand why. We'd just been fighting these people. But because they believed in the power of liberty to transform lives, they helped Japan develop a self-governing democracy. And today, Japan is an ally when it comes to keeping the peace. The Prime Minister and I talk about North Korea. We talk about Iraq. We talk about humanitarian needs around the world. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace, and they're going to look back in history and say, "Thank goodness America never forgot the power of liberty to change lives."

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by today. As you can see, I've got a plan to continue growing this economy so people can realize their hopes and dreams; that I know what needs to be done when it comes to securing this homeland and winning the war on terror; that I believe strongly in the values that make us a great nation; and that, with your help, we're going to win Pennsylvania and win a great election in November.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at Byers Choice. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Fitzpatrick, candidate for Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District; Tom Corbett, candidate for Pennsylvania State Attorney General; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks in Johnstown, Pennsylvania
September 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. You know, it turns out I am the first sitting President to have visited Johnstown in more than 30 years. All those other Presidents sure missed out. Thanks for coming. I'm proud you came out. I'm honored you are here. I'm pleased to be with the good folks here in Johnstown. I know you like to hunt and fish. So do I. I know you care about your neighbors. I appreciate that. I know you take your baseball seriously. And from the looks of things, with your help, we'll carry Pennsylvania in November.

I'm here to ask for your vote. And I'm here to ask for your help. We have a duty to vote in this country, and I'm here to

ask you to register your friends and neighbors and encourage them to do their duty. And when you're out registering people, don't overlook discerning Democrats. You might remember my friend Zell Miller. He represents a lot of folks who understand that when you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country will be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

My regret is that Laura didn't come with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. She was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I don't have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. You saw her the other night in New York City. You saw how gracious she is, how strong she is. I love her dearly. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience and can get the job done for the American people.

I appreciate Congressman Bill Shuster joining us today. He's been telling me all along I need to come to Johnstown, Pennsylvania. When I showed up, he said, "You finally made it." I said, "I made it just in time to rally these folks to get ready to win this election come November."

I want to thank your mayor, Don Zucco, for joining us today. Mr. Mayor, I'm proud you're here. Sometimes they say, "Well, do you ever have any advice for the local officials?" Mr. Mayor, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you coming, Mayor.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank my friend Victor Raia. He heads Veterans for Bush. And I want to thank all the veterans who have joined us here today as well.

I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band. I appreciate them playing here. I appreciate the high school band that's here tonight. Thank you for coming. I'm going to try to keep my speech short so you can get home and do your homework. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here, the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. I really appreciate your help. I know you're working hard, but keep working. And I'll be working right alongside of you.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, where I—what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation. I'm going to tell them that I have a plan to keep this country of ours safer and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that says, "Government ought to help people, not dictate to people."

I believe every child can learn. That's what I believe. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We've raised standards. We're measuring early to solve problems before it is too late. We're ending that old practice of just shuffling the kids through the system year after year without learning the basics. We trust the local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went up to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem with Medicare. Let me give you one example. Medicare would pay tens of thousands of dollars for the heart surgery, and that's okay. But it wouldn't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. It didn't make any sense for our seniors to have a Medicare system like that, and

it certainly didn't make sense for the taxpayers. We have modernized Medicare. Our seniors will get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of the American worker and farmer and small-business owner. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind your friends and neighbors that we've been through a lot. This economy of ours has been through a lot. See, 5 months before I got into office, the stock market had begun to decline. We had a recession. We had corporate scandals, which affected our economy. And of course, we had the attacks on our country. But we've overcome all these obstacles because we've got good workers, good small-business owners. We've overcome them too because of well-timed tax cuts.

And this economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We're adding jobs here in America, about 1.7 million new jobs over the last 12 months. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The unemployment rate is now 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 5.3 percent. The economic stimulus plan we passed is working.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live and work is changing. In the generations of our dads and granddads, a man generally had one job and one career, worked for one company, and the company provided health care and a pension plan. It's a different world today; I understand it's a different world today. Many women now work inside the home and outside the home. The workplace is changing. Many people change careers. Yet many of the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In the next 4 years, we will transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, so you can realize the great promise of America.

Listen, any hopeful society has a growing economy, and I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we must reduce the regulatory burden on our small-business owners in America. To create more jobs in America, we must stop the junk lawsuits that threaten our employers. To keep jobs here and to expand our economy, Congress needs to pass my energy plan, a plan that encourage conservation, encourages renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages clean coal technology. It is a plan that understands that we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs here, we've got to open up markets for U.S. products. We open up our markets for goods from other countries, and that's good for the consumer. And it's good for you. If you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. So what I tell countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To create jobs, we got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion about taxes in this campaign. I'm running

against a fellow who has proposed more than $2 trillion in new spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Awfully tempting when you're coming down the pike to tell everybody what they want to hear. So they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's simple. We'll just tax the rich." There's two problems with that. One is that you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2 trillion. There's a gap between what he promises and what he says he's going to do. Guess who usually has to fill that gap? Yes. Here's the other problem. You've heard that rhetoric before, "Oh, don't worry. We'll just tax the rich." They hire lawyers and accountants and dodge, and you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Thinking about taxes, the Federal Tax Code needs to be changed. It's a complicated mess. It is full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend hours after hours filling out their tax form. They estimate about 6 billion hours worth of paperwork and headache on an annual basis is spent by American workers and small-business owners and big businesses. You see, the American people need a simpler, fairer, progrowth Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to simplify and make more fair the Federal Tax Code.

The job base is changing, and we've got to help workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong proponent of helping workers gain new skills at the community colleges across this country. Most new jobs are now filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets there. So in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place an emphasis on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In this time of change, we will do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than half of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble with health care costs. In order to help those families and help small businesses, Government should allow small businesses to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

We will expand health savings accounts. We will make sure poor communities have got community health centers. And we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits. I'm telling you, the cost of medicine is on the rise because junk lawsuits are driving good docs out of practice and running up the cost of medicine here in America. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. And my opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In a changing society, ownership can help bring stability to people's lives. That's why we want more people owning their own home in America. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high right now. Isn't that fantastic? Think about that. More people are opening their front door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." We've got a plan to continue to expand homeownership to every community in this country.

And we also want to make sure that our pension plans are modern and work. If you're an older citizen, you're in good shape when it comes to Social Security. If you're a baby boomer, like me, you're

in okay shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set it aside in a personal account to make sure Social Security is available.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric, my opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand opportunity. And I feel comfortable doing that because I think the role of Government is to trust the people, trust the people with their own decisions, trust the people with their own money, trust the people to make the right judgment.

In a world of change, there's some things that just do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we must support the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of live in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. And we're reforming and strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy and clear moral purpose and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, this Nation must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "Take a look at this threat," and they took a look at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, came to the same conclusion we came to, and he authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into combat, we must try all means to deal with any threat. See, I was hopeful diplomacy would work. And so I went to the United Nations, and I gave a speech at the U.N. They looked at the

same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered. And with a 15-to-nothing vote, the United Nations Security Council voted that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world has to say. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors that were sent into his country. So I had a choice to make, a choice that only comes to the Oval Office, a choice nobody wants to make but must be prepared to make: Do I trust the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Because we acted, because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people now live in freedom. Fifty million people are free. In Afghanistan, the world has changed since those dark days when young girls weren't allowed to go to school and their mothers were whipped in the public square. The Taliban were barbaric people. They were backward. They had a dim vision of the world. Today, Afghanistan is an ally. They're helping us in the war on terror, and over 10 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. It's amazing.

Despite ongoing violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. We are standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're also standing with them because we're serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free Governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them. And that makes America more secure, and it makes the world more peaceful.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies and their police forces so citizens in those countries can do the hard work of defending the hopes of many against the terror of a few. We'll help them get on their way to elections. We'll help them become more stable, and then our troops will return home with the honor they've earned.

I'm proud of our military. I'm proud of our military, and I know you are as well. We've got a fantastic United States military. I've had the privilege of meeting with the service men and women who wear our uniform. I've seen their unselfish courage. I know their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I have made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their families that they will have all the support they need to complete their missions. That's why, a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and proposed supplemental funding of $87 billion to help our troops in not only Iraq, but Afghanistan. It was important funding, really important funding. It was a really important funding request because it funded body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed for people to do their jobs. And we received great bipartisan support, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding request.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators—two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate. When asked to explain his vote, he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I suspect that not many people in Johnstown, Pennsylvania,

talks that way. They kept asking him. He said, well, he was proud of the vote. And finally, my opponent said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

After voting for the war but against funding it, after saying he would have voted for the war even knowing everything we know today, my opponent woke up this week—[*laughter*]—with new campaign advisers and yet another new position. Suddenly, he's against it again.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No matter how many times he flip-flops, we were right to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. I spoke with Tony Blair this morning. He's got a clear vision. He's a good, strong leader. Every time I talk to him, I thank him for his contributions. You know, we put together a broad coalition—some 40 nations in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. And I will continue, over the next 4 years, to build our alliances, to strengthen our relationships. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the people that I've spent time with the Prime Minister of Japan during my 3½ years as President. I like him a lot. He's a good fellow. The amazing thing about my discussions with him is that here I am, sitting down with somebody that our country was at war with some 60 years ago—my dad, I'm sure your dads or granddads fought against the Japanese. They were our sworn enemy. Yet right after World War II, President Harry Truman and many Americans believed that by helping the Japanese self-govern and become a democracy, that liberty would transform an enemy into a friend. And sure enough, it worked, because, guess what, Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit around the table talking about how to make the world more peaceful, talking about how to use our respective positions in the world to make our countries more secure and the world a better place. Someday, an American President and a duly elected leader from Iraq will be sitting down at the table talking about the peace.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; it is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the land. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation, and we will continue to work for freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the first-responders, the brave firefighters and policemen who had gone into rubble and come out emptyhanded—a lot of them had come out emptyhanded. They'd lost their buddies. A guy looked me right in the eye,

and he said, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:06 p.m. at the Cambria County War Memorial Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Mayor Donato B. Zucco of Johnstown, PA; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on the Situation in Sudan
September 9, 2004

The United States is appalled by the violence in Darfur, Sudan. Our Government has led the international effort to end the suffering there by speaking clearly about the crisis and sending assistance to the suffering. We have provided more than $211 million in aid and humanitarian relief, and we will provide an additional $250 million. To end the conflict, we helped broker a cease-fire and worked closely with the African Union to deploy monitors and soldiers to investigate violations.

I sent Secretary of State Powell to Darfur and Khartoum to demand that the Sudanese Government act to end the violence. We sponsored a strong Security Council resolution, which passed on July 30. This resolution called on the Government to disarm the Janjaweed militias which have terrorized the people of Darfur and bring their leaders to justice. Secretary Powell later sent a team of investigators into the refugee camps to interview the victims of atrocities. As a result of these investigations and other information, we have concluded that genocide has taken place in Darfur. We urge the international community to work with us to prevent and suppress acts of genocide. We call on the United Nations to undertake a full investigation of the genocide and other crimes in Darfur.

The Government of Sudan has not complied with U.N. Security Council resolutions and has not respected the cease-fire which it signed. The rebels are also guilty of cease-fire violations and failing to carry out past commitments. It is clear that only outside action can stop the killing. My Government is seeking a new Security Council resolution to authorize an expanded African Union security force to prevent further bloodshed. We will also seek to ban flights by Sudanese military aircraft in Darfur.

The world cannot ignore the suffering of more than 1 million people. The U.S. will continue to help relieve suffering, as we demand that the Janjaweed disarm, and that the Government, Janjaweed, and Darfur rebels end the violence.

Remarks in Huntington, West Virginia
September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much for coming. By the sound of things, it sounds like the Herd is thundering. It's good to be back here in Huntington. Thank you all for the hospitality. You know, this isn't my first time here. I've liked it every time I've come because the people are down to earth, hardworking, decent, and they love America just like I do.

I want to thank our friends from Ohio who have joined us today. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank our friends from Kentucky who are here today. And of course, I want to thank my friends from West Virginia who are here. Thank you all for coming.

I told Zell we're going to have a heck of a day. He's helping to kick it off in fine fashion. You know, Zell Miller, he represents a lot of folks out there who are wondering whether or not it's okay to vote Republican. He's what I would call a discerning Democrat. More importantly, he is a proud American, and I'm proud to call Zell Miller friend.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here to let you know that I'm willing to get amongst the people and say, "I need your vote, and I need your help to win this election." You see, we have a duty in this country to vote, and I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors. Remind them we have a duty. Register our fellow Republicans; register independents; register discerning Democrats. Then after you register them, get them headed to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back in there for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Zell said—we got on the bus after flying up from Washington, and he said, "I wish you'd have brought Laura." He's got really good judgment. [*Laughter*] You know, when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, I'll be—I'm willing to marry you, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] She was a public school librarian who didn't particularly care about politics or politicians. I said, "That's fine, you'll never have to give a speech." And we got married. Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She is a—the country saw, in New York City, she not only gives a good speech, but she's gracious and strong. She's comforting. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason of all in putting me back in office is so that Laura will have 4 more years as your First Lady.

I appreciate Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito from the great State of West Virginia joining us today. Shelley Moore is a fine, fine Member of the United States Congress. She's a class act. I also appreciate today traveling with Senator Mike DeWine from the State of Ohio. I appreciate you coming, Mike. He too is a fine United States Senator, and I'm proud his son Patrick is joining us today as well.

I want to thank all the State and local officials here. I want to thank all the candidates for throwing your hat in the ring. I appreciate the Wil Gravatt Band. I want to thank the Parkersburg Base Army Reserve Charlie Company, the 463d Engineering Battalion. Thank you all for coming.

Most of all, thank you all for taking Friday out of your life to come. I appreciate you being here—for taking this Friday to come here. I appreciate it. It means a lot to me. I know it means a lot to Zell. See, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I'm

going to tell the people where I stand and what I believe and where I'll lead this country.

I believe every child can learn and expect every school to teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe we ought to raise standards. I believe we ought to measure early to solve problems before it's too late. I believe we got to stop this practice of just shuffling kids through our schools year after year, grade after grade without learning the basics. I believe we've got to trust the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. I know we're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Medicare is an incredibly important program for our seniors, but it wasn't modernizing. People say, "What do you mean when you say that?" Well, Medicare would pay thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars for heart surgery, but it would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. I went to Washington, DC, to solve problems. We have now modernized Medicare to help our seniors. Beginning in 2006, seniors will get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people about what this economy has been through. Five months before we got into office, the stock market had started to decline. We had a recession right as we got there. There was corporate scandals. By the way, we made it clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We had a terrorist attack on our country. All those were obstacles for our American workers.

See, we're overcoming these obstacles. We're overcoming these obstacles because we got great workers, great farmers. We're overcoming it because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're overcoming it because of well-timed tax relief.

Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added about 1.7 million new jobs in the past year. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in West Virginia is 5.2 percent. The economic stimulus plan we passed is working.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will carry West Virginia again; we'll carry Ohio again; we'll carry Kentucky again; and we'll win in November.

Listen, I understand the world we're living in is changing. The generation of our dads and granddads, a person generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided health care and a pension. Today, it's different. The workforce has changed. Most of those workers in the past were men. Today, many, many workers are women. They're working inside the home and outside the home. Many people change jobs and careers several times over the course of a lifetime. Yet many of the fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training,

were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. And so, for the next 4 years, we'll transform the systems to help our citizens. We'll transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can realize the great promise of America.

Any hopeful society has a growing economy, and I have a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to reduce the regulations on our businesses, particularly small businesses. It means we got to stop these junk lawsuits that are threatening employers all across the country.

It means Congress needs to get my energy policy to my desk. Yes, in order to create jobs here in America, we need sound energy policy. That means more conservation; that means supporting renewables; and that means using coal, clean coal technology to make sure people can find work. The plan I submitted will modernize the electricity grid so hospitals and offices can keep focus on hiring workers, not coping with blackouts. What I'm telling you is, we need an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. See, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. It's good for you because the more products you can choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at higher quality and better price. That's how the market works. So what I'm telling places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, the best policy is to level the playing field, because Americans can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure jobs are here in America, to make sure people can find work, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, I'm running against a fellow, he's already promised over $2 trillion of new money, new Federal programs, so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We've got—there's going to be a lot of temptations coming down the pike to tell everybody everywhere what they want to hear. That means—that generally means spending your money. But the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to spend—pay for it. See, he said, "Oh, don't worry. We'll pay for it by taxing the rich." Two things wrong with that. One is, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2 trillion worth of new programs. See, there's a gap between his promise and what he can deliver, and guess who's going to get stuck with the bill? Secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, don't worry. We'll just tax the rich." Well, the rich hire accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win a great victory in November.

And speaking about the Tax Code, we're going to do something about our Tax Code in a second term. We're going to make it easier to understand, and we're going to simplify it. This Tax Code of ours is too complicated. It is filled with special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes because of the complicated nature of the Tax Code. The Tax Code is a drag on our economy. In a new term, I'll bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, this world of ours is changing, and the nature of the jobs are changing. And we've got to help workers gain the skills necessary so they can fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a big believer in improving access to the community colleges all across our country. I remember coming to the community college here in Huntington, West Virginia. We talked about job training. We talked about

people having the skills necessary to fill the jobs which are being created.

And we got to do a better job in our high schools. Do you realize that about—most of the new jobs, over 50 percent of the new jobs require at least 2 years of college? And yet, one in four of our students gets there. That's why we've got to fund early intervention programs in high schools to help students who are at risk. We want to place a new focus on math and science in our high schools. We want to require a rigorous exam—over time, require a rigorous exam before graduation. See, by raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

We'll do more to make quality health care available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care and, therefore, help families is to allow them to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts big companies get. We'll help more people own and manage their own health care plans. We'll expand health savings accounts. We'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center so people can get the primary care they need. And we're going to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice and running up your costs.

One reason small businesses are having trouble affording health care is because these lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine. Make no mistake about it, junk lawsuits are running up your costs. And make no mistake about it, too many good docs are being run out of practice. And that's harmful. It's harmful for the folks in Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, and all across America. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In a changing world, ownership brings stability to people's lives. One of the most hopeful statistics in recent times is the fact that homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America. More and more people are owning their home. In a new term, we'll continue to expand ownership all across this country. We want more and more people opening the door of the place where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And we want to make sure our younger workers have got a Social Security system that's viable. Now, let me say, if you're an older worker or you're a dependent now on Social Security, you're going to be just fine. If you're a baby boomer, you'll be just fine when it comes to Social Security as it's now structured. But I think we need to think about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. It's one thing for people like Zell and me to say it's going to be fine for us; we have an obligation to see that it's fine for younger folks. And so, therefore, I think younger workers who are coming up ought to have the right to take some of their own tax money and put it in an account they can call their own, a personal savings account that will help them with Social Security.

In a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We believe—we stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand

for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work—we will continue our work to advance freedom in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago—4 short years ago—Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was seriously pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

The progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he had a long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. Members of both Houses and both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They came to the same conclusion that my administration came to—Saddam Hussein was a threat—and they authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and he came to the same conclusion then that we had come to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. He authorized—he voted to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all options in order to solve the threat. And that's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence we looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered, and they came to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. So the world spoke with a 15-to-nothing vote in the Security Council.

But Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the world had to say. He hadn't been interested over the past decade, and he certainly wasn't interested now. He ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. decided to send inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived them. In other words, he wasn't about to comply.

So I had a choice to make at this point in time: Do I take the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. Because we upheld doctrine, because the most solemn duty of government is to defend the security of the people of this country, 50 million people now in Afghanistan and Iraq are free. Think about Afghanistan for a minute. This is a country, not all that long ago, where young girls weren't allowed to go to school, and their mothers were taken into the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of the Taliban. The Taliban was backward and barbaric in their vision. They're the opposite of what we stand for in America. They didn't believe in religious freedom. They didn't believe in political freedom. They didn't believe in freedom. Today, over 10 million Afghan men and women—10 million citizens, over 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election. It's amazing.

Freedom is powerful, isn't it? In Iraq, it's still tough there. But Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in January.

The world is changing. Our Nation is standing with the people of those countries, because when America gives its word, it must keep its word. We're standing with those people in the country—in those countries, and as we do so, we're serving a historic cause that will make our country safer and make the world more peaceful, something we all want. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. A free Iraq and a free Afghanistan will serve as a powerful example for those who long for freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help the new leaders. We'll help them head down the road to democracy. We'll help them hold elections. More importantly, we'll train Afghan and Iraqi citizens for police and their armies so they can do the hard work of defending their countries, their fellow countrymen from the designs and demands of a few terrorists. We'll help them provide—we'll provide those countries with stability as quickly as we can get the job done. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our military. We've got a great United States military. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who wear the Nation's uniform. I've met them all across bases here in America and around the world. I'm telling you, I've seen their unselfish courage, their great decency. I appreciate the veterans who are here today who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform today. I appreciate the military families who are here today.

I made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and their families that they will have the resources they need to complete their missions. So I went to the Congress a year ago and proposed supplemental funding of $87 billion. It's really important funding because it provided body armor, spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed by our troops who were in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. I appreciate Senator Miller's strong support for that funding request. We received strong bipartisan support. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against this important funding, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him to explain his vote. It was right here in Huntington, West Virginia, where he said, "I voted for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it"—right here in Huntington. They kept pressing him after

that, and he said, well, he was proud of his vote. And finally he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future of more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." End quote. In 2002, he voted for the war. But then he voted against body armor and combat pay for our troops. When the heat got on in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, he said he would have still voted to go to war, even knowing everything we know today. Earlier this week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying it's the wrong war at the wrong time, even though he earlier said it was the right decision, and he supported it.

The newest wrinkle is that Senator Kerry has now decided we are spending too much money in Iraq, even though he criticized us earlier for not spending enough. One thing about Senator Kerry's position is clear: If he had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would still be a threat to the security and to the world.

During the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies to make us more secure and to make them more secure and to make the world more peaceful. We put together a broad coalition, about 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. But I'll assure you this: I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I've spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, I was having dinner with him one evening, and it dawned on me how remarkable it is that an American President could be talking about working together to make the world a better place. After all, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were at war with Japan. They were our sworn enemy. My dad, I'm sure your dads and granddads, fought against the Japanese. And yet, right after World War II, after we were victorious, Harry Truman and other Americans never abandoned this notion that freedom could change societies, and they stood the line. There was a lot of skeptics in those days. I can understand why; we were just at war with them. You can imagine why a lot of American people said, "Why are we wasting our time? Why do we care?"

Well, people did care. See, they cared because they had a vision of the future. And because they worked to help Japan become a democracy, today, Japan is an ally. Prime Minister Koizumi and I sit around the table talking about the peace. We're talking about using our influence to make the world a better place, not only for the people in our own country but for people around the world. We talk about peace in North Korea. We talk about peace in Iraq. We talk about feeding the hungry.

Liberty can change countries from enemies to friends. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace. They'll be talking about a better world. See, liberty has got the chance to make this world a more peaceful place. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. And I believe these things not because freedom is America's gift to the world, but because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom here at home and freedom abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we will free more Americans to be able to realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to become more free and more peaceful.

You know, for all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. I met a fellow behind the stage here who was at Ground Zero the same day I was at Ground Zero. He was there to save lives. I was there to thank people for saving lives—so on September the 14th, 2001, that—both of us were in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I told him that. I said, "It's a day that I'll never forget." There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I tried to do my best to comfort those who had been in the rubble. A fellow looked me right in the eye and said, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning—every morning—thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled our great country asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. at the Tri-State Milton J. Ferguson Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Ironton, Ohio
September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all. I'm glad you all are here. Thanks for coming out. I want to introduce you—you know your Senator, Mike DeWine. This is my friend Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. One Republican, one Democrat, all united to making this country a better place for everybody.

Thank you all for coming out to say hello. We're here to ask for the vote in Ironton, Ohio, and I appreciate you giving me a chance.

We've got plans to make this world a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place for every American. I'm here to ask for your help. I'd like to—I'd like your support, I appreciate your prayers. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thanks for coming out to say hello. I appreciate you. Thank you all.

Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate you coming.

Mayor John W. Elam. President Bush, it is certainly an honor to have you here. We're looking forward to 4 more years.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Elam. I have a proclamation here that I know will take awhile to read. And I would also like to present you with a key to the city of Ironton.

The President. Oh, yes. Thanks for coming out. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. at the Lawrence County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Portsmouth, Ohio
September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you all. Thanks. Be seated. I got some work I got to do here. [*Laughter*] First, thank you all for coming. I've got an interesting way of explaining today why I have made some decisions I made and what I intend to do to lead this country for 4 more years. I've asked some of our fellow citizens to come and share with us some stories that may help people in this part of the world understand about why we do what we do in this administration.

First of all, I want to tell you I'm here to ask for the vote. See, I believe you got to get out among the people and ask for the vote. And I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here. I'm glad you invited me to come here to Portsmouth. The murals are fantastic. They are beautiful. They said, "You got to see the murals." I said, "Okay, take me by them." [*Laughter*] And I'm glad they did. It's beautiful. What a special part of your city. Thanks for sharing them with me.

I want to thank—by the way, I always thought Roy Rogers was from Texas. [*Laughter*] I know, I'm wrong. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. We got on the bus and Zell, who is a wonderful fellow and a great friend, says to me, "You'd be wise if you took Laura with you." I said, "Well, I know, Zell, but she went to two other States." She's out campaigning. She's a fabulous woman. You're not going to believe this, but—we're about to talk to some schoolteachers here—when I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Public school librarians for Laura here. [*Laughter*] And so, of course, I went through the traditional, "Will you marry me?" And she said, "Yes, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, that's fine with me. You won't have to give any political speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She gave a heck of a speech the other night in New York City. She sends her love and sends her best.

And Zell gave a heck of a speech the other night too. The way I'd like to summarize his speech is that it's okay for a Democrat to support me for President. And if you're interested in a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back into office. And I appreciate you being here. I want to thank my friend for coming.

I know there's a lot of—[*applause*]—thank you all. Remember I've got some

work I got to do, because I want to answer some of your questions too. I appreciate the cheers, but let me do my work. [*Laughter*] See, I know this part of the world is like parts of Georgia and like parts of Texas, where there's a lot of what we call discerning Democrats who—with whom we share a lot. That's what Zell was saying. He was saying to people in this part of the world, "It's okay if you're a Democrat to pull the Bush-Cheney lever." And we welcome Democrats into this election. We want Democrat votes. And so when you're out registering to vote, register our fellow Democrats. Register them, and turn them out to vote.

And that's another reason I've come today. I'm asking for your help. I hope that you get out and do our duty as citizens and participate in the process, register people, and encourage people to go to the polls. Tell them we've got a duty in this country to vote. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do, and I appreciate your willingness to work and turn out the vote. When you do, we're going to carry Ohio again and win a great victory in November.

I want to thank Rita Rice Morris, the president of Shawnee State, a University of Opportunity. I appreciate you coming. Rita, thank you.

A little later on, you'll hear me talking about how this is a changing America, and Government must recognize that. One of the things that's changing here is that in order to find high-paying, quality jobs, you've got to have a college degree. Most new jobs in America require 2 years of college. One in four of our students gets there, which means Government must do a better job of intervening early in high schools to help at-risk students, emphasizing math and science so people will have the skill base necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, raising standards, but also expanding Pell grants so low- and middle-income families will be able to send their kids to college and they can start with a college degree—start their career with a college degree. And I appreciate you coming, Madam President.

What I'm telling you is, we're going to make our job training relevant so we help our workers. We're going to help them in high school. We're going to help in the community college as well to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are now growing here in America. And so this is a great place for us to come and talk about jobs and job skills, right here at a place that's training people for the jobs of the 21st century. I'm proud of your leadership. Thank you for having us.

I want to thank my friend Rob Portman, Congressman Rob Portman. He's a—here's typical Portman. He says, "Take credit for the visitors center." I said, "Wait a minute. You did all the hard lifting. All I did was see to it that it happened." I want to thank the Congressman very much for his work. He cares a lot about the people in this city. You're just getting to know him here. You're getting to see a really fine guy. He's really a good, solid American.

I want to thank Mike DeWine, the Senator from the great State of Ohio. Where are you, Mike? Probably making a phone call. [*Laughter*] I want to thank Voinovich, who is not here, but listen, put him back in office. George Voinovich is a great United States Senator. Proud to work with him.

Doug White is with us from the statehouse. Anybody else from the statehouse here, I want to thank you all for coming. Appreciate you serving the folks here in this part of the world in the statehouse of Ohio.

I want to thank the mayor, Jim Kalb, for being here. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored you're here. Appreciate you taking time.

I want to thank Anthony Munoz, *mi amigo.* Thank you for coming. I met your daughter the other day. Yes, Tennessee basketball star. Anthony is a great guy. He's helping me in the campaign. He's helping to invigorate the grassroots. Those are the people who put up the signs and make

the phone calls and do all the hard work. You're grassroots, I can tell it looking right here. But I appreciate your hard work.

Listen, I had the honor today of meeting with folks from the Piketon plant. We got a management guy; we got the head of the union with us, two other hard workers. Actually, there are going to be three other workers—about to talk to one in a minute. But these four people came on the bus. I stopped the bus in the middle of town; they hopped on. [*Laughter*] And we talked about—let me tell you something about what I heard.

First of all, I heard that I fulfilled a promise. In the 2000 campaign, I said we'd do everything we can to keep the Piketon jobs available. Not only the jobs there—this is an expanding operation. I'll tell you why it's expanding. It's got enlightened management and enlightened leadership. These are people who work together for the good of the workforce and, as they do so, working for the good of the country. And I appreciate the leadership of the folks at Piketon, and I want to thank you for what you're doing. And welcome.

I'm going to first talk a little bit about our economy in a changing world and how we're going to deal with it. And then I'm going to talk about how to keep the country safe. As you get out and gather up the vote, remind people that this economy has been through a heck of a lot recently. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and those corporate scandals hurt us. They did, because a lot of our economy depends upon trust, and when you have people who are supposedly writing good numbers down on paper violating that trust, it causes people to wonder. The message is clear now in America: We're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country. We're going to hold people to account. That attack on September the 11th hurt us. Make no mistake about it, it hurt this economy—estimates of a million jobs lost in the 3 months after the attack. That meant people weren't working. That matters to me.

And we've overcome those obstacles. That's what I want you to tell your friends and neighbors. We have been through a lot, but we're overcoming the obstacles. I'll tell you why I think we have: One, we got great workers, workers who are productive, workers who work hard; we got great small-business owners, people who are dreamers and doers and planners and hope for the best, and employing new people; we got great farmers in America, people who know how to work the land. I also think the tax relief helped a lot, helped to overcome the obstacles.

We're adding manufacturing jobs here in America. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. We've added 1.7 million jobs since August of '03. We're growing. The national unemployment rate of 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

That statistic doesn't help some of the working people here in Ohio. I understand that. I know that parts of your great State have lagged behind the rest of the Nation in recovery. So long as somebody is looking for a job and can't find one means we've got to continue to promote progrowth policies.

I'm fully aware that there's some communities in your great State that need help. That's why I proposed opportunity zones. These are a fantastic opportunity for cities and counties that have been affected by loss of manufacturing jobs to be able to get special tax relief, priority when it comes to Federal funding. It's a great opportunity to rebuild your communities, and the Federal Government is going to help you, so long as you take the initiative. We can't make people—[*applause*].

People often ask me, what about job creation? Of course we want jobs to grow here in America. In order to make sure they grow here in America, America has got to be the best place in the world to do business. So people say, "What does that

mean?" Well, you can't do business here if we don't have reliable energy supplies. How can you expect for people to be able to work in the United States of America if the employers can't get energy. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy now.

Two years ago, I proposed to the United States Congress an energy plan, and it's stuck because of politics. And this plan encourages conservation. It says that we perhaps can add to our energy supplies by using ethanol and biodiesel. It says that we can do a better job of developing technologies, clean coal technologies. We want to be using our coal. Coal makes a lot of sense because we've got a lot of it here, and we can use technologies to make this economy grow.

But I need a plan to my desk that we submitted to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's necessary in order to keep jobs here in America. In order to keep jobs here in America, we got to cut down on all these lawsuits that are making it harder for people to hire people. In order to keep jobs here, we got to have a health policy that makes sense. We want health care available and affordable. We want the health care decisions to be made between doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And there is a big difference of opinion on health care in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the plans of my opponent, it's all about strengthening the Federal Government's role in health care. And I think that would be a mistake. Our policies aim to strengthen the role of the individual and small businesses.

Now, let me tell you some of the plans I've got. Over half the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. Rather than Federalizing insurance, why don't we be wise about it and allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the discounts that big businesses can.

We're going to expand health savings accounts. Listen, I understand there are some people in this country that cannot afford health care. That's why we want to expand the community health centers in every poor county in America. That makes sense. It's a wise use of your money, as far as I'm concerned, to have places where people can get primary and preventative care if you can't afford it. It's much better that these clinics be available rather than emergency rooms of local hospitals.

We're going to continue to defend this Medicare program we put in place. This is good law. You might remember what the Medicare debate used to be like. It was called "Medi-scare." [*Laughter*] So they would lay it out there for somebody to talk about; then they would beat him over the head with it. But I went to Washington to solve problems. People say, "Please explain to me as clearly as you can the problem of old Medicare." Well, here it is. Medicare would pay for somebody's heart surgery, which might cost up to $100,000. Medicare wouldn't pay for the drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Now, that's not a very cost-effective use of your money, because the pharmaceuticals would be substantially less in cost than the operation. And it's certainly not fair for our seniors to have a plan that didn't help them with prescription drugs.

Beginning in 2005, there is going to be preventative screenings for the first time in Medicare. If you sign up for Medicare, you're going to get a free checkup. And the reason why that's important is you solve problems early, before it's too late. Secondly, in 2006, you've got prescription drugs coming your way if you're a senior.

I'm just getting wound up here. Let me talk about one other issue as regards to health care. And one of the reasons why we have working uninsured is because small businesses can't afford health care. And one of the reasons they can't afford health care is not only the structural problem I just

outlined to you before but because there's too many frivolous lawsuits that are running up your costs. Make no mistake about it, these frivolous lawsuits are running good docs out of practice and are making the practice of medicine more costly.

And we need to do something about it. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-trial-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. Now, my opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I have made my choice. I'm standing with the small-business owners. I'm standing with the docs. I'm standing with the patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

A couple of other things I want to talk about, then we'll talk with some of the citizens who are here. Remember I talked about a changing world? Some of the institutions of our Government need to change. Some of the systems of Government need to change, is a better way to put it. You know, a lot of—if you think about it, the pension plans were designed in the past. Health care policies were designed in the past. Tax policy is kind of old and stale. And I think we need to change these systems in order to make sure people can realize their dreams and so we got a better tomorrow.

The Tax Code needs to be simplified. We need to change it. People say, "Oh, sure, we've heard that before." I'm telling you, if I have 4 more years, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the code. Here's why we need to simplify it. We spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes because the code is too complicated. It's a million words long, and there's too many special interest loopholes. For the sake of fairness and for the sake of growth, economic growth, we need to simplify the Tax Code.

They say, "Oh, that's too hard." Well, listen. Medicare was plenty hard, and we got it done. The No Child Left Behind Act was plenty hard. We got it done. The tax relief was plenty hard, and we got it done. This administration knows how to get things done, and I'm looking forward to simplifying the Tax Code.

One of the interesting facts about our society is many women work in the house and out of the house now. That wasn't the way it was 30 or 40 years ago. That's the way it is today. And that's why I think we ought to change labor laws to allow people flex-time and comp-time so moms can have more time to plan their lives, to do their duty with their children. Same with dad. In other words, the labor laws were written for the past. They ought to reflect the present and the future.

We ought to make sure that the Social Security system meets its promise. Now, if you're on Social Security, forget all the politics. Nothing is going to change. You'll hear all kinds of rhetoric, believe me. It's the way it is every campaign. Somebody says "Social Security," and immediately, people are going to jump up and say, "They're going to take your benefits away." Forget it. You're safe. Baby boomers like me, we're safe in Social Security. The trust is okay for baby boomers. It's the children and grandchildren we need to be worried about. The trust fund becomes insolvent down the road.

And so what are we going to do about it? That's the fundamental question. I think we need to think differently. I think we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own money and set up personal retirement accounts as a part of Social Security, so Social Security exists, something somebody owns. It's something Government can't take away, and it's something you can pass on from one generation to the next. I repeat, if you're retired, don't listen to the tired rhetoric, that political noise about taking away your money. It's just not going to happen. If you're a baby boomer, we're fine. But the problem is there's a lot of us, and there's fewer payers, and those fewer payers is who we need

to worry about, those coming up over the next couple of decades.

So what I'm telling you is, is that over the next 4 years, I'm going to work to change systems that are old and antiquated. That will help people. The role of Government is to help people with their lives, not try to run their lives. Our philosophy is to say, "We want to help people realize their dreams."

The tax relief worked. Now, the problem we have, for those of us in Washington, is they always talk about tax relief in terms of numbers—this number and that number. So I've asked a family here to join us—Jennifer and David Shoupe is with us today. Thank you all for coming. Stand on up. It looks like little Shoupe might have heard too much of hot air. [*Laughter*] Laura always warned me not to talk too much. [*Laughter*]

Listen, thanks for coming. First I want to tell you, these good folks from Portsmouth, Ohio, are teachers. And teaching is a noble profession. Thank you for doing what you do.

What grade do we teach? Jennifer, what grade do you teach?

Jennifer Shoupe. First grade.

The President. First grade. That must be exciting. [*Laughter*] Really, when you think about it, here's a chance—little learners come in with their eyes bright and sparkly. I know you focus on reading. It's really important we get reading right early. And thanks for teaching.

And you teach, David?

David Shoupe. Phys ed and health.

The President. Yes. And you are the baseball——

Mr. Shoupe. Baseball coach.

The President. Yes. I'm a baseball fan. [*Laughter*] I'm a fan because I peaked in Little League. [*Laughter*] The ball started to curve. [*Laughter*]

This good family, by the way, in tax relief in 2003 and 2004, saved $1,700. That's what tax relief meant to them. The reason why is because we cut all taxes. We thought if you're going to have tax relief and you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. Secondly, it's because we raised the child credit. They've got two children, one awake and one asleep—[*laughter*]—and a granddad holding on. And by the way, we reduced the marriage penalty. They're married. It doesn't make any sense to penalize marriage in the Tax Code.

Okay, what did you do with the money?

Mr. Shoupe. We actually used it to pay our homeowners' insurance.

The President. Good, okay. See, one of the things we want to do is encourage people to own their own home. Tax relief helped these people realize a dream, didn't it—to own their own home. We want more people saying, "I own my own home." A hopeful America in changing times is one in which people say, "Welcome to my home." During the Bush administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high.

What else—anything else with that money?

Mr. Shoupe. Yes, we put a little in savings.

The President. Savings? That's good, supposed to save, particularly when it comes time to educating these kids. [*Laughter*] See, here's the problem. This tax relief we passed is set to expire, and if it expires, these folks have a tax increase. They got their life planned out. They saved 1,700 last year, 1,700 this year, 1,700 next year. And here's the fundamental question we got in politics is, after we set priorities, who should be spending the money? See, I'd rather have David and Jennifer making decisions with their money than the Federal Government. Once we—[*applause*].

That's why I asked them to come, good, hard-working people. They got $1,700 additional money in their pocket. And one reason our economy is recovering is because people have got more money to spend. In Texas they call it walking-around money. [*Laughter*] I call it tax relief money. And one of the ways to make sure this economy

not only grows this year, next year, and the out-years is to make the tax relief permanent.

And that's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue. I'm going to tell you why it's an issue. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion of new money so—of new programs so far—2 trillion. And we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. [*Laughter*] It's pretty easy when you get out there on the campaign trail, believe me. You'll say, "Oh yes, I'll spend it on that, you know." It's easy to make promises. It's just hard to deliver them.

So they said to him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, that's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich." The problem is, you can't raise enough money taxing the rich. We estimate by raising the top brackets like he wants to do that you'll only raise 650 billion. So if you promised 2.2 trillion and you can only raise about 650 billion, you're short. And guess what happens when you're short? You get to pay. Yes. Plus, you've heard the rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, all we're going to do is tax the rich." Yes, I know how that works. That's why they've got accountants and lawyers. [*Laughter*] They duck, and you get stuck. [*Laughter*] But we're not going to let him. We're going to win the election.

All right, I've got a man I want you to hear from. Big Carl, pick up that mike. This guy, first of all, is a really interesting person. He was a timber worker, and he dreamed a big dream and now owns his own business.

Is that right?

Carl Pertuset. Yes, sir.

The President. All right. Tell the truth, who's the brains in this operation?

Mr. Pertuset. My wife, Vera.

The President. Yes, that's what I thought. Same thing in my household. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Pertuset. Right.

The President. Vera and Carl started their own business. Isn't that fantastic? It's American. It's a dream of the country. I meet entrepreneurs all the time, and a lot of the time they say, "Well, we started it in our garage." You didn't start this in your garage, did you?

Mr. Pertuset. No, sir.

The President. Where did you start it? Kitchen table.

Mr. Pertuset. In the woods.

The President. In the woods. [*Laughter*] What do you do, Carl? Tell us what your business—tell us about your business.

Mr. Pertuset. I started out about 22 years harvesting timber out of the forest. And then in 2002, we purchased a piece of ground that had been abandoned in McDermott, Ohio. And now we are manufacturing those woods—it is harvested with—producing crossties for the railroads and hardwood flooring, and we also produce mulch. We have a grinding facility there that goes all over the United States, really.

The President. See what he's doing? He's got a little manufacturing company. He said, "Do you know anything about timber?" I said, "Well, we've got some trees in Crawford." [*Laughter*] "Plus, we did pass the Healthy Forests Initiative to preserve our national forest and, at the same time, recognize that forests are renewable resource."

How are you organized?

Mr. Pertuset. We are an LLC.

The President. Yes, he's not a lawyer, and I'm not, either, but let me try to explain it. From tax purposes, it means he pays tax at the individual income-tax level. That's what that means, see? A lot of people don't know this, but 90 percent of the small-business owners in America pay individual income taxes—90 percent. So when we talk about tax relief, we're talking about affecting 90—well, in individuals, we're talking about 90 percent—affecting 90 percent of the small-business owners. And that helps. You know why? Because 70 percent of all new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Think about that.

Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses.

You create any jobs?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir. We started out with four when we moved in there. Today, we have 18. And we interviewed four yesterday to go to work Monday.

The President. See you on Monday?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes.

The President. He just did it to make the President look good. [*Laughter*] He did it because his business is growing. Now, you know, four people added Monday by this small business—there's a lot of small businesses across the country adding them here and there. And it's an important part of our economic growth. Sometimes, the small-business numbers I don't think get counted in the big numbers until later on. There's kind of a lag.

But what I'm hearing is the small-business sector is doing well, and the tax relief helped. One of the interesting things we did in this—in the tax relief, was we said, "If you invest, you get a break. If you're a small-business owner and you make an investment, you get tax help when it comes to that investment."

Tell me, are you an investor?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir.

The President. What do you buy?

Mr. Pertuset. We've redone the facility, first of all, and then we've put different mills in, different sizes, and purchasing grinders. Probably around $750,000 invested in 2003, and in 2004, we've invested around 200,000.

The President. So far. And you bought a grinder. And was it a new grinder?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir, brand new.

The President. Yes. See, here's how the economy works. If the Tax Code says, "Go out and make an investment; there's an incentive for you to do so," old Carl says, "Well, it's going to help my business if I do. I'm more effective. My workers are more productive." And so he goes out and he says, "Well, I think I'll buy a grinder." Somebody has got to make the grinder. See, good tax policy stimulates demand. It says to Carl, "It's wise for you to buy the grinder," and then when he makes a decision to buy the grinder, the grinder maker hires somebody. That's how the economy works.

If you run the taxes up on this guy, it has the reverse effect. And when my opponent says he's going to tax the rich, he's taxing Carl. See, his individual—with the individual rates running up, that means we're going to tax his business. We got it now where he's hiring people, where he's investing in grinders. The grinder manufacturer is doing better. And if my opponent has his way, he's going to run his taxes up on Carl. That's bad economic policy if he does that.

Thank you.

Chris—Chris, you ready? Yes, he's ready. [*Laughter*]

Chris Sanford. Sorry, Mr. President. My wife was side-tracking me there for a minute. [*Laughter*]

The President. Taking care of your—trying to keep him awake for Dad's discussion. Oops, just spit his gum out. Anyway—[*laughter*].

Mr. Sanford. That wasn't intended for you. [*Laughter*]

The President. Kept it under your seat. [*Laughter*] So what do you do, Chris?

Mr. Sanford. Mr. President, I happen to be a member of a security protective force up at the Department of Energy Gaseous Diffusion Plant up there in Piketon.

The President. Right. The reason I asked Chris to come, because he's going to—well, he's got a job because of the policies we did. Because of good management, good labor, and good collaboration with the Government, this guy is working.

And you came up from where?

Mr. Sanford. We relocated from west Tennessee.

The President. Yes, Tennessee, good. Nice part of the world.

Mr. Sanford. Not too bad.

The President. Yes. And you moved your family here.

Mr. Sanford. Yes, sir. This is my wife, Michelle, and my little boy, Ethan, and my daughter, Claire.

The President. Great. And let me ask you something. How is your pay compared to the old job?

Mr. Sanford. Okay. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. Sanford made further remarks.*]

The President. Well, I appreciate—yes. Listen, Chris, thanks for coming. By the way, his family saved $1,900 in 2003, about the same in 2004. I'm not a lawyer; I'm going to lead the witness. Does it help? [*Laughter*] Yes, it helps. We don't want to be running up the taxes on this guy. He just got his family going. You just heard him, "I bought my first home," he says. You know what it's like to get into your first home. You're wondering whether or not you can make the payments, and you're struggling, and you're dreaming, and you're working hard to get there. Why would you want to be taxing this family just as they're beginning to realize their dreams?

Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent. This bill is coming up in front of the United States Congress right now, as to whether or not to run taxes up on him, whether or not the child credit goes down, the marriage penalty goes up, the 10 percent bracket goes away. It would be a huge mistake for the Congress not to make the tax relief permanent, not only for the sake of our economy but for the sake of this family.

Bonny Huffman. I couldn't come to this part of the State and not talk about coal. Bonny is—she is the chairman of the Ohio Coal Association. Accurate? And you work for a coal company. As a matter of fact, you're one of the owners of a coal company. So what is the name of the coal company?

Bonny Huffman. Sands Hill Coal Company.

The President. Good. And what is your—who is your main customer?

Ms. Huffman. We have several customers—American Electric Power. We also supply coal to the Gaseous Diffusion Plant here and to——

The President. That's good. We were talking about that a little while ago. Good. We're talking about the need for coal in the energy mix. We also need—this country needs to be wise about nuclear power. It seems like, if we're worried about being hooked on energy from overseas, we ought to be using new technologies to expand the capacity for us to use nuclear power as well. But the resource we've got available at hand here is coal. And one of the initiatives the Coal Association of Ohio and other States—West Virginia and Pennsylvania and other States have been working on in Congress is clean coal technology. Do you want to try to explain what that means?

Ms. Huffman. Well, clean coal technology is the development of the coal to burn it more efficiently and more environmentally safe. It is critical to our future. And natural resources has made this country great, and if we don't develop, then we will take a step back in our being able to compete internationally, globally.

The President. Right. That's a wise statement. We'll take a step back in not being able to compete. I told the people in the country that if they elected me, we'd spend $2 billion on clean coal technology. I said this 4 years ago. We're on track to do so.

I'll tell you why I think it's important, is because, as Bonny said, that clean coal technology means we'll be able to burn coal cleaner. We'll be able to protect the quality of our air and protect the quality of our jobs. And I want to—so we've been working with the coal associations here—she's been holding my feet to the fire to make sure I fulfilled the promise. I've been working with her to make sure that we get the right technology in place. And the mutual

benefit is the country is able—is being able to grow and less dependent.

By the way, Bonny's coal company—didn't you tell me you hired some people recently?

Ms. Huffman. Yes, we've put on about eight people in the last couple months. And that is strictly because the economy is improving. We're seeing more need for coal than we have and more optimism than we have in the last 10 years.

The President. That's good. See, people's outlook looking better. By the way, Sand Hill Coal—that's the name of the company—you're organized——

Ms. Huffman. S corp.

The President. S corp. See, that's another fancy word—LLC, one way to do it—S corp—that's legalese and accountantese for you pay at the individual income-tax level. See, here's another example of what I'm talking about. When they say, "All we're going to do is tax the rich," running up those brackets, that's the rich. You just heard from her. That's a small business that has added eight, you said?

Ms. Huffman. Yes.

The President. Yes, eight. If you tax this little coal company, it's likely those eight aren't going to have work. The money doesn't stay in the company so people can have benefits and health care. The money goes to the Federal Government.

The small-business sector of this country is important. And I've got policies that encourage the growth of small business, and my opponent is going to tax small business. And it's a clear difference in this campaign. Our policies will cause this economy to grow.

I want to thank you. Good job.

Let me talk about my most solemn duty, which is to protect the American people. Let me share with you some of the lessons I've learned as your President. Maybe this is the best way to describe what I intend to do over the next 4 years.

First of all, we're facing an enemy that is so hateful and so backward. They have an ideology that is opposite of ours, and they use terror to try to intimidate us. That's the reality of the world in which we live. These are the people that flew the airplanes. These are the people that share the same sentiment of those who took the school over in Russia. They're still trying to figure out exactly who did it. But nevertheless, it's the mentality I'm talking about, a mentality that tries to achieve an objective by killing little kids. It's a mentality that takes innocent life because they have no conscience.

That's the nature of the people against whom we're facing, and which says to me there's no negotiations, there's no "hope for the best," that the task at hand is to bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And that's exactly what we're going to do. We must be relentless and untiring and unyielding. That's the task at hand. We're making progress, by the way. Three-quarters of the known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice. We're after the rest of them. But we must not yield.

Second lesson is this is a different kind of war. I know there's a lot of veterans here, and I want to thank you guys for coming. But it's a different kind of war than you faced. It's really different. We're chasing an enemy down that hides in caves or lurks in the corners of cities around the world, and they're patient. They're plenty tough, you know. And they plan and they think and they wait for weakness, and they exploit it, which means that in order to make us more secure, we must not only deal with the enemy but those who harbor the enemy, those who provide safe haven to the enemy.

And so I laid out a doctrine. I said, "If you harbor the terrorists, you're just as guilty." Now, when the President says something—two things I want to tell you: One, it has to be easy for everybody to understand; and two, you better mean what you say.

I meant what I said. I understand that part of my job. I mean, when I speak,

I better mean it, for the sake of peace. And I meant it when I said to the Taliban, "Get rid of Al Qaida." They didn't. And so we got rid of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It's—and we put up the—we went in, and we just—it was necessary to uphold the doctrine. The world is more peaceful because of it.

Let me spend a little time on Afghanistan. I think it's such a hopeful story. First, we're safer. See, Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. They found a soft spot, is one way to describe it, and they exploited it. And they—Al Qaida loved the Taliban. These guys were so backwards, it's unbelievable. They'd whip these mothers in town squares, and they wouldn't educate the girls. That's their view of the future. Imagine a society that's like that. No wonder these thugs were able to burrow in, into that society. They were parasitical. They were like parasites with the idea of eventually becoming the host themselves.

And we routed them out of there. And this is a society which, by the way, has now registered 10 million citizens—over 40 percent are women—to vote in an election coming up next month. Think about that. It's amazing, isn't it?

I went to Cleveland to open up the Children's International Games. Right to my right, right on the front row, with all these—intermixed with all these kids was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was amazing. It's amazing to see the kind of hope in their eyes. They had just come from darkness, and now they found light. And the world is better off for it.

A free Afghanistan will help us keep the peace. That's what we want. We want peace. A free Afghanistan will prove to others who long for freedom that, "Maybe my freedom is possible." See, free societies are peaceful societies.

The short-term objective of this country is to find the terrorists and to stop any attack. And they're out there, and they're lurking. Believe me, it's a dangerous period. There's a lot of people working hard on your behalf. Everyday, people are working. The long-term solution is to defeat terror with freedom. That's what we believe.

The third lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats before they fully materialize. When we see a threat, we must take it seriously. In the old days, which wasn't all that long ago—the old days now mean 4 years ago, roughly—we'd see a threat, and we say, "Oh, we don't need to worry about it, maybe, because the oceans were there." It's kind of hard to remember those days, isn't it? But that's what life was like. I guess it was 3 years ago. And all the threat could be materializing over here in this part of the world, and we could deal with it if we wanted to or maybe not, because it couldn't come home to hurt us. And that's what changed on September the 11th. It's a really important lesson for the American people never to forget.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. He's a fellow who had used weapons of mass destruction before. All of the intelligence I looked at, my opponent looked at, the Congress looked at, said the same thing: He had them. It turns out we haven't found the stockpiles yet, but remember, he had the capability of making those weapons. He had the capacity to make weapons. And the danger, of course, in the world in which we live is that capacity, that capability could be passed on to an enemy that had flown airplanes into our buildings and killed thousands of our citizens.

He had terrorist ties. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He was there in Baghdad. So was his organization. Zarqawi and the poisonous network was in Baghdad. Zarqawi is the guy that likes to behead people and try to shake our conscience. He's a terrorist. Saddam Hussein was paying the families of suicide bombers. That's supporting terror. And he was a sworn enemy of the United States of America.

I saw a threat. I remembered the lessons of September the 11th, so I decided to, hopefully, solve this threat diplomatically. The first thing I did was to go to the United States Congress. In other words, I thought it was important to act with the Congress, not against the Congress. We work in concert with the United States Congress. After all, they're the duly elected representatives from districts and States. Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at, came to the same conclusion I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Congress voted the authorization of force. My opponent voted yes when it came to authorizing force. It's something he sometimes hopes we forget.

I went to the United Nations because before I would commit troops into harm's way, I have to be able to tell the loved ones of those troops I've tried every avenue to try to deal with the threat. That's what you want in your President. And so I tried diplomacy. I was hopeful diplomacy would work. I was hopefully—I was hopeful that the free world would convince Saddam Hussein to end his threatening ways.

And I'll never forget going to the United Nations and laying out the case, talking exactly what I thought was right. And they listened and debated the issue. They looked at the same intelligence all of us looked at. They remembered the same history all of us remembered and voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

And he ignored the world again. As he had for over a decade, he—I guess the best way to put it, he wasn't interested in what the free world had to say. We sent inspectors into the country. Hopefully, that would solve the problem. History has shown that he deceived the inspectors. In other words, he wasn't interested in complying with what we said, nor was he interested in letting anybody come in and find the truth.

So I have a choice to make at this time. Diplomacy is not going to solve the problem. My choice is based upon the nature of the man. Do I trust a madman? Can I, conceivably, as the President of the United States, whose major obligation is to protect the people of this country, trust a madman? And given the behavior of the past, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or having tried diplomacy, do we take the action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

A couple of other points, and then I'm going to answer some questions. And then old Zell and I got to get on the bus and head down the road. [*Laughter*]

One, we've got a great military, and this Government owes the military all the resources necessary for them to do the job. I get asked all the time, "Are you for the draft?" The answer is, absolutely not. The All-Volunteer Army works. And it works if this Government supports the All-Volunteer Army, and we are. We've raised pay by 21 percent over the past four budget—well, when they passed the—they passed it, over the last four budget cycles. Housing is a lot better and equipment is a lot better. We're transforming the military to make it work better. But as well when we've got them in harm—people in harm's way, we support them.

I went to the Congress a year ago and said, "$87 billion is necessary to support these troops." And this was a really important legislation because it was vital funding. And we got great bipartisan support. That means both Republicans and Democrats supported it. It was so strong in the Senate that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. As a matter of fact, I think it's interesting—and people ought to know this—that there was only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force but didn't vote to fund the troops they authorized. In other words, they said, "Use

force," but, "No," when it comes to funding the troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

I just came from Huntington, West Virginia, where he made his famous statement, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, you know, I don't know if they talk that way at the Piketon Plant or not. I doubt it. I suspect the people who work on the floor there tell it the way they see it.

And so they pressed him, and he went on. He finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Finally, let me tell you—you're probably worried that I could go on all day. [*Laughter*] I could. Let me tell you something that just—I believe in my heart and soul, and I want the loved ones who have got somebody in Iraq and Afghanistan to understand. It's really important you understand this, that we're changing the world for the positive, for the better. See, I believe liberty has got the capacity to transform the world. That's what I believe.

One of my favorite leaders in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi. I think he caught my attention when I first met him. He said Elvis is one of his favorite singers. [*Laughter*] His favorite movie was "High Noon." [*Laughter*] He loved the values embodied in "High Noon." This is really a good fellow, and Laura and I view him as a dear friend.

We were eating Kobe beef in Tokyo one evening, and just during the course of the conversation I was thinking about what an amazing experience it is, one, to represent the United States, and two, to be talking to this fellow about world affairs, because, after all, it wasn't all that long ago that my dad was at war with his country. Your dads were at war; your grandfathers were fighting the sworn enemy of Japan. They were the sworn enemy, and we were at war with them. And after World War II was over, a President named Harry Truman believed in liberty, believed that liberty had the ability to transform societies. So did a lot of Americans, and they worked with the Japanese to develop a democracy.

Now, there's a lot of people in our country during that period of time that didn't believe it could happen. You understand why. Imagine if your loved one had been overseas, fighting the Japanese. You can understand why people said, "These people can't possibly be our—ever be our friend. They're our sworn enemy." We lost a lot of lives in that theater—I mean, a lot of lives were lost. You could imagine people in this country saying, "Well, I lost my son. There's no way this enemy is going to be a friend."

But my predecessors believed in the power of liberty, and as a result, some 60 years later, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi—50 years later, whatever the number—right number is. I think it's 50 years since they became a democracy, maybe a little less than that—and guess what we talk about? Sitting around that table eating Kobe beef, we're talking about the peace. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about how to work together to make the world a more peaceful place. We're talking about how to work together to help on the issue of—for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. We're talking about Iraq and how we believe that a free Iraq is in our nations' interests. We're talking about fighting an—HIV/AIDS around the world. We're talking about helping to feed the hungry. We're talking about making the world a better place.

It's amazing, isn't it, when you think about it, what liberty has done. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. See, freedom is going to transform Iraq from a place of tyranny to a place of hope. It's happening.

I meet with the families of those who have lost a soldier, and sometimes they ask me what you said to them. I say, "Well, I love them. We're praying for them. And

we're going to finish the mission so that their loved one didn't die in vain." The mission is to spread freedom and peace. The short-term objective of this country is to find an enemy and bring them to justice before they strike us. The long-term objective is to make this world a more free and hopeful and peaceful place. I believe we'll succeed because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

A couple of other points I want to make, and then we got some time for some questions. You know, I told you it's a changing world. I believe certain things shouldn't change. Values shouldn't change, values like courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. I believe we ought to support institutions that matter in a changing time, our families, our schools. Government ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters, every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the Second Amendment. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench. And we stand for an America that is safer and more hopeful for every single citizen.

Thanks for coming today. Let me answer some of your questions. Anybody got any questions? Yes, sir. We got a mike lady right here—two mike ladies. Well, two "yes, sirs." Let her rip.

Financing Campaign Promises

Q. Hello, Mr. Bush.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. You may not remember this, but in 1964, when you were a freshman at Yale, my roommates and I came over and knocked on your door. This was Governor George Pataki——

The President. Oh, yes.

Q. We persuaded you to join the Yale Republican Club.

The President. Oh, yes, well——

Q. Well, Mr. President, you——

The President. Problem is I never attended any meetings. [*Laughter*]

Q. You've become a very good Republican.

The President. Well, thank you, sir. Welcome. There's no telling, given politics, where you were about to take that story. [*Laughter*] Pataki, by the way, did a great job at the convention.

Q. You then went to Harvard Business School, and by your comments tonight we can see how you've put together a competent and credible business plan, not only for southern Ohio but for the whole country.

The President. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Q. In contrast, John Kerry, who also went to Yale with us, did not go to Harvard Business School but to the school of flip-flop. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay.

Q. And I'm wondering how you could address and elaborate a bit on this promise gap of how all of these programs and promises that Senator Kerry makes that would cost hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars, in a miraculous manner, at no cost to working American taxpayers.

The President. Right. Well, I appreciate that. That's a—the point I tried to make about making promises and paying for them, and his plan isn't going to pay for them, unless we tax everybody. And that's just the reality. They pressed an economic adviser the other day and he said, "Well, we'll let you know how we're going to do it after the election." [*Laughter*] Seriously. And when you hear that you got to be nervous, because that—I put out a budget. Portman has seen it, and it's a tough budget. And it's a budget that reduces the deficit in half by 5 years. It's a budget that prioritizes defense and homeland security, and it's a budget that grows non-discretionary—I mean, discretionary, non-homeland—yes, non-homeland, non-defense—

everything other than defense and homeland—[*laughter*]—at less than one percent. But it's necessary if you want to shrink the deficit.

It requires being wise about the political promises you make. And so you're right, there's a promise gap. And I'm going to continue to remind people of it here in this campaign. I think it's an issue, because I think people need to tell you how they're going to pay for things. If they come out here to Ohio and promise you this program or that program or this program or this education program, I think it's a fair question, "How are you going to pay for it?"

I've explained how we're going to pay for it. And my opponent can't explain it because he doesn't want to tell you he's going to have to tax you. But he is, and we're not going to let him.

President's Visit/Taxes/Health Care Costs

Q. Mr. President, I just want to thank you for coming to southern Ohio and Scioto County.

The President. Thanks for having me.

Q. Also, I'm from Claremont County, and we're working very hard for you there, and we want to see you there, if you can squeeze that into your schedule sometime. I'd appreciate that.

The President. Okay, thanks. That's good, used the moment to invite me, nothing better than that. [*Laughter*] A fellow always likes to be wanted. [*Laughter*]

Q. The other thing I wanted to thank you about, you were talking about taxes earlier and a tax break, and I just wanted to tell you how it affected me personally. If Al Gore had been elected, I would be in a 28-percent tax bracket today. But because you are my President, I'm making more money, and I'm in a 15-percent tax bracket, thank you very much.

The President. Well, that's good. Yes, I appreciate that.

Q. The last thing I wanted to say, you were talking about health care and the problem with health care costs. And what gets me is the audacity that John Kerry has to talk about wanting lower health care costs when it's people like his runningmate, John Edwards, that are part of the problem, being an ambulance chaser.

The President. Yes. No, I appreciate that. I think this is an issue. I'm telling you, it's a national issue. Everywhere I go people understand now the cost of lawsuits. And people ought to have their day in court. Don't get me wrong; I mean, if you get hurt, you ought to have your day in court. And there's a reasonable way to do so. But frivolous lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit causes docs to have to practice defensive medicine.

You know that it costs the Federal Government about $28 billion a year because of the practice of defensive medicine. That's why I believe it's a national issue. It affects our national budgets. I submitted a plan. The House passed it. Of course, it's stuck in the Senate where the trial bar is tough. They're one of the most powerful special interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of powerful interests in Washington, DC, and the trial bar is one of the toughest.

One of the reasons I'm running—well, one of the issues I'm making during the course of this run is, I want people in Washington to hear the voice of the people. It's the great thing about campaigns: You get out and you say the same thing a lot of times. And I do. I talk about medical liability reform almost every speech I give. You know why? Because when I win I want to be able to stand up in front of the Congress and say, "I made it an issue, and the people spoke. Now, let's get the job done on behalf of the patients and doctors."

Yes, sir.

Mad Cow Disease/Canadian Beef

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, and I just want to thank you for the privilege of speaking to you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I've never been in the same room as the President, and I just wanted to have the opportunity to thank you.

The President. Well, I appreciate it. I hope you view me as just like the neighbor next door.

Q. Good. You just spoke a minute ago about great farmers. Just a few hours ago, I was in up to my knees in cow manure. [*Laughter*] And I've been a dairyman——

The President. No wonder you're sitting way up there. [*Laughter*]

Q. I milked my first cow in—when I was 12 years old, 41 years—yes, 41 years ago. And my wife and I, tomorrow, will celebrate, on 9/11—we had no idea was going to happen about emergency numbers or happen in New York—but our 33d anniversary is tomorrow.

The President. Congratulations. I appreciate that.

Q. And I have a question. I don't know whether you'll like this question or not, but it is a farmer's question. Less than a year ago, the first part of December, mad cow disease was discovered in Washington State.

The President. Right.

Q. It was eradicated there and traced by DNA—every offspring—and traced to a herd back in Canada. The border was closed and is closed—Canadian beef and dairy animals. I just wondered if you could tell me about a timetable——

The President. Sure.

Q. ——and how it would be done. I know for a fact that there's cattle that weighs over 2,000 pounds in Canada that's wasting—waiting across the border, and what that will do—impact that will have on the United States.

The President. No, I appreciate that. That's a legitimate question on BSE. First of all, thanks for being a farmer. Secondly, we have an obligation to make sure the meat supply is safe. I'm sure you understand that. And there is a whole process in place that, once we discover diseased meat, that kicks into action. And our Agriculture Department responded according to the law. And the law was, as you mentioned, to make sure the dairy herds are properly—or herds are properly inspected. And that's what we have been doing.

Now, what he is basically saying is, "Hasn't the inspection process gone on too long?" Certainly, the Canadians think that. And so we're in the process—by the way, some beef is moving across the Canadian border. Cut beef—cut box beef, I believe—where is the guy? [*Laughter*] Oh man, you got a lousy seat. [*Laughter*] Cut box beef is moving, right? You don't know. It is. And so we're working the Canadians to make sure that the herds—the herd is clean enough so that we could get cross-border beef moving again.

I would like to do it as soon as we possibly can. I understand the cattle markets fairly well. I think it's in our interest we move product. It's also in our interest that we convince the Japanese to reopen their beef—their markets to U.S. beef, which they have shut down because of BSE—same with the Mexican market.

So the—our approach is threefold. One is to finish the regulatory process that we're required to do to make sure the herd is—the product is safe for consumers. Two is to work with the Canadians to get the border open again. And three is to get markets back open again that shut down as a result of the BSE scare.

Okay. Yes, sir. Number 22. How old are you?

Q. Fourteen.

The President. Good.

Wheelersburg High School Student President Election

Q. Well, first of all, it's just an honor to be here, and I'm glad to meet you, and you're really a hero to America.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. My name is Dillon MacDonald. I go to Wheelersburg High School. I'm running for student president of my freshman class, and I was wondering if I could have your support. [*Laughter*]

The President. Man, you're heading in the right direction. [*Laughter*] Grab a mike when you find one, and let her rip. [*Laughter*] I assure you, when I was 14, I couldn't have stood up in front of all these cameras. Yes, you can have my support.

Thank you. Good luck. I'll tell you what you do. President—I'll tell you what you do. Let Portman know if you win. [*Laughter*] Seriously, write his office. When's the election?

Q. Monday.

The President. Monday? Yes, we'll know pretty soon. [*Laughter*] I've got a little longer to go in mine. [*Laughter*] But seriously, drop Portman a line, okay? I'm interested in knowing the outcome. I'll be curious. I'll remember you. I'll be watching the election like a hawk. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, *mi amigo.*

The President. Como esta?

Q. Muy bien. Muchas gracias. The Cubans in Miami want to know if you're going to be the President, going to get rid of Fidel Castro. You got rid of Saddam Hussein—[*inaudible*]—so I hope you'll be the one to clean Cuba. Hey, Puerto Rica and Cuba are for you.

The President. Gracias.

Q. No hay de que.

The President. All right, let me tell you what he's talking about. *Cuba libre.*

Q. Cuba libre.

The President. Si. Ahora. Here's what he said. We're talking about Cuba. Here's my view of Cuba. The people in Cuba want to be free. That's my view. And—but I think our policies—this administration has got the right policies. There's some pressure, I think, to make the wrong decision, and that is to trade with Cuba, for example.

Now, let me tell you the problem with that. Cuba—Fidel Castro does a marvelous job in a controlled economy of having certain places where dollars can purchase goods. The problem is, is that they pay the Cuban workers in pesos, and there's an arbitrage—he's able to split the difference between currency valuations. The dollar is a lot stronger than the peso. So we buy goods in dollars, or a tourist buys goods in dollars, or an investor buys goods in dollars, and yet, the people get paid in pesos, and Fidel Castro keeps the balance. And it keeps him strong and keeps him in power.

That's why this administration has taken a view that we're not going to lift the embargo on Cuba, that we have got capacity for citizens to send some money and food and medicines directly to people, but we're not going to empower the Cuban Government through bad—through economic policy that would end up having an undesired effect. This guy is a tyrant right in our own neighborhood. He's not—he's—a while ago, we gave him a chance. I gave a speech down in Miami. I said, "Why don't you allow people to express their opinions in referendum and step up and participate in the process, and we'll change our policy. Just show some freedom." And instead what he did was he logged down and imprisoned librarians. This guy will put people in prison at a drop of a hat. There is no rule of law.

And so our policy is to keep the pressure on him and to not allow Fidel Castro and his dictatorial society to exploit trade and/or commerce to his advantage and to the disadvantage of the suffering people within his country.

Yes, ma'am.

Present for the President

Q. Thank you for coming to our area, first of all.

The President. Okay, thanks.

You're next.

Q. And I have made a promise to my little girl. She got up this morning and said, "Would you give this to the President?" She drew you a picture last night.

The President. Sure.

Q. And so I want to make sure that you got it, but I gave it to that gentleman back there.

The President. Where is he? [*Laughter*] Josh? Josh Gatlin? You picked—[*laughter*]—we grew up in Texas together. By the way, his old man is a good friend of mine, Larry Gatlin. Josh is a better—just for the record—hold on, just in case his old man is watching—Josh is a better golfer. [*Laughter*] I know him. He'll make sure I get the picture.

Q. Thank you.

The President. That's it?

Q. I just made a promise to her that I'd get it to you.

The President. Well, you tell her Mom fulfilled her promise. Thank you very much for coming.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Legacy

Q. President Bush, we absolutely love you. We love your sincerity. We love everything you represent.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And my one question for you is, 50 years from now, what would you like for your legacy to be?

The President. Yes, I appreciate you saying that. [*Laughter*] No, it's a great question. It's a great question. It's really an important question too. A couple of things. I'd like the reputation to be: He came and solved problems and didn't pass them on to future Presidents or future generations; that he realized he was fortunate to be the President of a mighty country and, therefore, set big goals, not only for our own country but for the world. I believe we have an obligation to lead. That's what I believe. And I also believe to whom much has been given, much is required.

I would hope that people would look back and say after 50 years of—that we put in place a certain momentum that caused more and more people to demand to live in liberty and freedom, that people saw that free societies could exist in parts of the world where there had been hatred and, therefore, violence, that liberty was available and possible.

I think there are millions of women in the greater Middle East who want to live in free societies. That's what I believe. I believe that young men would rather have a hopeful life than strapping suicide belts on. I believe that there are reformers in the Middle East who watch very carefully the words and actions of the United States of America. And I would hope that after my time as the President—8 years of it—that people say, "George Bush didn't waver in his belief," in my hopes.

And so one of the legacies would be a peaceful world. That's what we want. We want this world to be—that's what we all long for. We've got peace in our hearts.

Secondly, at home, I would hope that people would look back and say our society was better off, for two main reasons. One, the education system fulfilled its promise. The No Child Left Behind Act is a major piece of reform, and I'll tell you why. It—one of my favorite phrases is, we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know, if you have low expectations, guess what happens? Kids just get shuffled through the school system. And I looked at it as the Governor of Texas, and we challenged this low expectations in our schools.

I believe every child can learn. I believe every child can read. And therefore, I expect every child to learn and read. And so we raise standards. Rather than lowering standards, we raised them. And we said, "In return for a substantial increase in Federal money"—and there has been—"that we expect results." And that's the change. We said to the people of Ohio, "Measure. In return for money, you measure. Now, you figure out the test, but you measure." And here's why you want to measure—because you can't solve a problem unless you diagnose it.

If you think the system of just shuffling the kids through is wrong, then the way

you deal with that is you measure early and you solve problems early. That's how you raise the bar. The accountability system is crucial to making sure that there's a hopeful America. And that's what we're doing.

One of the integral parts of the No Child Left Behind Act says, "If you're deficient, if you're not meeting the standards in the third grade or first grade or second grade, there's extra money"—they actually start testing in the third grade—"there's extra money. Or the fourth grade, if you're falling behind, there's extra money. The fifth grade, there's extra money, so to pull people up."

Now, some may believe that you can't read, and therefore, just shuffle them through—or learn. I don't believe that. And so another legacy, I would hope, is that we've laid the foundation for a new way to approach public education so that the public schools meet the dreams of every parent and the obligations of our society, so that colleges don't become places for remedial education but in fact are places for additional education.

And finally—I know this is too long an answer, but you asked it, and I've got some big dreams. Finally, I want people to look back and say that George W. Bush understood the power of faith-based programs to change America one heart at a time. And here are the policy recommendations—policy implications. The question is, should we use Federal taxpayers' money for faith-based programs? In other words, should faith-based programs have the capacity to apply for Federal grants. And it's a legitimate debate on this subject. A lot of people say no, because of the issue of separation of church and State. I say that you don't have to blur the lines of church and State, and—by allowing faith-based programs to bid, so long as they don't use the Federal money to proselytize and so long as people of all faiths can be treated or saved or helped.

And let me give you an example of what I'm talking about: drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. Sometimes Government programs work. Sometimes, however, in order to convince a person to change their ways, you have to change their heart, and Government is not very good at changing hearts. As a matter of fact, change of hearts take place in faith-based programs. That's why faith-based program exists. That's the power of a faith-based program.

And so I believe that Government ought to welcome faith-based programs that work and give them access to Federal monies. As a matter of fact, we're changing the culture in Washington, DC, now to get Washington well-meaning, hard-working Federal employees not to fear faith-based programs. All I'm asking is, "Does it work," see. I'm not asking the process question. I don't have time to worry about process in Washington. I'm saying, "Does it work? Does this program to change the person's heart and, therefore, causes him to get off drugs—does it work?" If so, we ought to say, "Welcome. Welcome into our society. Welcome to the fabric of social help."

And so the legacy is one in which our Government recognizes that the true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens and empowers citizens to change America, one heart at a time. And so one of the legacies is a more hopeful America. That's what I'm talking about—when I say a more hopeful America, I want this society of ours to be hopeful for everybody. And I recognize, amongst our wealth there are people who hurt and people who weep and people who are hungry and people who need housing, and Government can help, but the true help can be found as well in neighborhoods, in churches and synagogues and mosques that empty out and pour out their love to help save lives.

Anyway, it's a long answer to a short question.

Q. Thank you so much.

The President. I don't think a President ought to be planning legacy. I think a President ought to be acting and leading, and let the legacy thing happen. I don't think you write your history right now. I don't think you can worry about how history is written. I think you deal with the hand you've been dealt and do the best you can do, not worry about polls and focus groups, not worry about the pressure here or the pressure there. You make the decision you think is right. You surround yourself with capable, competent people and listen to them.

Let me talk about the capable, competent people I've surrounded myself with. My administration has empowered more women than any administration. I'm talking about women who have got positions of responsibility, people who can march right in there to the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, you're doing all right," or, "Mr. President, you need to change."

I've empowered a lot of African Americans when it comes to making decisions and policy. My head of my State Department, my National Security Adviser, the head of the Department of Education, the head of the Housing and Urban Development. I mean, that's—what I'm tell you is—I'm kind of blowing my own horn here, for a second. [*Laughter*] I've got good, capable people from all walks of life, and I listen to them. And I listen to their advice. And I'm open-minded to their point of view. But when I make up my mind, I can make a decision and stay with it and lead this country. And that's what is important when it comes to leadership.

You know what? You got a question? Make it a good one, because this is the last question. No, I know—I know, but guess what. I got a bus to get on. [*Laughter*] We got to get on down the road. We got to start shaking some hands and get out there and campaign. You want me out there seeing as many people as I can see. This election is getting closer by the day.

Yes, ma'am.

Health Education

Q. I was wondering, with obesity and disease and all the things that are plaguing our youth in our schools today, what you can do as President and what you will do as President to promote health education back in our school system.

The President. Well, I appreciate that very much. Let me talk about education, putting programs in the school systems. Look, the Federal Government's role is to focus on at-risk kids, Title I kids, which we do. And we funded a reading program. But the truth of the matter is, we're spending about, oh, 9 percent of the money nationwide, and you don't want us to have 100 percent of the power. Quite the contrary. You want the local schools to be making the decisions here.

And so you ask the question, what are we going to do to make local schools have physical ed—frankly, that's up to your school boards and your Governor. I don't want to—I'm not the kind of guy who usually passes the buck, but I don't think you want the Federal Government making curriculum decisions for you.

Now, having said that, there's some things we can do. I believe that, first of all, I think it's good to exercise at school. But it is also good to exercise when you're not in school. And you can—it doesn't take much. It doesn't take much.

As you know, I'm kind of an exercise person. I like to get out and work out. It kind of clears out the cobwebs. [*Laughter*] But if you walk 20 minutes a day, you're improving your health. If you're—and let me tell you, I'm a busy guy, but I make time in my schedule to work out. I say to my schedulers, "I know so-and-so is important to come in here, but not nearly as important as giving me the hour to myself so I can exercise."

And so what I'm—one of my suggestions, and one of the things I will continue to do is try to set a good example when it comes to prioritizing physical exercise. I

know you can do it, and I know your friends can do it. And sometimes it takes turning off the computer or the TV to get it done, and I know that's not easy. But nevertheless, one of the roles I can do, a useful role, is to set an example, and I'll continue to do so.

I believe strongly in exercising. And I believe that the American people ought to be out there as best they possibly can. And I repeat, it doesn't take all that much. As a matter of fact, one of the best things we can do to keep health care costs down and to keep—is for people to exercise and to make right choices about what you eat, make right choices about whether you smoke cigarettes. I mean, there's some things that Government can't cause you to do, but we can tell you what you ought to do and inspire you to do it. And that's what I think one of my proper roles to be.

Listen, thank you all for coming. I appreciate your interest. God bless you. Get to work, and we're going to win. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at Shawnee State University. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Ohio State Senator Doug White; Mayor James Kalb of Portsmouth, OH; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz and his daughter, Michelle, former University of Tennessee women's basketball player who transferred to Ohio State University in 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Remarks in Chillicothe, Ohio
September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here. Old Bob Ney, he said, "Why don't you come over to the Ross County Fairgrounds. Maybe a couple of people will come over and say hello." Thanks for having me. It's good to be here. I'm here to ask for the vote; that's what I'm doing.

I've been traveling on that bus throughout your beautiful State telling people I'd like their vote. And we're ending our bus trip right here in Ross County, and it's a good place to stop. This is where the people work hard. They value family. They like hunting and fishing, and they love their country.

I'm traveling with my friend Zell Miller. He—what Zell said is something I appreciate. He said, "You can be a Democrat and vote for George W. Bush." I understand there's a lot of people here in this part of your State who call themselves Democrats, and we welcome you here, and we welcome your vote. I want to thank my friend Zell Miller for traveling with me. He's a great American. He is a solid, solid citizen of this great country. And I'm proud to call him friend.

Not only am I here to ask for your vote, I'm here to ask for your help. I'd like for you to go out and register your friends and neighbors. Remind them they have a duty to do in this democracy of ours, to participate in the process. So go to your coffee shops and your community centers, and register people. Register our Republican friends, the independents, and discerning Democrats. Not only register them, I'm here to ask you, then, to get them to go to the polls, voting time. And when

you head them to the polls, remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I am sorry Laura is not here today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Most people usually do groan. [*Laughter*] So when I asked her to marry me, I said, "Will you?" And she said, "Fine—[*laughter*]—"just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, okay, you don't have to give any political speeches. Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. [*Laughter*] See, last week in New York, people got to see Laura. They got to see her calm, steady, compassionate self. I love her dearly. And perhaps the most important reason to put me back in to office is so she'll be First Lady for 4 more years.

I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I'm proud to be running with him. Admittedly, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment, strong experience, and he can get the job done for the American people.

I appreciate Congressman Bob Ney, straight shooter, good friend, and a fine Member of the United States Congress.

I'm proud your Governor is here. Mr. Governor, thank you for coming. I appreciate my friend Bob Taft joining us today. I'm going to thank my friend Rob Portman, Congressman from the Cincinnati area, Congressman from the district right next door—great American. Thank you for coming, Robbie.

I appreciate it. I'm proud Mike DeWine is with us today. Mike is a fine United States Senator. I want to thank—oh, by the way, speaking about Senators, put Voinovich back in there. He's running too. He's a great United States Senator. He's serving these people—the people of this State with class and dignity, and I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him Senator.

And I want to thank Attorney General Jim Petro for being here. Senator Doug White—I want to thank all the senators and house members who are here. I want to thank the local officials who've come. Thank you for serving.

I appreciate my friend Anthony Munoz, who's with us today. You might remember Anthony. He's nothing but an NFL Hall of Famer. He's a Hall of Famer in my book too because he's trying to help us get reelected here in the State of Ohio.

I want to thank John Stone, the country music artist who was here today. I appreciate, John.

We've had a great trip. I had the honor of visiting on the bus with some employees from Piketon. I appreciate those workers for being with me today. I reminded them, in the year 2000, I wrote the Governor a letter. I said, "If I'm President, I'm going to save that plant." Promise made; promise kept.

Appreciate the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up all the signs we saw coming in today, people who will man phones when it comes time to get people to vote, people who are going to talk it up when it comes time to talk it up. Thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what you're going to do. With your help, we will carry Ohio again. With your help, we will be able to serve this great country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like getting out with the people. I like to tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation.

I believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I believe every child can learn. We've raised the standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems now, before it's too late. We trust the local people to make the right decisions

for the schools. We're making progress here in America. We're closing the achievement gap, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. You might remember the endless debates on Medicare. As a matter of fact, they used to call it "Medi-scare." I went to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. People say, "What do you mean?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. Medicare would pay $100,000 for heart surgery, but they wouldn't pay for the medicines to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't right for the seniors. That was lousy for the taxpayers. Beginning in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage: they'll get a modern system, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, and farmers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, remind people we've been through a lot. This economy has been through a lot. You know, months before we got ere, the stock market started to decline. Right after we got there, they declared a recession. Then we had corporate scandals. By the way, it is now clear in America, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked. Some people estimate that attack cost us a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack.

But we've overcome those obstacles. We've overcome them because we've got great people here in America. I believe we've overcome them because our economic stimulus plan is working. See, this economy is strong; it is getting stronger. We've been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I fully understand there are parts of your great State which are lagging behind the national recovery. But that doesn't mean we ought to go to lousy policies. That means we ought to continue the progrowth policies that we put in place. We ought to continue to grow this economy so people can find work.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future generations or future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we'll win a great nationwide victory in November.

I fully understand the world in which we live in is changing. See, our dads and granddads generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided health and pension plans. The world we live in is different from that. Most people have more than one career. They change jobs several times. The most significant change in our workplace is that a lot of women work in the home and out of the home now. Yet the fundamental systems haven't changed. See, these are systems designed for yesterday, not tomorrow, the Tax Code, health coverage, and pension plans and worker training. In a new term, we will transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices, to be able to pursue your own dreams.

Any hopeful society is one in which this economy is moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create more jobs here, we need to reduce the regulations that burden our employers. To create new jobs here, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for small businesses to expand. To create jobs here, we need a sound energy policy.

Listen, 2 years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, and it got stuck, for political reasons. It needs to get unstuck. If we want jobs here, we need a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, modernizes the electricity grid, uses coal—clean coal technology, a plan that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

If we want to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets around the world for U.S. products. See, we open up the markets for foreign goods, and that's good for you. If you've got more choices, it's going to mean you'll get what you want at a better price and a better quality. So my message to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." That's why I'm enforcing these laws. Rather than fallen prey to the language of economic isolationism, what I'm saying is, "You open up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, the fellow I'm running against has so far proposed over $2 trillion in new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we still got October to go—[*laughter*]—and a lot of September. So they asked him, they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, you know, I'm just going to tax the rich." Two problems with that. One is that, his plan to tax the rich raises about $650 billion. If you propose $2.2 trillion and your plan raises $650 billion, you're a little short. [*Laughter*] You know what that means, don't you, when they get that shortfall between the promise and the plan? You're going to get stuck. The other problem with that plan of taxing the rich is, we've heard that rhetoric before out of Washington. See, that's why they hire accountants and lawyers, so you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November.

We need to do something about the Tax Code as well. This Tax Code of ours is too complicated. It is full of special interest loopholes. It takes the American people about 6 billion hours a year to fill out their taxes. That is too much time. In a new term, I'm going to call Republicans and Democrats together and make this Tax Code more simple and more fair, for the sake of economic growth and for the sake of fairness to the taxpayer.

In a changing world, jobs change. And I know that, and you know that. In order to help people when jobs change, we've got to make sure our community colleges are more accessible for American workers. We want people to be able to train for the skills that are needed to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Same things comes to our high school students. Most new jobs today are filled by people with 2 years of college, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why we will fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students in high school. We'll place a new focus on math and science so the kids have got the skills necessary to fill the new jobs. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we'll help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

We've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable.

More than half of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. See, small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses afford health care and to take care of American families is to allow them to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies. Another way to help small businesses and the workers is to expand health savings accounts. We'll expand community health centers in every poor county in America, to help people get preventative care and primary care.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice and running your costs up. See, you cannot be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, we'll make sure the health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, stability can be brought to people's life if they own something. I believe in promoting an ownership society in America. One of the most hopeful statistics of the last couple of years is that under my administration, homeownership rates are at an alltime high. More and more people are owning their own home. We've got a plan over the next years to promote more ownership. We want people opening up the front door, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

I see a lot of younger workers here. I want to thank you all for coming. I want to talk to you right quick about pension plans, Social Security. If you're an older worker, Social Security will take care of you. I don't care what they say in the campaign. You've heard it every 4 years, "They're going to take away your Social Security check." That's old, stale, tired, Washington, DC, talk. You're going to be just fine. Baby boomers like me are going to be just fine when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. And so therefore, I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal account to help them with Social Security, a personal account they can call their own, a personal account Government cannot take away.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the rhetoric of my opponent, they all aim to expand Government. This campaign intends to expand opportunity because we trust the American people.

In a world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we'll support the institutions that matter, that bring us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will chase the terrorists around the world so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader

Middle East and elsewhere, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. The toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and using weapons of mass destruction. We knew that after September the 11th, we must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history that we remembered, and concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and he concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat and voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief puts troops in harm's way, we must try every avenue to solve the problem. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I went to the United Nations. I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history. They concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat. They passed a U.N. Security Council resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Saddam Hussein, disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The world spoke.

But as he had for resolution after resolution after resolution, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors in, he systematically deceived them.B

So I'm now confronted with a choice. The choice was whether to take the word of a madman, to forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq now live in freedom. And the world is better off. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls didn't get to go to school in Afghanistan because of the backward ways of the Taliban. It wasn't all that long ago that their mothers were pulled out in the public square and whipped because they wouldn't toe the line to their dismal ideology of hatred. But think about this. Today, 10 million people, 40 percent women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's amazing. Freedom is so powerful. People long to be free.

In Iraq, despite ongoing violence, there's a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January.

We'll stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. It's in our interest we stand with them. As well when America gives its word, America must keep its word. I say it's in our interest—I believe it is because freedom societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed export—breed violence for export. Freedom governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. And that will make us safer in the long run.

Our strategy is clear in those countries. We will help new leaders train their armies so they can do the hard work of defending themselves. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. I want to thank the veterans who have joined us today for setting such a great example for those who wear today's uniform. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I know their decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their loved ones that the Federal Government will give them all the support they need to do their jobs. That's why a year ago, I went to the United States Congress and proposed supplemental funding for $87 billion. It was an important piece of legislation, really important. It provided funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies, necessary money for troops in harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. We received great bipartisan support in the Halls of Congress. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the vital funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I know. In fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. And two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember when he said, when they asked my opponent why, and he said, "Well, of course, I did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." Not exactly the way they talk here in Ross County. [*Laughter*] He went on to say, well—said he was proud of the vote. And finally, he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

See, I think a Commander in Chief must be clear and steady. When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. [*Laughter*] Senator Kerry once said, "It would naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that if left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future of more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." End quote. That's what he said.

In 2002, he voted for the war but then voted against the funding for body armor and combat pay and other needed measures. When the heat got on him in the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, he said he would still have voted to go to war even knowing everything we know today. Earlier this week, he adopted the language of his one-time rival Howard Dean, saying, "It's the wrong war at the wrong * time," even though he earlier said it was the right decision and he supported it.

The newest wrinkle is that Senator Kerry has now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he earlier criticized us for not spending enough. One thing about Senator Kerry's position is clear: If he had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would still be a threat to the security of America and the world.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I want to thank our friends and allies for the contributions they've made to making this world a more peaceful place. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. The next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

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* White House correction.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I tell people about the fact that I've got great relations with the Prime Minister of Japan. We have consultations. We talk about important matters. What's interesting about those consultations is, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that Japan was a sworn enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. Your dads and granddads, husbands fought against the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy.

After we won in World War II, my predecessor Harry Truman and many Americans believed that if Japan would become a free society, the world would be better off. A lot of people were skeptical about that in America, at that time. You can understand why. They were the enemy. But they had—my predecessor had great faith that liberty could transform an enemy into a friend.

Because we helped Japan become a democracy, today, I sit at the table with the head of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about how to see the Korean Peninsula is more peaceful, talking about Iraq and how to keep the peace there. We're talking about feeding the hungry and helping people with disease. We're sitting down as allies and friends talking about a better world.

Someday, a free Iraq is going to elect a leader, and an American President is going to be sitting down with him or her, and they'll be talking about the peace. The world will be better off with a free Iraq. America will be more secure with a free Iraq. A free Iraq will send such a clear signal to people throughout the Middle East that freedom and liberty are possible.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government every devised by man. I believe this, because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to work to make this world more free and, therefore, more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. It's a day that workers in hardhats were there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was trying my best to thank the workers, people who had been in the rubble. A guy grabbed me by the arm. He said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to better protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State asking for the vote. I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Ross County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia,

who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Ohio State Attorney General Jim Petro; Ohio State Senator Doug White; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Notice on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Terrorist Attacks on the United States

September 10, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2004, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,

September 10, 2004.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address

September 11, 2004

Good morning. This is a day of remembrance for our country. And I am honored to be joined at the White House today by Americans who lost so much in the terrible events of September the 11th, 2001, and have felt that loss every day since.

Three years ago, the struggle of good against evil was compressed into a single morning. In the space of only 102 minutes, our country lost more citizens than were lost in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Time has passed, but the memories do not fade.

We remember the images of fire and the final calls of love and the courage of rescuers who saw death and did not flee. We remember the cruelty of enemies who murdered the innocent and rejoiced in our suffering. We remember the many good lives that ended too soon which no one had the right to take. And our Nation remembers the families left behind to carry a burden of sorrow. They have shown courage of their own, and with the help of

God's grace and with support from one another, the families of terror victims have shown a strength that survives all hurt. Each of them remains in the thoughts and prayers of the American people.

The terrorist attacks on September the 11th were a turning point for our Nation. We saw the goals of a determined enemy, to expand the scale of their murder and force America to retreat from the world. And our Nation accepted a mission: We will defeat this enemy.

The United States of America is determined to guard our homeland against future attacks. As the September the 11th Commission concluded, our country is safer than we were 3 years ago, but we are not yet safe.

So every day, many thousands of dedicated men and women are on duty—as air marshals, airport screeners, cargo inspectors, border patrol officers, and first-responders. At the same time, Americans serving in the FBI and CIA are performing their daily work with professionalism, while we reform those agencies to see the dangers around the next corner. Our country is grateful to all our fellow citizens who watch for the enemy and answer the alarms and guard America by their vigilance.

The United States is determined to stay on the offensive and to pursue the terrorists wherever they train or sleep or attempt to set down roots. We have conducted this campaign from the mountains of Afghanistan to the heart of the Middle East to the horn of Africa to the islands of the Philippines to hidden cells within our own country. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We know that there is still a danger to America. So we will not relent until the terrorists who plot murder against our people are found and dealt with.

The United States is also determined to advance democracy in the broader Middle East, because freedom will bring the peace and security we all want. When the peoples of that region are given new hope and lives of dignity, they will let go of old hatreds and resentments, and the terrorists will find fewer recruits. And as governments of that region join in the fight against terror instead of harboring terrorists, America and the world will be more secure. Our present work in Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult. It is also historic and essential. By our commitment and sacrifice today, we will help transform the Middle East and increase the safety of our children and grandchildren.

Since September the 11th, the sacrifices in the war on terror have fallen most heavily on members of our military and their families. Our Nation is grateful to the brave men and women who are taking risks on our behalf at this hour. And America will never forget the ones who have fallen, men and women last seen doing their duty, whose names we will honor forever.

The war on terror goes on. The resolve of our Nation is still being tested. And in the face of danger, we are showing our character. Three years after the attack on our country, Americans remain strong and resolute, patient in a just cause, and confident of the victory to come.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. The National Days of Prayer and Remembrance and Patriot Day proclamations of September 10 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Terrorist Attacks in Russia
September 12, 2004

Mr. Ambassador, thank you for receiving Laura and me. I'm here to express my country's heartfelt sympathies for the victims and the families who suffered at the hands of the evil terrorists. The United States stands side by side with Russia as we fight off terrorism, as we stand shoulder to shoulder to make the world a more peaceful place and a free place.

The atrocities that took place in the school were beyond comprehension. Many in America and, I know, many in Russia simply cannot conceive the hearts of a person that would mow down innocent children. And the killers, once again, reminded us—remind us of the duties we have as free people to work in concert, to work in unity, to make this world a better place.

And so, Mr. Ambassador, I'm honored. Please pass on my very best wishes to President Vladimir Putin, a man who I admire. I talked with Vladimir right after the incident. We had a very good discussion about the need for us to continue to work together. I pledged our Government would continue to work with the Russian Government and the Russian people.

And may God bless the people of Russia, and may God bless those who suffer. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. at the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Yuriy Viktorovich Ushakov, Russia's Ambassador to the United States; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Muskegon, Michigan
September 13, 2004

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. So Hoekstra said, "Get over here." He said, "Come to Muskegon." I said, "Okay. See if you can get some people to show up."

Listen, thanks for coming. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here to tell you I have a reason to ask for the vote, and we're going to do it a little differently today. I'm going to talk to some of our fellow citizens about health care. That's what I really want to spend some time on. I'm also going to talk about making America a safer place, making the world a safer place.

Before we get started on issues that matter to the future of everybody in this country, there's an issue that matters to me, and that is, I hope I can also count on your help in order to win this election. That means registering people to vote. Step one is to remind your friends and neighbors that we have an obligation in a free society to participate. So anybody who is 18 years old here who hasn't registered—register. You have an obligation. And step two is once we register people to vote, is to get them to vote. And step three is when you get them headed into the polls, remind them America will be a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place when you put Dick Cheney and me back into office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay. Thank you all. Perhaps the most—I'm ready for 4 more years, and perhaps the most important reason to give us 4 more years is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. So I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine." She was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Yes, I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] Well, fortunately, it's a promise she didn't hold me to. People got to see her in New York City. She gave a fabulous speech. And the reason why is because she's a genuine, kind, compassionate person who is a great mom, a great wife. I love her dearly. And she sends her very best. She's out campaigning today.

I want to thank my friend Peter Hoekstra. He is a solid citizen and a very fine Member of the United States Congress. He is—and Diane, thanks for coming—he is a highly respected Member of Congress. He is now going to be in charge of the House Select Committee on Intelligence. I look forward to working with him to strengthen our intelligence gathering capabilities so that we can do as good a job as possible about protecting our fellow citizens. Peter understands that the world changed on September the 11th. He understands we have a solemn duty in America to do everything we can to protect you. And I look forward to working with you, Pete. It's a great honor that you've been selected.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Those are the unsung heroes who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work. I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do—[*laughter*]—over the next couple of weeks. You know, there's just no doubt in my mind that with your help, we're going to carry Michigan and win the country.

Listen, most people in America agree with my philosophy that the role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to try to run their lives. The role of Government is to say, "What can we do to help you," not tell you what to do. And that's the fundamental difference of opinion in this campaign.

One of the things that I'm going to spend a lot of time talking about in this race is that I understand the world we live in has changed. And the fundamental systems of Government must change with a changing world. People say, "What do you mean?" Well, think about the workforce. When our dads and granddads were in the workforce, they generally were working for one company, one career, had one pension plan, one health care plan. Today, the workforce has changed. A lot of people have more than one job and more than one career. In other words, people are changing. Life is moving quite quickly.

The other most massive change in the workforce has been women. Women who used to stay at home are now not only working inside the house, are working outside the house. And yet, the Government systems haven't reflected this change.

The pension plans were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. If you're a senior citizen, you don't have to worry about Social Security. If you're a baby boomer, you don't have to worry about Social Security. And by the way, you'll hear the same rhetoric you hear every campaign, believe me, you know, "Oh, don't worry, they're going to take away your Social Security check." It is the most tired, pathetic way to campaign for the Presidency. So you don't have to worry about that. And baby boomers are fine. We're in good shape, you know.

The people who aren't in good shape are the children and grandchildren in this country, because there's a lot fewer payerinners than there are recipients when it comes to Social Security checks. I think we need to think differently for young folks when it comes to pension plans, and by that I mean younger folks ought to be able to take some of their own taxes and set aside a personal savings account. When you

hear me talk about changing systems to help people, this is a—this will help people when they have their own personal savings accounts which will enable them to actually receive Social Security benefits.

The worker training programs were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. That's why I'm such a big backer in community colleges. That's why I believe we ought to promote a lifetime of learning for workers. The jobs change in America. Sometimes the skill sets don't change with them. In order to make sure people can work and realize their dreams, the job training programs must adjust to a changing economy.

We're going to talk about health care. It needs to be changed and modernized. It needs to reflect the world in which we live.

The Tax Code needs to be changed. It's complicated—it's a complicated mess, is what it is. Americans spend about 6 billion hours filling out the taxes. That's a lot of time and a lot of headache. The Tax Code is full of special interest loopholes. In a second term, I'm going to work with both Republicans and Democrats to simplify the Tax Code, to make it more fair. This will not only help our economy grow, it'll help the American worker; it'll help the American family. So we're going to simplify the Tax Code.

What I'm telling you is, I recognize the changing world in which we live, and the proper role of the Government is to change the systems of Government that were designed for yesterday so that they reflect tomorrow. In order to make sure—by the way, one of the biggest changes we have in America is the fact that our workers are more productive than ever. There have been high productivity increases, and that's great for the country. People say, "What do you mean by productivity increases?" It means you've gone from a shovel to a—you know, to a mechanized digger, or from a manual typewriter to a computer. That's what it means, when you come more productive.

And yet, a more productive workforce requires our economy to have sustained growth in order for people to find work. If the same worker can—if one worker can double the output of the past, it means the economy has to grow faster in order to make sure people can find work if they're not working. That's what that means. And, therefore, I put out a plan to make sure the economy that we have today is even stronger tomorrow.

Now, when you're out gathering the vote, remind people we've been through a lot. Think about what this economy has been through. When we got in there, the market had already been declining for about 5 months. In other words, there was something fragile about the economy. And then we had a recession. The first three-quarters of my Presidency were declared recession because economic growth was negative. In other words, we checked in to serve the American people, and the next thing we know is we've got a recession handed to us.

And then we had some corporate scandals, and that affected the psychology of the country. Make no mistake about it, when somebody doesn't tell the truth in the corporate world, it affects economic growth. There should be no question in anybody's mind today that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then September the 11th came, and it hurt us. I'm going to talk a little bit later on what it meant in terms of working to secure the homeland. There's some interesting—not "interesting"—really important lessons from that day. But they estimate we lost a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

And yet, if you think about it, we've overcome those obstacles. This economy of ours is strong, and it's getting stronger. And the fundamental question—I mean, the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent.

That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Now, there are pockets in your State where the recovery is lagging behind the national average. I understand that. But that means we ought to put good policies in place and keep them in place, as opposed to resorting to the old, tired, you know, Government approach.

So I want to talk to you about how we're going to keep the economy growing. And one of the key aspects is to make sure the health care system works. Before we get to the health care system, let me—here are some ideas that the American people need to hear.

In order to make sure the job base expands in America, we need an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. I mean, it's going to be hard to sustain economic growth if we stay hooked. And we need to modernize our electricity grid as well. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress over 2 years ago, and it's stuck. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that recognizes technology is going to change much of the energy debate.

In other words, hopefully within a decade, people will be driving hydrogen-powered automobiles. That makes sense. You know, we've got great research being done on clean coal technology, so we can use an available resource. We want people—and one of—I think a great opportunity for America is that someday they're going to walk in and say, "Here's the crop report, Mr. President. We're growing more corn than ever, and now were less dependent on foreign sources of energy." We ought to be using ethanol and biodiesel as ways to diversify our energy supply.

I think we ought to be using technology to expand and advance nuclear power. We ought to be wise about how we diversify our energy supplies and encourage energy conservation. In order to keep this economy growing, we put forth a plan that Congress must pass in order to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure the economy grows, we've got to continue to open up markets. There's a lot of farmers in this part of the world. The farm economy is strong here, strong in Michigan, and it's strong around the world. One of the reasons why is because we're selling U.S. product in other markets. That's one of the reasons why. Ask your corn growers, ask the people who are growing soybeans what it's like to be able to sell product, grown here in Michigan or elsewhere in America, overseas. And listen, we've opened up our markets, and it's good for you we have. Here's the way the economy works: If you've got more choices to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how it works. My message to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

One of the reasons we overcame the obstacles, one of the reasons this economy is growing, is because of well-timed tax cuts. I mean, when you've got more money in your pocket, it means that you're going to demand an additional good or a service. And when you demand an additional good or a service, somebody is going to have to produce it. And when somebody produces it, it means somebody is more likely to find work.

One of the central tenets of that tax relief was, we're helping our small-business owners. Do you realize 90 percent of the small-business owners in America pay individual income taxes?

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Good, well, there you are. Then you understand what tax relief means. [*Laughter*] When you give—70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses, and when you provide tax relief for small businesses, it means our economy is growing. That's what's happening here in America.

And so here's the thing, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are making it hard for small businesses to stay in business. We've got to reduce regulations on small businesses so they're able to hire. And we must not raise taxes. In order to keep this economy growing, in order to make sure that jobs are available not only this year but in the out-years, we've got to keep your taxes low, and that's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue.

I'm running against a fellow who has proposed over $2 trillion of new Federal spending. That's a lot. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, don't worry. I'm just going to tax the rich." Now, let me—a couple of things wrong with that. One is, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for over $2 trillion of new money. In other words, there's a tax gap. Guess who's going to get stuck? Yes. Don't worry, we're not going to let him stick you, because we're going to win. [*Applause*]

Hold on a second. A couple of other things. Thank you all. We've got a lot of work to do here, though. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the cheering.

Secondly, if you run up the top two brackets on the individual income taxes, you're taxing about a million small businesses, is what you're doing. Now, why in the heck would you want to tax small businesses just as this economy is beginning to grow? If 70 percent of the new jobs are—in America are created by small businesses, why would you want to tax the job creators? You wouldn't.

Thirdly, you've heard the rhetoric, right, "Tax the rich." We've heard that before. The rich hire accountants and lawyers for a reason. [*Laughter*] And you get stuck with the bill. Raising taxes is wrong right now for this economy, and we're not going to let him get away with it. We are going to win. Taxes is a big issue in this campaign. I intend to make it an issue all across the country.

Let me talk about health care. We're going to talk about health care now. And I've asked some folks to come and explain to you some of the reasons why our policy makes sense. You've probably already heard enough from me already for one day.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Okay, well, that's good. I'm just looking for a little affirmation. [*Laughter*] If that's the case, I'm just getting wound up.

I have a practical, commonsense plan to make health care available and affordable, and that's important, a practical way to make sure health care is available and affordable and a way to make sure good doctors keep practicing medicine.

I believe health care decisions should be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC. We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has got a massive, complicated blueprint to have our Government take over the decisionmaking in health care.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His plan, if you listen carefully to what he says, would have bureaucrats become the decisionmakers, and that would be wrong for America. As well today, there's a independent study which has been released which says that his plan would cost the taxpayers $1.5 trillion in new Government spending. Not only is his plan going to increase the power of bureaucrats in your lives, but he can't pay for it unless he raises your taxes.

Today we're going to talk about a difference of opinion. It starts with—you know, what would you expect from a Senator from Massachusetts? [*Laughter*] That's what you would expect—a Government takeover of health care with an enormous price tag. We're going to talk about a way to make sure health care is available and affordable, and start with Medicare. You might remember the old Medicare debates. They were called "Medi-scare" because people wouldn't dare talk about changing

them. I believe we have a duty to our seniors. I believe we have a moral obligation to make sure health care is available and affordable to our seniors.

Plus, I went up to Washington to fix problems. You know, I said, "If I'm fortunate enough to win"—this is what I said in 2000—"I'm going up to address problems, not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents." My style is to say, "Here's a problem. Let's come together to fix it." We had a problem in Medicare. And the problem was that medicine was modernizing and Medicare wasn't. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, Medicare would pay for, you know, $100,000, say, for heart surgery, but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers.

And so we modernized Medicare. Listen, seniors should get a prescription drug card today. It will help you with your cost of drugs. Starting in 2005, we'll have preventative care and screenings for our seniors as a part of Medicare. That makes sense. You hear me say I've got a commonsense, practical plan. It's practical to have seniors tested early so we can diagnose problems before it's too late. It's practical for seniors to be given preventative screenings in Medicare, and in 2006, prescription drugs will be available for senior citizens in Medicare. We have strengthened Medicare, and it's good for our seniors we have done so.

To make health care available and affordable, we've got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine. And those junk lawsuits are running good docs out of practice. If the goal is an available and affordable health care, we've got to do something about lawsuits. Make no mistake about it, these lawsuits are running up your cost of medicine. You ask small-business owners, you ask docs what it's like to practice in a litigious society. That means there's a lot of lawsuits. [*Laughter*] I'm not even a lawyer, and I know the word "litigious." [*Laughter*] Yes.

And so—people say, "Well, that was a local issue." No, it's not a local issue when the cost of medicine is skyrocketing or the cost of health care is skyrocketing because of the defensive medicine being practiced by docs, so if they get sued, they're able to have a good case in the courthouse. And it costs the taxpayers about 28 billion a year for docs to practice medicine defensively.

And therefore, I went to Congress and said, "This is a national problem. It requires a national solution. We need medical liability reform." Of course, it's stuck in the United States Senate. It came out of the House, and I want to thank Pete for his support. It's stuck in the Senate because the trial lawyers are powerful. They are a powerful special interest. They stand in the way of good medical liability reform. This a big difference in this campaign. I like to remind people you can't be pro-doctor or pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

There's more to do to make health care available and affordable. We've got to modernize the health care information. I believe that within the next 10 years, we can have electronic health records, with safeguards for your privacy, which will cut down on the administrative costs of health. We can save a lot of money by using technology to modernize health care.

In order to make sure that health care is available, we need to expand the Government health insurance program for children. In other words, it exists, but many children are not using it. We've got a billion dollars available in the budget to encourage families to take advantage of Government-sponsored health care for children, for low-income children. It makes sense to

make sure that the programs are fully utilized in every aspect of our—in every corner of our country.

In order to make sure health care is available, we need to expand community health centers. Tom Lufkin is with us. We're about to talk about community health centers. I made a promise, by the way, when I was running. I said, "These things make sense for low-income Americans, to have a place to get preventative care. It's better that they get care in a community center rather than an emergency room in a hospital." I think it's good use of taxpayers' money to expand these, and we're doing it. We're fulfilling the promise I made in the 2000 campaign. I made a further pledge. I think every poor county in America ought to have a community health center.

Tell us what they are, Tom. Thanks for coming.

[*At this point, Thomas Lufkin, executive director, Muskegon Family Care Center, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Appreciate that. Thanks. See, I believe Government ought to help people who can't help themselves. And the idea is to help people so they can help themselves, but there are some who just can't, some who are stuck, some who are poor. In the land of plenty, there are pockets of poverty. We've got to understand that. And the idea is to make sure that preventative health care is available through community health centers.

I want to thank you for your compassion. An interesting point he said was these health centers spawn other acts of generosity in communities. People see that they're up and available, and other people who have got good hearts, who want to love their neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves, step up and participate in helping those who hurt, in helping those who need help.

And so one way to make sure health care is available is to expand community health centers throughout the country. And that's what we're doing. I want to thank you for coming, Tom.

Another way to make sure health care is affordable and available is to help small businesses with health care. Now, here's the problem for small businesses: They go out and bid in the current system, and they don't have a significant pool of people to spread risk. That's the problem. They're in the midst of trying to provide health care in their businesses, and they go out and try to get a bid for health care, and they're kind of a little, stand-alone entity. Now, big companies are able to pool risk because of their size. We believe in order to make sure health care is available and affordable, that little companies ought to be able to bind—be bound together, share risk, so they can get the same discounts that big companies get.

David. David Pray. I was looking for you and finally found you. [*Laughter*] Tell us what you do.

[*David J. Pray, president and chief executive officer, Decker Construction, Inc., made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good, that's a good sign, isn't it? Upbeat guy. Small company, how many employees?

Mr. Pray. We have 10 employees.

The President. Ten, that's small. That's the definition of a small business. And so he was telling me aboard Air Force One there that he has some problems with health care.

Mr. Pray. Well, we've been—through Associated Builders and Contractors, we have been in a statewide pool for quite a long time. And for a lot of years, we enjoyed about a 10 to 15 percent cost advantage over being—over going out and finding single, affordable policies elsewhere.

The President. So they got a plan here in Michigan where you can pool together. It's a nice concept. However?

Mr. Pray. However, last year, the State of Michigan passed legislation called Small

Group Health Care Reform which, instead of now being able to pool the risk over 400 member companies, premiums are now calculated based on claims history. So we don't have the advantage of pooling anymore. And the immediate effect for our company was a 29-percent increase in our premiums. And bear in mind that we, as a company, feel a duty to provide the medical and dental care not only for the employee, himself, but for his dependents. We fund 100 percent of that cost.

The President. So here's what we're talking about. Listen, this guy's a responsible guy, you know. He says, "I've got a duty as a employer of people to do the best I can do." The problem is the system is so designed that he can't really do his job because he is unable to pool risk. See, the more people you have in the risk pool, the lower the cost of health insurance. That's just how it works.

And so what we're suggesting is, is that David be able to combine with companies not only in Michigan but nationwide. I mean, why shouldn't a guy building commercial construction in Texas not be able to put his employees in the same pool as David? The reason why is because the health systems were designed for the past. The current health care system is stuck in the past, as far as I'm concerned.

A national plan—in other words, people being able to bind together nationally would mean that a lot of mandates that now affect the cost of health care would not be imposed upon these small businesses, and it means that more people could bind together. People resist this because they like the system the way it is. What we're interested in is, we don't like the way it is. We're interested in change. Government must be willing to change with the times. Association health plans mean we're willing to change with the times to help small employers be able to provide good health insurance for their workers.

Another way—as you can see, I've got a strategy to make sure health care is available and affordable without the Federal Government making the decisions for you. See, we've said, "We're going to take care of those who can't help themselves. We're going to make sure small businesses are able to afford insurance just like big businesses can do."

And now, I want to talk about a very interesting idea called health savings accounts. This is a different approach to health care, which will mean that the patient and doctor are central to the decision-making process and helps us hold down the cost of health care. Health savings accounts are an innovative idea that became the law of the land as a result of the Medicare bill I signed. And I want some people to describe. Matt, are you willing to describe what it means?

Matthew J. Venema. Yes.

The President. Okay, don't worry about all the cameras. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Venema. All right, all right. I'll try to forget about those.

The President. First, start with the name of the company and why you're even involved.

Mr. Venema. The name of our company is All-Flo Plumbing, LLC. We're a plumbing contractor in the Grand Rapids and West Michigan region. We were struggling under the burden of our health care.

The President. How many people, sorry?

Mr. Venema. Fourteen employees, twelve full-time.

The President. Small business, thousands of small businesses just like his all over the world, all over the country, all over America. The heart and soul of the American economy are these small-business owners. Sorry.

Mr. Venema. No problem.

The President. Giving you time to warm up. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Venema, controller, All-Flo Plumbing, LLC, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Hold on a minute. Sorry. We've got to make sure the people understand what we're talking about. A lot of times, you use initials in Government. [*Laughter*] HSA.

Okay, here it is. So you buy a high deductible——

Mr. Venema. High deductible health policy.

The President. ——health policy to cover for major medical costs, right?

Mr. Venema. Correct. Correct.

The President. So, for example, if you're a family—I've said, this company, he'll tell you what his is, I think it's a zero——

Mr. Venema. Pardon me?

The President. What is your deductible in your——

Mr. Venema. It's $3,500 for a family plan.

The President. So above $3,500, the insurance company will take care of the costs.

Mr. Venema. Absolutely.

The President. And then so what happens between zero and 3,500?

Mr. Venema. As the employer, we took most of the portion of our savings and funded the HSA plans for each individual employee.

The President. So the company is now putting in the money to cover routine medical expenses from zero to 3,500. They're able to put it in tax-free. They're able to rollover the money tax-free, and they're able to take the money out of the HSA tax-free.

Mr. Venema. Yes, it's a nice benefit for the individual employee. If they happen to have a good health situation, they get a tax-free savings account. If something goes wrong, they're still covered. And my wife and I gave this a good test run last year because we had a premature baby and $20,000 in health bills at the hospital, and it worked like a charm. So we're very happy with this plan.

The President. Let's make sure we understand here. This is—we're trying to simplify what sounds like a complex issue. And zero to $3,500, you pay—"you" being the company and the employee, depending upon the arrangement. Now, if you spend $2,000 in the year, 1,500 of that 3,500 that's in your account rolls over for the next year. And that's your money, and it's tax-free. It rolls over. So you build up a health savings account over time.

Now, think about a system, by the way, that provides an incentive for you to make good choices with your life. If you save that money by—because you're healthier, that may cause you to go out and walk 20 minutes a day. No fooling. In other words, the system all of a sudden says, "You're in charge. You, the employee, or, you, the patient, you're in charge of your decisions, as opposed to somebody far away making decisions whether or not you deserve this or not through your insurance plan. You're the person in charge." And there's a tax incentive for you to make right decisions.

All right, any savings?

Mr. Venema. Yes, actually when we switched over, the premium savings have been phenomenal. Our total group expenditure right now for health insurance, including what we contribute to everyone's HSAs, is $38,500 a year, approximately. If we were still under our previous conventional plan, it would be about $81,000 a year. So we're talking about a 52-percent savings for our group, and we've been very excited about that.

The President. These work. I'm telling you, they work. They make a lot of sense. Health care is more affordable under health savings accounts, and health care is more manageable because the decisionmaking is between the patient and the doc. And it's really important for people to understand that. This stands in contrast to a system where the Federal Government is going to say, "Oh, here's what's going to happen here. We're going to move people from private health insurance to expanded Medicaid," for example. You don't want the

Government making decisions on your behalf when it comes to health care. And this is one of the fundamental philosophical differences in this campaign, is who do you trust? We trust the people. My opponent trusts the Government to make decisions when it comes to health care.

Now, we've got another man here who knows something about it. Jim, tell us what's—welcome.

[*Jim Glupker, customer relations, All-Flo Plumbing, LLC, made brief remarks.*]

The President. It's an interesting twist. [*Laughter*] You're not the first person in America that way, by the way. [*Laughter*] Go ahead. Would you care to clarify why you're mad at me? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Glupker. I can do that——

The President. ——a fellow like me, sitting here.

Mr. Glupker. I'm just a little disappointed that it wasn't available to me 30 and 35 years ago, when I was a young family, you know? Because then that account would have a lot more in it than it does today.

The President. Yes, see, explain to people—you've got an account up and running? And you've used it?

Mr. Glupker. I've used it, and the interesting thing is, when we changed over——

The President. They work for the same company, by the way.

Mr. Glupker. Yes. We were able to keep our same doctors, which was interesting. And the other thing is, because it's our money, when we go shopping for prescription drugs and stuff, we shop, because why pay $100 for that prescription when you can go down the street and only pay 80?

The President. Yes. See, that's a very interesting point, isn't it? There is a marketplace in America, if consumers are empowered to have choice. That's what we're talking about here. "We go shop." The old system, when the Government is involved, they don't shop. They dictate. Here, consumers shop. It's your money. You're in charge of your money. In this case, the company puts a lot of money in there that you call your own money. It's part of how they make sure the labor relations are good inside this little company, is they contribute to the health savings account, and he's out shopping.

People ask me about prescription drugs a lot. Let me—a couple of points I want to talk to you about. And one, one way to make sure that prescription drug costs are reasonable is to encourage people to go into the marketplace and to provide more information to people so that they're not necessarily buying a brand drug when the generic is available. Generics are a lot cheaper than brand drugs, but nevertheless, they do the same thing.

Secondly, we've got to move generic drugs quicker to the market. That's important for us to do, and we've got plans to do so. As a matter of fact, the Medicare bill helps do that. There's a lot of stalling tactics sometimes in the industry, where they say, "We've got a new add-on that needs to be—need to extend the protection period for our brand drug." Well, we're cutting through all that. We're saying, "Here's a reasonable period of time for you to recoup your investment," and generics are going to move quicker.

I'm asked a lot about importation of drugs. It's an interesting idea. But remember, my job is to protect you as best I can. That's the role of the Government. And what we don't want to do is have a system where it sounds like a pharmaceutical may be coming in from Canada, but, in fact, it is manufactured in another country. I suspect the consumers of this country, while it sounds good that these may be able to help us on price of drugs if they come in from Canada—before I'll allow that to happen, I'm going to make sure that you're safe. Because all you need to do is get a batch of drugs manufactured elsewhere that sounds like they're legitimate, and get sick, and then you're going to be wondering, where were the people,

why weren't they doing their jobs of protecting consumer safety? And so I'm interested in knowing whether or not we can make sure you're safe. That's a duty we have in the Federal Government.

Seems like to me, the best way to make sure that drug costs are reasonable is encourage the consumer to be a pricer in the market and to speed up generics. They say we'll save $35 billion over 10 years by speeding up the generic drugs to the marketplace, is what we're doing.

Anyway, I hope you've got a better sense of where I intend to take health care. It's a practical way to make sure health care is available and affordable.

And it's a comprehensive plan. We've thought through this very carefully. It's commonsensical. In other words, it makes sense to do it this way, because the alternative is, in my solemn judgment, not right for the American people. Having the Federal Government run your business and health care is—would be costly, it would lead to rationing of health care. It would mean that you're not in charge of your decisions, which is the exact opposite philosophy we hold.

Now, let me talk to you about making America a safer place and the world a safer place. A couple of things I want to share with you. One, it's important never to forget the lessons of September the 11th, and I'm not going to forget them. I'm not going to forget them.

The first lesson is, the enemy we face is coldblooded, and they have no conscience, that you cannot negotiate with these people, in other words. You cannot hope for the best from them. You cannot hope they'll change their ways. See, these are people who profess, you know, Islam. No, they've hijacked Islam, and they've substituted the peaceful nature of Islam with an ideology of hate. And they use terrorism as a tool to shake our will, to shake the conscience of the free world. And so the only way to deal with them is to stay on the offense, is to chase them down overseas so we don't have to face them here at home, and we will. [*Applause*]

And it's important—okay, if you'll all hold on—thank you. I've got a little more work to do, though. Got some things on my mind——

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Oh, we'll have a chance to do a little "4 more year" thing in a minute. [*Laughter*] I've got to tell you what's on my mind. I want you to know I have a reason for running again. I've got a plan to make this world a safer place and the country a more hopeful place. That's why I'm running.

See, we've done a lot in this administration, but the only reason to look backwards is to best determine who to lead us forward. And that's what I'm talking about here. I just want you to know I have a plan and a reason for running, so that you can go out and tell your friends and neighbors, "Let's put him back in there. He's got some good ideas. He understands what he's doing when it comes to making sure this economy continues to grow, making sure that families are strong, making sure that the institutions and systems are changed in order to help the American people, and he's got a plan and a vision to make this world a safer place." And that's what I'm here to tell you.

First, I know the nature of the enemy. It means we must be relentless and unyielding. Secondly—and we must use all tools at our disposal. That's why I'm looking forward to working with Peter, to make sure the intelligence system—see, we're chasing down people who hide in caves, people who kind of lurk in the dark corners of cities around the world. And therefore, we need good intelligence, and we're working with friends and allies in order to share intelligence. You know, people—we'll use law enforcement. We're darn sure going to use our United States military, too, to protect the American people. And that's why it's important for our military to be,

you know, transformed to meet the threats of the 21st century.

Secondly, since it's a different kind of war, in order to make sure America is safer I laid out a new doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the American President says something, he better mean it. When the American President says something, he's got to speak in a way that's easy for people to understand and mean what he says. I meant what I said when I said to the Taliban, "If you harbor a terrorist, like Al Qaida, you're just as guilty as they are." They ignored what we said, and that's why they're no longer in power. In other words, we said, "If you continue doing what you're doing, you're not going to be in power." And as a result of a great United States military and as a result of brave souls, Afghanistan has been liberated from a barbaric group of people. And we're safer for it. Al Qaida can no longer train because we upheld doctrine.

Remember, they were training thousands of people in Afghanistan so they could put these terrorist cells around the world. Way before September the 11th, they were training in Afghanistan, plotting and planning. You know, somebody said, "Well, they—by staying on the offense, you're creating more enemy." I strongly disagree with that sentiment—I strongly disagree. They were planning—they were plotting and planning way before September the 11th. No, by staying on the offense, we're reducing the enemy. By keeping the pressure on them, we're reducing the enemy and making America more secure. And by upholding doctrine, we're making America more secure as well.

Now, think about Afghanistan for a second. Not only is the Taliban out and Al Qaida has lost a safe haven, but people are free in that country, and that matters to America. It should because free societies promote peace. Free societies become allies when it comes to fighting off the ideologues of hate.

You know, it just wasn't all that long ago—it was 3 years ago that young girls weren't allowed to go to school—many young girls—most young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan. That's backwards, see? When you've got people running a country that is so clouded in their vision that they wouldn't let young girls go to school, is a society that would breed, you can imagine, incredible resentment. It's a hopeless society. That's how terrorists are able to recruit, because there's no hope. Freedom—a free society is one that promotes hope. You know, their moms would be drug out in the public square and whipped. And that matters to America, because we believe in human dignity. We believe in the value of every human being. That's why we support a culture of life, because we believe in life.

Think about this, tell your friends and neighbors this amazing statistic when it comes to Afghanistan—at least I think it's amazing. Three years ago, these people lived in a dark world. Today, there's light, and freedom is moving rapidly to that country to the extent that 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, are registered to vote in the Presidential elections that will be taking place next month. Think about that. Amazing, isn't it?

I have—I can't remember all the people that wrote and opined about what it was like going into Afghanistan back then. I suspect some probably said that these people can't be free. You know, they really don't want to be free. Freedom is powerful. And I'm just guessing that there were some people that were pessimistic about the country's dream of having a democracy there in Afghanistan. But 10 million people—that wasn't all that long ago that women were pulled off a bus by the Taliban and murdered because they were involved in the election process.

Third lesson is, when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. In other words, one of the lessons of September the 11th is that oceans no

longer protect us from harm's way. It used to be, prior to September the 11th, that if we saw a threat, we could deal with it or not deal with it because we never dreamt it would come home to hurt us if we saw something materializing overseas. Policymakers in the country could say, "Well, that makes sense to deal with that," or, "We can let that one go because it can't possibly hurt us." That's what we thought, and history had taught us that. I can understand why everybody felt that way, but September the 11th changed that equation.

And therefore, when we see a threat, this country must deal with that threat so it doesn't come home to harm us. And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. The reason I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein is because I was looking at intelligence that said he was a threat. But as importantly, I remembered his history. He was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. We had been to war with him once before. He was shooting at our pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had harbored terrorists. Remember Abu Nidal? He killed Leon Klinghoffer. Abu Nidal and his organization was in Iraq. Zarqawi, he's still lingering around. He had an organization. He's got ties to Al Qaida. He's the guy who beheads people to shake our conscience. He was in and out of Baghdad. Saddam Hussein paid the families of suiciders

Now, he was a threat. I went to the Congress, and I said, "The world has changed." And they looked at the—they agreed. They looked at the intelligence I looked at. They remembered his history. And they concluded—Members of the Congress from both political parties concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force. My opponent, he looked at the very same intelligence my administration looked at. And he voted yes when it came time to authorize the use of force.

I went to the United Nations, and I'll tell you why I went to the U.N., because I believe before a Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues, all avenues to solve a problem. I understand the grave decision of sending men and women into harm's way. It's a decision I wish I hadn't had to make as your President. It's a decision, however, that came to my desk because of the actions of an enemy.

And so I went to the United Nations in the hopes that we could solve this problem diplomatically. And so I gave a speech, I remember, there talking about the threat, reminding people of the world that we lived in after September the 11th. And the United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at and remembered the same history and voted 15 to nothing to send this message to Saddam Hussein: "You disarm"—or "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." Now, I believe when you say something, you better mean it in order to make the world a more free and peaceful place. That's what I think. I think when you say something, in order to—if you're going to vote to authorize force, you better mean it. If you're going to say "serious consequences," you better mean it.

But Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world once again. People say, "Well, you didn't try diplomacy." Diplomacy had been tried for a decade. This was a confirmation that he wasn't interested in complying with the demands of the free world. I think there was, what, 17 U.N. resolutions? Something like that—a lot, like, resolution after resolution after resolution. And he wasn't interested in complying. One reason we knew is because he systematically deceived the inspectors.

And so I have a choice to make at this point: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, take the word of a madman, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you.

A couple other points. It's hard work in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know that, and I want to thank the family members who are here who—if you've got a loved one in the military, I want to thank you for the sacrifices you've made and the sacrifices your son, daughter, husband, or wife have made on behalf of this country. It's not easy to help a country. There are people around this world that want to stop the march of freedom because they see it as the biggest threat to their ideology of hate. That's the fact.

A lesson I've learned, and a lesson that—it wasn't hard for me to learn it, either—was that anytime you put troops into harm's way, the Federal Government needs to support them so they can finish their mission. That's why a year ago, I went to the Congress and proposed $87 billion of supplemental funding to make sure marines, like this man right here, have got what it takes to do the job. And we got great support in Congress. You might remember that, Pete, about how members of both parties stood up and recognized the need for us to support troops in harm's way. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against essential funding for our troops—only 12—2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate, were part of those 12.

Interestingly enough, when you're out gathering the vote, you might remind people that there was only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't vote to fund the troops. And two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate. You might remember, when asked to explain why he made the vote he made, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] See, I think a President needs to speak clearly and mean what he says. So they kept pressing him. He finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

A couple other things I want to share with you—a couple of other things then we've got to move on down the road in the bus. [*Laughter*] It's a bus tour. [*Laughter*] It's exciting to go on a bus tour, because a lot of people come out, and they want to wave, and it warms my heart to see many people lining the roads like—that's what happens on these trips.

Let me tell you a couple of other things. One, people say, "What's the mission?" The mission is, in Afghanistan and Iraq, to help those countries become free countries, is to help on the road to democracy, is to help the political process go forward.

Remember, Iraq is going to be having elections in January. They've got a tough Prime Minister. I like him, Allawi. He's a strong guy. He's the guy that, by the way, survived an assassination attempt by Saddam Hussein. The guy sent the people in to—he was living in London at the time—they sent a ax-wielding thug to try to chop him to pieces. And he survived it. Seriously. So he understands. He understands the tyrant. He believes in the aspirations of the people. He wants there to be elections. He knows that Iraq can handle democracy. It's what he believes in his soul. I believe we ought to help him get there.

When we give our word, we need to keep our word. In order to make the world a more peaceful place, when you say something, you better mean it. And we've told the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, we'll help them. We will stay the course so that they can develop an army and police force of their own so they can defend themselves. That's what we're doing. We're providing stability for a political process to go forward, and we're training troops so they can do the hard work, so they can step up, so they can help the reconstruction efforts go forward. It's precisely what we're doing. And we're going to get the job done as quickly as possible, and then our troops

will come home with the honor they've earned. And the world will be better off.

I believe liberty can transform the world. Listen, we all want peace. And I believe it's going to happen, that our children and grandchildren will grow up in a peaceful world, that we will make America secure by staying on the offense. But in the long run, our security comes from spreading liberty.

You know, I tell people that one of my favorite leaders in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I want you to think about this here for a minute. You know, I sit down at a table with him and have dinner, and we have really interesting, meaningful discussions about peace. What's unusual about that conversation is that 60 years ago or so, my dad and your dads and husbands and grandfathers were at war with the Japanese. They were a sworn enemy of America. Thousands lost their life because of the Japanese.

Fortunately, Harry Truman believed in the power of liberty to transform societies, and so did a lot of other Americans. There was a lot of skeptics, and you can understand why there was skepticism after World War II. If your loved one had been over fighting and had lost a life, how could you possibly imagine that a sworn enemy could become a friend? But because our predecessors believed in the power of liberty—I mean, predecessors for citizens and elected officials—to transform an enemy into a friend, today, Japan is a friend.

We did the hard work after World War II of helping Japan go toward a democracy, not an American democracy but a Japanese democracy. And today, I sit down at a table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to deal with the tyrant in North Korea. By the way, it is now five voices reminding him that he needs to disarm, including China, as opposed to one voice reminding him.

I talked to Prime Minister Koizumi about how liberty can transform Iraq and Afghanistan to become allies in the war on terror. I talked to the head of a country that we were at war with about how free societies will serve as powerful examples for women who want to be free in the Middle East or for reformers who wonder whether or not the free world hears their calls for help. I talked to him about feeding the hungry.

I believe to whom much has been given, much is required. I believe this United States of America must use our great wealth and generosity to help those who are hungry in the world. I believe we ought to continue to lead the effort to help orphans whose lives have been changed because of the pandemic of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. I believe we not only need to write checks; I believe we need to unleash the great faith-based programs of America to help those who suffer. I believe all these things. And of course, we'll continue to provide medicines and help and infrastructure to help save lives. I believe all this because the actions we take will mean that a generation of young Americans can grow up in a better world.

The enemy attacked us. We didn't ask for this attack. They attacked us, but out of this attack, because of U.S. leadership, because we've got great values, because of our resolve, because of a clear vision of a better world, out of that attack is going to come some incredible good, in my judgment, a safer America, a more peaceful world, a better life.

And that's why I'm asking for the vote for 4 more years. I know where I want to lead us. I have the energy and desire to do so. And I'm not afraid to ask for your help.

God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. at the Muskegon County Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Diane Hoekstra, wife of Representative Hoekstra; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi

of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks in Holland, Michigan
September 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. Nothing like a little Dutch hospitality on the campaign trail.

I'm here to ask for your vote. That's what I'm doing today. I believe you've got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote. And not only do I want your vote, I want your help. Go out and register your friends and neighbors to vote. Don't overlook the discerning Democrat, people like Zell Miller. And then when you register them to vote, get them headed to the polls. Then when you get them headed to the polls, tell them if you want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back in office.

I wish Laura were here today. She is a great mom, a wonderful wife. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, I'm real proud to be—I'm proud to be running with my friend Dick Cheney. Look, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because he's a man of good judgment, good experience, a man who gets the job done.

I want to thank my friend Pete Hoekstra and his wife, Diane. Hoekstra is a good one, a fine Member of the United States Congress. I look forward to working—he said, when we were coming in on the bus, he said, "Remind them we worked on the desks together." [*Laughter*] I did. They put him the head of the Intelligence Committee. Believe me, that's a big deal. I'm looking forward to working with him to make sure we've got the best intelligence possible to protect our country.

I want to thank the mayor for being here. Mr. Mayor—Mayor Al is with us today. I appreciate him coming. Just fill the potholes, Mr. Mayor, and everything will be fine. [*Laughter*] I appreciate, Mayor—tell your police force how much we appreciate their sacrifice and service. And while you're thanking the police, thank those firefighters, too, for their service.

And I want to thank my friend Betsy DeVos and her father-in-law, Rich. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. Thank the local officials who are here.

I thank the Bellamy Brothers are here, my friends the Bellamy Brothers. Good to see you guys. Thank you for coming. I want to thank the Holland Public High marching band for coming today. Make sure you hustle back to class and start studying. [*Laughter*]

Here's what I believe. I believe with your help, we will carry Michigan and win a great victory in November. I'm looking forward to campaigning in your State. I'm looking forward to spending a lot of time here. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, to raise the standards, to measure

early and solve problems before it's too late. I went to stop this practice of just shuffling children through the schools grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. I went to make sure Washington trusts the local people to make the right decisions for their schools. We're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide our seniors with good health care. I knew Medicare was an important program, but it wasn't changing with the times. See, we pay $100,000 for heart surgery but not the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We've strengthened Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of America's workers and farmers and small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, you remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. We have been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. By the way, we passed new laws, and it's now clear, abundantly clear, that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And we went through that terror attack. And that attack hurt our economy.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We're overcoming those obstacles because we've got great workers and great farmers. We're overcoming those obstacles because the tax relief is working.

The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Listen, there are some areas of our country that are still lagging behind, but we'll continue to promote a pro-growth, pro-small-business policy, pro-entrepreneur policy for the next 4 years so people can find a good job here in America.

I believe a President—I believe it's a job of a President to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that's why, with your help, we're going to win a great national victory in November.

Listen, I understand the world we live in today is a changing world. Think about what happened in the workplace. Years ago, our fathers and grandfathers worked for one job, one company. They had one pension plan, one health care plan. Today, people change careers and change jobs often, and the most startling change of all is that women now work not only in the house but outside the house.

We have a changing world. And yet, the fundamental systems haven't changed. The Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. So over the next 4 years we're going to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make their own choices and to be able to realize the great promise of this country.

Listen, any hopeful society has got to be one in which the economy is growing, and I've laid out a plan to make sure that this economy of ours continues to grow. To keep jobs here in America, America

must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations and less lawsuits on our small-business owners.

Listen, to keep jobs here in America, we need an energy plan. I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, and it's stuck in there. It's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables, encourages clean coal technology, encourages the use of technology to make sure we explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways. But it's a plan that recognizes to keep jobs here, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we use our natural resources, including water. And that starts with keeping the Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin.

See, earlier this year, my opponent said a decision about Great Lakes water diversion would be a delicate balancing act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That kind of sounds like him, doesn't it? My position is clear: My administration will never allow the diversion of Great Lakes water.

Listen, to keep jobs here, we've got to make sure we open up foreign markets to our products. See, if we open up our market, it's good for you we do. See, the economy works this way: If you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and higher quality. So what I'm telling the places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And the reason I'm saying that is I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs here in America, to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who's promised at least $2 trillion in new money so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we haven't even gotten in the stretch run yet. So they said to him the other day, "Well, how are you going to pay for them?" And he said, "That's easy. Just tax the rich."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to cover his $2.2 trillion of new spending. There is a tax gap. Guess what he's thinking? Guess who he thinks is going to fill the tax gap when he can't make it with the rich? Yes.

Let me tell you what else—you've heard that "I'm going the tax the rich" before, haven't you? That's why the rich hire accountants and lawyers so you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Let me tell you something else we've got to do about this Tax Code: We've got to change it. It's a complicated mess. It's full of special-interest loopholes. In a new term, I'm going to bring the Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Tax Code, to make the Tax Code more fair. We want more people working than spending time—than the time they have to spend on filling out all these forms. Do you realize Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on Federal taxes? That's one complicated code that needs to be fixed and will be fixed.

In a changing world, we've got to recognize we've got to help our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Jobs are changing. Sometimes the skill sets aren't. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system around America. I also understand that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in high schools we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We must place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we will require a

rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance standards in high school, by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

Times have changed. We've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than half of the uninsured in America are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In order to help the families who work for these companies, we must allow small firms to join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We want people owning and managing their own health plans, and that's why I believe we ought to expand health savings accounts. I want to expand community health centers so poor people can find good health care all across America, particularly in our poor counties.

I know in order to make sure we've got good docs practicing medicine, to make sure health care is affordable, we need to stop these junk lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

Our plan to improve the quality of health care is practical. It's a commonsense plan to make health care more accessible, more affordable, and to keep the good docs practicing medicine. I believe that health care decisions should be made by doctors and patients, not by Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

We have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who's put out a health care plan that is massive. It is complicated. It is a blueprint to have the Government control your health care.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he can't pay for his plan. Today there's an independent study out that says his health care plan today would cost taxpayers 1.5 trillion new dollars.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, that's just the kind of plan you would expect from a Senator from Massachusetts.

In a new term, I'll continue to promote an ownership society in America. In changing times, ownership can bring stability to your lives. One of the great statistics of the modern—of the last couple of years, is the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We've got a plan to continue homeownership in America. I love the fact, when people from all walks of life can open up their door where they're living and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

We need to—listen. On Social Security, we need to—I want the younger workers here to listen carefully to this debate on Social Security. If you're on Social Security today, nothing is going to change. I do not care what the DC politicians will tell you. Nobody is going to take away your benefits. And if you're a baby boomer, you're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and grandchildren when it comes to the Social Security system. I think we need to think differently when it comes to our children and grandchildren. I think we ought to allow young workers to put aside some of their own tax money in a personal savings account, to make sure Social Security fulfills the promise.

If you listen carefully to the rhetoric in this campaign, I'm running against a fellow who wants to expand Government. We want to expand opportunity for every single citizen of this country.

I also recognize, in the world of change, some things do not change. The values we try to live by do not change, courage and

compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we'll support the institutions that gives our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland, transforming our military, and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and throughout the world, and we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leadership has been brought to justice.

We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using, weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress, and members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and recognized Saddam Hussein was a threat. They voted the authorization of force. They said, "Go ahead and use force if you need to. He's a threat."

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must have tried all alternatives. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hopeful that diplomacy could deal with this threat. I was hopeful diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history we remembered and voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, he ignored the resolutions of the United Nations. He wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors in to find the truth, he systematically deceived them. So at this point, I have a choice to make. I have a decision to make, a decision that only comes to the Oval Office, a decision no President wants to make but must be prepared to make, and that is: Do I trust the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted to defend ourself, more than 50 million people are now free. That makes the world more peaceful. Think about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls weren't allowed to go to school, and their mothers got whipped in the public square because they didn't toe the line of the Taliban. These people were barbaric people. They had hijacked a good religion and converted it into an ideology of hate. Today, in Afghanistan, more than 10 million people, 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. We're standing with the people in those countries, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. And by standing with them, we're also serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments or breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep us safe.

So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear: We will help the new leaders train their police and their armies, so the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending freedom. We will help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military, people like Lance Corporal Russell Bullock, who's with us today. I've had the honor of meeting people like Russell, men and women who wear our uniform. I've seen their great decency and unselfish courage. I want to thank the veterans who are with us today for having set such a great example.

And I believe the Government has a commitment, has an obligation to those who wear our uniform. They must have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why a year ago I went to the United States Congress and proposed $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a very important piece of legislation. As a matter of fact, most Members of the United States Congress understood its importance. We had great bipartisan support for this request, so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out convincing people to go to the polls, remind them that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops, and two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They said, "Why did you do that?" And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Now, I know Holland, Michigan, well enough to know not many people talk like that around here. [*Laughter*] And they kept pressing him. They kept pressing him. He said he was proud of his own—he finally just said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The Commander in Chief must have clear vision and mean what he says when he speaks. When it comes to Iraq, my opponent has more different positions than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive, to the point of grave danger, not

to believe that left to his own devices Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." Then, in 2002 he voted for the war, but then voted against funding for our troops. When the heat got on in his Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then, later—earlier this summer he said he would have still voted to go to war even knowing everything we know today. Then, about 10 days ago he adopted the language of his one-time rival, Howard Dean, saying it was "the wrong war at the wrong time," even though he said earlier it was the right decision and he supported it.

Here's the latest wrinkle—I'm trying to figure out what he believes. He said we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he earlier criticized me for not spending enough. One thing about his position is clear. If he had had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power and would be a threat to our security and peace in the world.

Listen, I want to thank our friends and neighbors—friends and allies for their contributions. I've spent a lot of time doing that. I appreciate the fact—we've got nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq helping us to spread freedom and peace. But I will never—as I build coalitions over the next 4 years, as I continue to work with friends and neighbors, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is freedom.

I like to share stories of my time with different leaders around the world, and one of them is—one of the leaders I admire a lot is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. Think about that—one of the people with whom I have good relations is the leader of a country that my dad was at war with. Your dads or granddads, husbands, grandfathers were at war with them. We had a bloody war with Japan, a violent war.

So World War II was over, after we had won. My predecessor Harry Truman and other Americans believed that liberty could transform enemies into allies. They stood the line. There was a lot of skepticism during those times. But they stood strong for the values that we believe in. And as a result of helping Japan become a democracy, today I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to make the world a more hopeful place, talking about working together to spread the peace we all yearn for. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be able to grow up in a much better world.

I believe that millions in the Middle East want to be free. I believe women in the Middle East long for a day of their freedom. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things, because I understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and freedom abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We'll continue to make the world a more free and, therefore, a more peaceful place.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the people coming out of the rubble. A guy looked me in the eye, bloodshot eyes, and he said, "You do not let me down." Ever since that day, I've woken up—I wake up every morning, ever since that day, thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country and your wonderful State asking for the vote, I made a pledge. I said that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. at the Ottawa County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Mayor Albert H. McGeehan of Holland, MI; Diane Hoekstra, wife of Representative Hoekstra; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; entertainers the Bellamy Brothers; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Battle Creek, Michigan
September 13, 2004

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. As you can see, I'm on a bus tour of your beautiful State. And stopping here in "Cereal City" is a good way to end a bus tour.

Thanks for coming out to say hello. I'm here to ask for the vote. I kind of like spending an afternoon in the ballpark asking for the vote. I so appreciate you being here. I'm not only here to ask for the vote; I want your help. See, I believe we have a duty in this country to vote, and I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors. Convince them they have a duty, in a free country, to participate. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller when you're out registering people to vote.

We've got a lot of people from the Democrat Party supporting my candidacy. We've got a lot of independents supporting my candidacy. We've got a lot of Republicans, because they understand that with 4 more years, this country will be safer, stronger, and better. There is no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry Michigan and win a great victory in November.

I am sorry that Laura is not here today. She's a great wife, a wonderful mom. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I am running with a good man in Dick Cheney. Listen, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because he's got good judgment and great experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Congressman Nick Smith for his service in the United States Congress. I'm looking forward to working with Dr. Joe Schwarz, the next Congressman from this district. I appreciate Terri Lynn Land being here. I appreciate the mayor being here. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. My only advice is fill the potholes. I'm honored you're here, sir. I want to thank all the people running for office.

I want to thank the grassroots activists, like my friend Betsy DeVos and all the people who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls. I appreciate the hard work you have been doing. I appreciate the hard work you are going to do. You're turning out a big vote come November.

I want to thank my friend Billy Dean for singing here today. I want to thank the Pennfield High School band for being here today. I'm trying to hurry up my speech so you can get home and do your homework. [*Laughter*] No? Okay.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to coming to Michigan a lot. I'm going to tell the people where I stand and what I believe and where I'm going to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I want to raise the standards so we stop the practice of just shuffling kids through school year after year, without learning the basics. I believe we ought to measure early, so we can solve problems before it's too late. We're closing the achievement gap here in America because we've got a good plan, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to make sure our seniors get good health care. I went to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem with Medicare. See, medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. We'd pay nearly $100,000 for heart surgery but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. We've strengthened and modernized Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, our farmers, our small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. When you're out there convincing people to go to the polls, remind them what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. By the way, we passed new laws, and it's abundantly clear here in America, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. We went through that terror attack. Some estimate that cost us three—a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack.

In other words, we've been through a lot, but this economy is strong and getting stronger. It's been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. It's growing because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. It's growing because there's no obstacle America cannot overcome.

We're adding jobs. We're adding jobs here in America. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. In Michigan, the unemployment rate here has fallen by 1 percent in the year 2004. But I understand we've got more work to do. We've got to continue to grow this economy to make sure the American people can find work. We've got to continue to have a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agriculture economic policy so people can find a job.

I believe a President must confront problems and not pass them on to future generations and future Presidents. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness

in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running on a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win 4 more years.

Listen, the world we live in is changing. I understand that. When our fathers were coming up, they generally had one job, one career, one company, paid one pension plan, and one health care plan. The world we live in is different. It's changing. People have more than one career. They change jobs several times. Perhaps the biggest change of all is the workforce has changed. Women work inside the house now and outside the house. This is a changing world. And yet, many of the fundamental systems of our Government, health care and the Tax Code and pension plans and worker training, were designed for yesterday, not tomorrow. Think about that.

And so I believe we've got to change these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own decisions so you can realize the great promise of America, so it can be a hopeful society.

Listen, any hopeful society, though, starts with a growing economy. I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure our fellow citizens can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to cut down on needless regulations that hamper the entrepreneurs in America. That means we've got to do something about these personal injury lawyers who keep suing everybody, makes it hard to keep work.

In order to keep jobs here, it means we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress several years ago, and it's stuck. But it's a good plan. It encourages conservation. It encourages the development of renewables, alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that says we can use technologies better, to use available resources. But it's a plan that understands this: To keep jobs here, to grow this economy, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep this economy growing, we get wise about how we use our resources. I believe that we can manage our environment in wise and commonsensical ways. Every day is Earth Day if you own the land. If you make a living off the land, every day is Earth Day. We've also got to be wise about how we use our water resources. That starts with keeping Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes Basin. Earlier this year, my opponent said his decision about Great Lakes water diversion would be a delicate balancing act. Sounds just like him. [*Laughter*] My position is very clear: My administration will never allow the diversion of Great Lakes water.

To create jobs, we must reject economic isolationism and open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we opened up our markets for goods from overseas, and it's good for the consumers here. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get what you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying to other countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." [*Applause*] Yes. "You open up your markets for our farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who, thus far, has promised over $2 trillion of new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. And we haven't even gotten in the stretch run yet. So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." You've heard that before, haven't you? That's why the rich hire lawyers and accountants, so you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Let me say—now we're talking about taxes, I want to say something about the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. To keep jobs here, to keep the economy growing, we need a Tax Code that is fair and simple. In a new term, I'll work with Republicans and Democrats to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Listen, in a changing world, our economy changes, and there are great new opportunities for the workers of America. But sometimes there's a skills gap. In order to make sure jobs stay here in America, we've got to make sure our worker training programs are modern and relevant. And that's one of the reasons why I'm such a big backer of the community college system around America. I want people to have the opportunity to re-train for the jobs for the 21st century.

I also know that most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. We've got a changing world. Yet, only about one in four of our students gets there. In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to fund early intervention programs to help students at risk in our high schools. We've got to emphasize math and science in our high schools, so people are prepared for the jobs of the 21st century. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. What I'm telling you is, before—by raising performance in high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to do more to make sure health care is available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Government should take the side of our small-business owners. We did so in the tax relief; we must do so when it comes to health care. To make sure families get the help they need, small businesses ought to be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get to do.

In order to make sure that health care is available, I promise to open or expand 1,200 community health centers around America by 2006. These are important facilities. These are places where the poor can go get primary care. This is where there can be preventative care. These are important because they take the strain off of emergency rooms around the country, and they're important because we're a compassionate country.

Today I met Dr. A.J. Jones. He runs the Family—Family Health Center of Battle Creek, Michigan. Right here in your hometown, you've got a community health center. He expects 85,000 visits this year, mostly from uninsured patients. And they're expanding the good work to Albion Clinic. What works—what I'm telling you is, in a new term, we're going to make sure every poor county in America has a community health center.

We'll expand health savings accounts. We'll make sure technology takes hold in the health care industry, which will help hold down costs. But I'm going to tell you one thing we need to do around this country to make sure health care is available and affordable. We've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and are running up the cost of your health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose.

And my opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket. I made my choice: I'm for medical liability reform—now.

I believe the decisions—health care decisions need to be made between doctors and patients, not by Washington bureaucrats. And that's the fundamental difference between my health care plan and that of my opponent. He's laid out a massive, complicated blueprint to have Government control your health care. As a matter of fact, they took a look at his plan. They said it's going to cost $1.5 trillion in new Government spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's what you'd expect from a Senator from Massachusetts.

In a changing world, ownership will help people deal with changing times. I believe in encouraging ownership. We're having great success when it comes to people owning their own homes. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America today. In the next term, we'll continue to expand ownership to all corners of this country, to all people. We want more people opening up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And I believe we've got to do something about the Social Security system. First of all, if you're a Social Security recipient, if you're retired or near retirement, you don't have a thing to worry about. I don't care what they say out of Washington, DC. I don't care how hard they try to scare you, you're going to get your check. Baby boomers, guys like me, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to be thinking about the youngsters coming up. I believe that young workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set aside a personal savings account in Social Security, an account they call their own, an account that'll help Social Security make the promise, an account Government cannot take away.

These are changing times, and Government is going to stand side by side with people, not dictate to people. But in changing times, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that give our lives purpose and direction, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since September the 11th, 2001, that terrible morning which changed our history, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

We've got a clear strategy. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're working to advance liberty around the world and in—most particularly, the broader Middle East, and we're going to prevail. We will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, not all that long ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a

free Iraq is fighting for freedom; more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members have been brought to justice.

We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. Abu Nidal, the guy who killed Leon Klinghoffer, he and his organization were in Baghdad. Zarqawi was in Baghdad. He's the guy that beheads people in hopes to cause us to shirk our duty.

Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. He's a sworn enemy of this country. We knew he had a long history of pursuing weapons of mass destruction. We knew he had used weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently. We must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. And I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered and concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at. He remembered the history, and he voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits our troops into harm's way, we must try to deal with threats any way we can. And so I was hoping diplomacy would work. That's why I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations that we see a threat. "September the 11th has changed the world. Take a look." They did. They looked at the same intelligence, the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council—15 to nothing—concluded that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

I believe when the American President says something, he must mean it. I believe that when the world speaks, the world must mean it. Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world—again. He had done so for nearly a decade, and he wasn't listening. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived them.

So I have a choice to make at this point in our history. Diplomacy hadn't worked. Saddam Hussein had a final chance—his choice—to listen to the demands of the free world. And here's the choice: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted in our self-interest, because we acted to protect ourself, 50 million people are now free in Afghanistan and Iraq. That matters. It matters to our security.

Think about what's happened in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago—3 years ago—that many young girls didn't get to go to school because of the Taliban. These people were barbaric people. They had an ideology of hate that's hard for Americans to comprehend. As a matter of fact, they'd take the mothers of these young girls out and whip them in the public square if they didn't toe the line. There was no freedom, none whatsoever. Today, because we acted, 10 million people, 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. It's not easy to go from a society as dark and dim as the Taliban to one where light is beginning to shine in because of freedom, but it's happening right here. And we're watching history. We're watching it happen.

In Iraq, there's a strong Prime Minister. There's a National Council. National elections are scheduled in January. It wasn't all that long ago we discovered mass graves

where the tyrant just killed people whimsically. And now they're headed toward national elections. We're going to stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

And we will stand with the people in Afghanistan and Iraq because we understand free societies will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. We understand free governments will fight the terrorists instead of harboring terrorists and supporting the terrorists, which makes us all safer. And so our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help the new leaders train their police forces and their armies, so Afghan citizens and Iraqi citizens can do the hard work of defending freedom against the few who want to deny the hopes of the many. We'll help get them on the path on stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

And it's been my honor to have met those who wear the uniform at bases across our country and at bases around the world. I appreciate their decency, their incredible courage. I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and to their loved ones that they will have the resources they need to complete their missions. They'll have the support of our Government. That's why I went to Congress a year ago and asked for $87 billion in funding—important funding, necessary funding to support our troops in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I'm pleased to report that there was bipartisan support for that funding. And that was good. It's good for our troops and families to know that the Congress not only voted to authorize force but was willing to put up the money to help the troops. As a matter of fact, the bipartisan support was so strong, the bipartisan support so significant, that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, when you're out gathering up the vote, I want you to remind people of this fact: There's only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only 4 of 100 Members—only 4 did that, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, we have a difference of opinion in this race, clearly. They asked him, they said, "Well, why did you do that?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it."

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. And so they said—they finally pressed him hard. He said he's proud of the vote, and he finally said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The American President must be clear in his thinking, must mean what he says, must be resolute and firm. Now, my opponent has more different positions on the Iraq issue than all his colleagues in the Senate combined. Senator Kerry once said, he said this, "It would be naive to the point of grave danger not to believe that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." That was said, I believe, in 1998. In other words, he was warning us about the nature of Saddam Hussein.

Then, of course, he voted for the war in 2002, and didn't—voted against funding the troops. And then when the heat got on in the Democrat primary, he said, well,

he was the antiwar candidate, when the pressure got on. Then he, several months later—this is earlier this summer—he said, well, he still would have voted to go to war, every—you know, knowing everything we know today. Last week he adopted the language of his opponent, Howard Dean, when he said "wrong war at the wrong time," even though he said earlier it was the right decision and he supported it.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Now, here's the newest wrinkle: Senator Kerry has now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though he criticized me for not spending enough earlier.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. The only thing that's clear about his position is that if he had his way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. America is safer, and the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

I'm proud of the contributions that our friends and allies are making. We put together a good coalition. Over the next 4 years, I'm going to continue to work with our coalition, to strengthen our coalition. See, we've got to work together to make this world more peaceful, to help us protect ourselves, not only America but other countries. You know, there's about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But I assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I believe this because I've seen what liberty has done throughout the course of history. Think about this, when you're talking to people about what we're doing, when you hear me say this is an historic time, remind people of this. I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan, and he is a friend. The amazing thing about saying that, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were the sworn enemy of the Japanese. They attacked us. My dad fought against the Japanese. You've got relatives, I'm confident, who fought against the Japanese; your dads or your granddads were at war.

After we won World War II, my predecessor Harry Truman and many American citizens had great faith in the ability of liberty to convert an enemy into an ally. And so they worked with the Japanese to help them develop a democracy. Now, there was a lot of skeptics in those days. There was a lot of people who said, "That can't be." You can understand why. We had just fought a bloody war with them, but there was a great faith in liberty in those days. And today, because they had that faith, I now sit down at the table with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi and we're talking about keeping the peace.

That's what we talk about. We talk about how we can work together to make the world a more peaceful place. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they're going to be talking about the peace. And our children and our grandchildren are going to be better off for it.

Freedom is a powerful force for good. I believe, in the Middle East, women want to be free. I believe they want their rights. I believe they want to have a chance to realize their ambitions and their dreams. I believe that people, if given a chance, will accept freedom and will adopt to the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. That's what I believe. And I believe this not because freedom is—freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe this because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are exciting times. We're living in historic times. This young century will be

liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dream. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We'll continue to lead the world to make it more free and more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. You know, there are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, and an abiding faith in the values that make us a great land.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console the workers and thank the workers as best as I possibly could. And a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that morning, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge. I said if I was so honored to serve as President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. at C.O. Brown Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Joe Schwarz, candidate for Michigan's Seventh Congressional District; Mayor John Godfrey III of Battle Creek, MI; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Michigan Republican Party; entertainer Billy Dean; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Second Protocol Amending the Barbados-United States Taxation Convention

September 13, 2004

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit the Second Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and Barbados for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income Signed on December 31, 1984, signed at Washington on July 14, 2004. Also enclosed for the Senate's information is an exchange of notes with attached Understandings, which provide clarification with respect to the application of the Convention, as amended, in specified cases. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocol.

The Protocol updates the existing Convention to bring it into close conformity with current U.S. tax treaty policy and to ensure that the Convention cannot be used inappropriately to secure tax reductions in circumstances where there is no risk of

double taxation. The Protocol would modernize the Convention's anti-treaty-shopping provision. The Protocol also updates the Convention to take account of a 1996 change in the Internal Revenue Code relating to the tax treatment of certain former long-term residents of the United States. The exchange of notes with attached Understandings provides guidance to taxpayers and each government regarding the intended interpretation of certain provisions of the Convention, as amended.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 13, 2004.

Remarks in Greenwood Village, Colorado
September 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Listen, I'm here in Colorado asking for the vote. I'm proud to be back in this beautiful State. Matter of fact, it's nice to be out West, where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. I appreciate you being here. I'm honored to be introduced by the man who led "the drive." Now I'm glad he's helping my drive. [*Laughter*] John Elway is a class act. I'm proud to call him friend, and I'm proud to call him supporter.

I'm also here asking for your help. See, I think we have a duty in this country to vote. I'm asking you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And as you register people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. There's a lot of Democrats and independents understand that when you put Dick Cheney and me back in office, this country is going to be safer, stronger, and better for every American.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's a wonderful wife, a great mom. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. [*Laughter*] She gave a great speech in New York City. The American people saw her heart, her compassion, her steady demeanor, her calm. I love her dearly. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Governor Bill Owens. He's one of the finest Governors in the State of—in this country, and he's represented the State of Colorado so well. I'm honored First Lady Frances Owens is with us today as well. Frances, thank you for coming. We're proud to call you friend.

I want to thank my friend Ben Nighthorse Campbell for being here. I was a little hot at old Ben when I heard he was retiring, because he's such a fine Senator, but I feel a lot better knowing that Pete Coors is going to be the U.S. Senator following him.

Audience members. Pete! Pete! Pete!

The President. I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton. Speaking about Nortons, Gale Norton is doing a heck of a good job in my Cabinet. I appreciate so very much the wonderful job she's doing. She was here in Colorado yesterday designating our newest national park, the Great Sand Dunes National Park. Doing a fine job.

I want to thank Mayor Nancy Sharpe for coming today. Madame Mayor, I appreciate you coming. Thank you for serving. I want to thank Senator Hank Brown. Appreciate him being here. He's a fine man.

I thank all the statehouse folks who are here and the courthouse folks who are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for serving. I want to thank John Lynch of the mighty Denver Broncos for joining us today. Danny Kanell is with us today. I appreciate Danny coming. I want to thank Tom Nalen, center of the Denver Broncos, for joining us today. I want to thank my fellow Texan Dan Neil for joining us today. I don't know if you remember me when I was the Governor, but I remember you. [*Laughter*] Great to see you again.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists. I want to thank the party officials who worked hard to put up the signs and make the phone calls. I urge you and encourage you to continue to work hard. With your help, we will carry Colorado again and win a great victory in November.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out amongst the people. I'm going to tell the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. So we're raising standards. We're measuring early so we can solve problems before they're too late. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to fix problems. Medicare was not modernizing the way medicine was. See, we would pay for a $100,000 heart surgery in Medicare but would not pay for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for our taxpayers. We have strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our small-business owners, our farmers and ranchers and our workers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people that our economy has been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We had corporate scandals. We passed tough laws, by the way, in Washington that make it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. The attacks on our country hurt our economy.

But we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. We've been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 5.1 percent. This economy is strong, and we're not turning back.

I believe a President must confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I am running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I appreciate the fact that he's out there every day gathering the vote. I admit he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people I understand the world in which we live in changing. You know, when our dads were coming up, people had one job, one career for one company. Today, that's different. People are changing jobs often. They're changing careers. In the old days women stayed at home. Today, women are in the workplace. They're working in the home and outside the home. These are changing times we live in, different times.

And yet, the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, I will work with the Congress to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue the American Dream.

A hopeful society has a growing economy. I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to reduce the regulatory burden on our small-business owners. To create jobs here, we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that threaten employers.

To create jobs here at home, we need an energy plan. Listen, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. It's stuck, of course, because of politics. But it's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, encourages clean coal technology, and uses technology to wisely explore for natural gas here in our own hemisphere. What I'm telling you is, in order to keep jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To make sure this economy grows and to keep jobs here, we've got to open up markets overseas for our products. See, we open up our markets for foreign goods, and that helps you. It helps you because when you have more choices in the marketplace, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So I tell the Chinese, for example, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I do that because I know American workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, I'm running against a fellow who has had a history of voting for higher taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And thus far in the campaign, he's proposed over $2 trillion of new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And so they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, first of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for his new spending, so there's a tax gap. And secondly, you've heard that rhetoric before, haven't you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes. "Elect me. I'm going to tax the rich." But the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the bill. But we're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. See, something else about taxes. Our Tax Code is a complicated mess.

It is full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours a year on the taxes. It's got over a million words in the code. In a new term, I'll call Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Federal Tax Code.

A changing economy means many new jobs require new skills. A changing economy and a growing economy creates new opportunities for our workers, but oftentimes, the worker doesn't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm a strong proponent of community colleges. That's why I believe we ought to promote a lifetime of learning for America's workers, so they can match their skills with the jobs which exist.

I also understand most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's—when I say changing worlds, that's one of the aspects of a changing world. Yet, only one in four of our students gets there. That's why in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to reform our health care system. Health care costs are rising rapidly. They're burdening our economy. They're leaving too many people uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. More than one-half of the uninsured today are small-business employees and their families. That's why I believe small firms ought to be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available for big companies.

I met Gail Lindley. She is a small-business owner from Denver. She is worried about her employees, and she's worried about the cost of health care. She understands how powerful association health care plans will be for small businesses. She said this, "My employees would be thrilled. They would be paying lower premiums. I would have more money to invest back in my company." Washington needs to understand that we need to help small businesses when it comes to health care here in America.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We will help small businesses with health savings accounts so they can provide them for their employees. Today I met Jeff Cheley. He runs a small business here. He runs Cheley Colorado Camps, CCC. He has an HSA. He's planning to provide them for his workers. He says, "It helps us cover our workers and lower overall costs. For a small family business like ours, it's a good deal." What I'm telling you is we've got a practical plan to help people who are uninsured and to help our small-business owners.

We're going to expand community health centers so poor citizens have access to preventative and primary care. As a matter of fact, I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. We're going to make sure that we bring technology into medicine to lower costs. But most of all, what we need to do is to make sure that we stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of your medicine and driving good docs out of business.

I don't think you can pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. See, I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice. He put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

There is a difference of opinion when it comes to health care in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed a massive, complicated blueprint to increase Government control over your health care.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They estimated the cost of his plan yesterday at 1.5 trillion new dollars. And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] I believe that we—I believe America is better suited for our commonsense plan that says health decisions will be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it helps to bring stability in people's life if they own something. We're going to continually promote an ownership society in America. Do you realize the homeownership rate in America, under my administration, is at an alltime high? It's a fantastic statistic, isn't it? During the next term, we'll continue to promote ownership to every corner of this country. I love the fact that more and more people from all walks of life are opening the place where they live—open that door up where they live, saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

I think we need to extend the concept of ownership to the retirement systems. If you're a senior citizen, Social Security is going to pay what they said they're going to pay. I don't care what the politicians in Washington tell you; the promise will be kept. If you're a baby boomer like me, we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren, see? That's where the bind comes. That's where the problems will exist in Social Security, not for our seniors who've retired, not for those of us who are near retirement, but for the kids. We need to think differently when it comes to our pension plans. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set it aside in a personal savings account to make sure Social Security meets the promise.

No, these are—it's a changing world. There's a clear difference of opinion. We're running against some fellows who want to expand the reach of Government. We want to expand opportunity. We want people to be able to realize their dreams. We want people to be able to realize the great promise of this country. In this world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and throughout the world, and we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom;

and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I had looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam just the way I remembered him, and they saw a threat. My opponent looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion I did, that Saddam was a threat, and voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all of our options to solve a problem. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I was really hoping diplomacy would work. And that's why I went to the United Nations, and I spoke to the United Nations. And when I went to the United Nations——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And so I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I did. They had the debate. They remembered the history I remembered and voted 15 to nothing in the United Nations Security Council, saying to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe that when the world says something, it must mean it in order to make the world more peaceful. I believe when the American President speaks, he must mean what he says in order to make the world more peaceful.

Saddam Hussein had no intention of listening to the demands of the free world. As he had for over a decade, he ignored the resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make at this point in our history. I realized diplomacy wasn't going to work. Do I trust a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people live in freedom. In Afghanistan, young girls now go to school for the first time. Their mothers are no longer taken in the public square and whipped because they don't toe the line with the backward Taliban. Because we acted, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. Our country is safer because we made tough decisions.

Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists, instead of harboring them. Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so that the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can defend themselves against the few who want to stop the hopes of the many. We'll help them move toward elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our military. We've got a great military. I've had the privilege of

meeting with the service men and women who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I know their unselfish courage and their great decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here today for coming.

I want to assure you, our Federal Government will support our troops. We will give them what they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress a year ago and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding. This money was to go to our troops in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was a really important funding. We received great bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, remind people there's only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't vote to fund the troops—only four, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him why. He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I've spent some time in Colorado. The people out here don't talk like that. He said he was proud of his vote. They kept pressing him. And he finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Before 2000, Senator Kerry once said, "It would be naive, to the point of grave danger, not to believe that if left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will provoke, misjudge, or stumble into a future, more dangerous confrontation with the civilized world." That was his opinion during the time of my predecessor's Presidency. In 2002, you know, he voted for the war, then voted against the funding for our troops. When the heat got on the Democrat primary, he declared himself the antiwar candidate. Then several months later, earlier this summer, he said he would still have voted to go to war, even knowing everything we know today. Last week, he adopted the language of his onetime rival Howard Dean, saying, "It's the wrong war at the wrong time," even though he earlier said it was the right decision and he supported it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So here's the latest wrinkle. Here's the latest twist. He's now decided we're spending too much money in Iraq, even though on national TV last summer, he criticized us for not spending enough.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. The American President must be clear in his thinking and must be clear in his speaking in order to make this world a freer place.

I appreciate the contributions of our friends and allies. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to work to strengthen our alliances. There's nearly 40 countries involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But as we strengthen alliances, I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe liberty can change nations. I believe liberty has the capacity to take a nation that has been plagued and tortured by a tyrannical thug into a partner in peace. I believe that, in part, because I've had a great experience with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman and many American citizens believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. I know a lot of people doubted it then. A lot of people doubt that concept now. But because they stayed true to what we believe, Japan became a democracy, and now I sit at the same table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace. And that's what we want. We understand in the short term, we'll stay on the offensive. In the long term, we'll spread liberty to make the world a more peaceful place, a chance for our children and grandchildren to grow up in a more peaceful world.

You see, I believe that if given the chance, the people of the Middle East, who plead in silence for their liberty, will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe women in the Middle East long for a chance to realize their dreams and their God-given talents. I believe that freedom is powerful. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe it because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of our country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the world to make it more free and more peaceful.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Three years ago today, on September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbed me by the arm, a big old burly firefighter—I guess he was a firefighter—he said, "Do not let me down." I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your beautiful State and our great land, I made a pledge to our fellow citizens that I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:51 a.m. at the Coors Amphitheatre. In his remarks, he referred to pro football Hall of Famer John Elway, who introduced the President; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Bill Owens of Colorado and his wife, Frances; Lt. Gov. Jane Norton of Colorado; Mayor Nancy Sharpe of Greenwood Village, CO; former Senator Hank Brown of Colorado; John Lynch, safety, Danny Kanell, quarterback, Tom Nalen, center, and Dan Neil, offensive guard, Denver Broncos; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; former Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks to the General Conference of the National Guard Association of the United States in Las Vegas, Nevada
September 14, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. I am glad to join you here in Nevada. I'm also honored to be up here with the Governor. He said to remind you of an important thing here. He said, "What happens in Vegas"—[*laughter*]—"stays in Vegas." [*Laughter*] I hope you've enjoyed yourself in this fantastic part of our country. I'm honored to be invited to the 126th national conference. It's a pleasure to be with the brave men and women of the National Guard.

As the General just said, you've had many famous Americans in your ranks, including men named Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, and Truman. Nineteen individuals have served both in the Guard and as President of the United States, and I am proud to be one of them.

The men and women of the National Guard are deployed around the world today, fighting the forces of terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and helping Americans threatened with natural disasters, like hurricanes here at home. I am proud to be their Commander in Chief, and I respect and honor all of those who serve in the United States Armed Forces, active, Guard, and Reserve.

I want to thank General Hargett for his leadership. I appreciate you for your invitation. I want to thank the Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank the attorney general, Brian Sandoval. I want to thank the secretary of state, Dean Heller, for joining us today. It's a pretty important group when you get that many politicians here in one room. [*Laughter*] I thank General Blum, General Harrison. I thank my fellow Texan, Danny James—General James, General Schultz. I want to thank the leadership and convention delegates. Most of all, thank you for inviting me today.

When I landed, by the way, at the airport, I had the honor of meeting Theresa Bunker. She is a volunteer with the Las Vegas National Guard Family Support Center. I met her brave son. He just came back from Iraq. I like to tell people the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens, people like Theresa, who have taken time out of her life to volunteer, provide support for family members, to send care packages overseas. No, we're going to keep our military strong, but never forget, the strength of this country are the great citizens of America who serve this country one heart and one soul at a time.

The Guard has been fighting for America since before America was a nation. From its birth in the 1630s, the Guard protected the early colonists and helped win the War for * Independence. Today, each of you carries on the great tradition of those early citizen-soldiers who picked up muskets to defend our freedom. Weapons have changed, and so have our enemies, but one thing remains the same: The men and women of the Guard stand ready to put on the uniform and fight for America. Our country is stronger, our freedom is more secure because each of you has volunteered to serve.

You have taken an oath to stand by America in times of crisis, war, and emergency. You're fulfilling that oath in many ways. Across the State of Florida—I happen to know the Commander in Chief of the Guard there—[*laughter*]—thousands of Guard members have mobilized in response to Hurricanes Charley and Frances. They are helping to control traffic, provide security, conduct search and rescue operations, and distribute food and water. One resident

* White House correction.

of Punta Gorda, Florida, put it, "I don't know what this town would have done without the National Guard." When tragedy strikes, Americans can always count on the Guard.

When tragedy came on September the 11th, 2001, the response of the Guard was outstanding. A thousand Guard volunteers came forward to help that day, and by sunrise on September the 12th, more than 5,000 Guard volunteers were on the job.

In the past 3 years, Guard units have defended the American homeland against further attack—you've taken the battle to our enemies abroad. The National Guard has played a critical role in every aspect of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 185,000 Guard members have been called up to serve on every front in the war on terror. You are a vital part of our strategy to defend America. You're fighting terrorist enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan and across the globe, so we do not have to face them here at home. America is safer because of your service, and we are grateful.

And we are grateful for your families, who share in your sacrifice. There are few things more difficult in life than seeing a loved one go off to war. When the call to duty comes, your families miss you, and they worry about you. By standing behind you, they also serve our country. America is grateful for the service and sacrifice of our Guard families.

Your service would not be possible without the understanding and support of your employers. In offices and schools and factories and hospitals across this country, businesses do without your talents so that you can serve our Nation. Employers across this country are supporting the Guard, because they know the stakes in this war are high. These companies are showing their patriotism, and they too have the gratitude of our country.

I know this time of call-ups and alerts and mobilizations and deployments has been difficult for Guard members and their families and employers. And when our Nation must call on you, we owe you some things in return. We're working to provide you at least 30 days' notification before you're mobilized, so you have time to make arrangements. We're working to give you as much certainty as possible about the length of your mobilization. You deserve to know when you can expect to resume civilian life. We're working to minimize the number of extensions and repeat mobilizations by moving forces out of low-demand specialties such as heavy artillery and increasing the number of available troops with skills that are in high demand, such as military police, civil affairs, and special operations.

We're improving benefits and the quality of life for our Nation's citizen-soldiers. My administration has spent almost $14 billion for construction, maintenance, and support for Guard and Reserve facilities across the United States. We have expanded health care benefits for Guard and Reserve forces and their family members, giving them access to the military's TRICARE system for up to 90 days before they report and 180 days after deactivation, and I will ask Congress to make that expansion permanent.

I called upon Congress to increase the monthly educational benefit for Guard and Reserve forces mobilized for more than 90 days in the war on terror by 40 to 80 percent, depending on the length of their mobilization. Congress must pass this piece of legislation. This administration stands for the Guard and its family. And we do so because we need the service of guards men and women, because of the times we live in. These are dangerous times. My most solemn duty as the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning 3 years ago, America has been at war. We fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of

our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so they can't come here and hurt us. We will advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all long for, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

All this progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he housed Abu Nidal—he's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer—housed him and his associates. Zarqawi was in and out of Baghdad. He's the fellow who cuts people's heads off and hopes we cringe and shirk our duty. Saddam paid the families of suicide bombers. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. So I went to the United States Congress. Members of both political parties, including my opponent and his runningmate, looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history we remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues to deal with the threat. I was hopeful that diplomacy would work; that's why I went to the United Nations. The U.N. Security Council looked at the same intelligence we looked at, remembered the same history we remembered, and came to this conclusion: They said to Saddam Hussein by a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

As he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. Matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. It was clear to me diplomacy wasn't working. So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action necessary to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are free. It wasn't all that long ago that many young girls weren't allowed to go to school in Afghanistan, because of the dark vision of the Taliban. Wasn't all that long ago that the moms were taken to a sports stadium and executed because they wouldn't toe the line of these barbaric people. And today, over 10 million Afghan citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, are registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Despite ongoing violence in Iraq, that country now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing for the better. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also serving a vital and historic cause that'll make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps keep the peace. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies, move toward elections, and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they deserve.

I have made a pledge to those who wear the uniform that they will have the resources and the tools they need to do their jobs. That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and requested $87 billion for vital funding, funding for our troops in harm's way, funding for those who wear the uniform of America in Afghanistan and Iraq. I was pleased with the overwhelming bipartisan support for this important funding request. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

They asked him why and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." Then they said, well, they pressed him for it; he said he was proud of his vote. And finally he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Last week my opponent questioned the cost of our operations in Iraq and said the money could have been better spent elsewhere. The problem is, just last summer he had a completely different view. Asked whether he believed we should reduce funding for operations in Iraq, my opponent at the time replied, "No. I think we should increase it." Asked by how much, he said, "By whatever number of billion dollars it takes to win. It is critical that the United States of America be successful in Iraq."

What's critical is that the President of the United States speak clearly and consistently at this time of great threat in our world and not change positions because of expediency or pressure. Our troops, our friends and allies, and our enemies must know where America stands and that America will stand firm. We cannot waver, because our enemies will not waver. As we saw with such horror on September the 11th, as the people of Russia saw in the terrible massacre of innocent children there, we are up against people who show no shame, no remorse, no hint of humanity, and we must confront them clearly and consistently, not just some of the time but all of the time.

Our troops understand the importance of our mission. Sergeant Bob Kells returned from Iraq a few months ago, where he was deployed with the Rhode Island National Guard. "We saw what Saddam Hussein did to these people," he says. "We saw the graves. The people would lead us to them. Now they're free. They never had that before. And we did it for them." He says of the insurgents and terrorists we are fighting in Iraq today, "They want us out, but they're a minority. The Iraqi people want democracy. The insurgents are absolute cowards. They fight behind women and children, but better fighting them there than over here."

Sergeant Kells is correct. Our mission in Iraq is critical, and our men and women in uniform, active, Guard, and Reserve, are doing a superb job for America. Because of your service and sacrifice, we're defeating the terrorists where they live, and that makes us safer. Because of you, women in Afghanistan are no longer shot and whipped in public. Because of you, the people of Iraq no longer fear being executed and left in mass graves. Because of you, the world is more just and more peaceful.

Others are helping us. We put together alliance to help us in the cause of freedom and peace. There's nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. One of the people with whom I've spent a lot of time is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We're friends. We talk a lot. It's amazing, though, to be having these discussions with Prime Minister Koizumi, because it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were at war with Japan. They were a sworn enemy. My dad, I suspect others' dads and granddads, fought against the Japanese.

But because of people like Harry Truman and other Americans, after World War II, people who understood that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally, because they doubted—they overcame the doubters, because they worked to build a democracy in Japan, today I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace. Liberty is powerful. Liberty can change nations. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that if given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe this because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. Three years ago today, September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I was trying to do my best to console and thank the rescuers. A guy grabs me by the arm, he looks me straight in the eye, and he says, "Do not let me down." I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

And I know that is your commitment as well. You've shown it by your commitment to service, your standards of honor, and your performance of duty. American citizen-soldiers reflect great credit on our military and on our country. And I am here to thank you for your service.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. at the Las Vegas Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn and Lt. Gov. Lorraine T. Hunt of Nevada; Nevada State Attorney General Brian Sandoval; Nevada Secretary of State Dean Heller; Maj. Gen. Gus L. Hargett, adjutant general, Tennessee National Guard, and chairman of the board, National Guard Association of the U.S.; Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau; Maj. Gen. Ronald O. Harrison, (Ret.), former adjutant general, Florida National Guard, and immediate past president, National Guard Association of the U.S.; Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, Director, Air National Guard; Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, Director, Army National Guard; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashanah, 5765
September 14, 2004

I send greetings to all those celebrating Rosh Hashanah.

On this holy occasion, Jews throughout the world celebrate the beginning of a New Year. In synagogues and homes, Jewish families reflect on the year that has passed, and look forward to the year to come. Jewish tradition teaches that on Rosh Hashanah, God holds open the Book of Life to all who approach Him in prayer. As you gather to pray, may God grant your prayers for a peaceful New Year.

As you share in the traditional festivities of this special time of year, you renew your commitment to acts of compassion, and to the cause of freedom around the world. Together, all of us are helping to build a world filled with the blessings of family, health, and peace.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a blessed Rosh Hashanah and a sweet New Year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Requests
September 14, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On September 6th, I submitted a supplemental request totaling $2 billion for the Department of Homeland Security for urgent needs associated with Hurricanes Charley and Frances. The Congress' prompt action on this request ensured that immediate response efforts to these recent disasters would continue uninterrupted. In addition to utilizing the supplemental funds provided in Public Law 108–303, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, Federal Government agencies will continue to use existing resources and programs for response and recovery efforts.

I now ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests, totaling $3.1 billion, for additional emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, the Interior, and Veterans Affairs, the Corps of Engineers, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the Executive Office of the President.

I hereby designate these specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. As I stated in my previous request, these additional requests will allow for a comprehensive response and recovery effort to address the critical needs associated with both of these hurricanes in Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and other affected areas. I urge the Congress to limit this emergency request to those items directly related to the recovery efforts from the impact of these recent major disasters.

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks at the Hispanic Heritage Month Reception
September 15, 2004

Thank you all for coming. *Bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca.* [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. Laura and I are thrilled to have you here. We welcome you to the—to observe Hispanic Heritage Month. What a performance. Thank you all very much. It was spectacular.

This is the month we celebrate great contributions of Latinos to our country. It's a special month. It really echoes our diversity and the strength of our great democracy. I spend a lot of time talking about the transformational power of liberty, reminding people that liberty has got an incredible way of taking diverse people and uniting them into one common purpose—*pais,* a great land. That's why we believe democracy has a place in our own neighborhood. We believe that liberty is important in countries throughout our hemisphere. We believe in human dignity and human rights, the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. And that's best achieved through liberty.

That's why we're working to advance liberty in the greater Middle East. We believe all people desire to be free. We believe that inherently in the soul of men and women is this desire to live in free societies. It's worked here in America. It can work everywhere. Think about our country. We're such a diverse land with different cultures all bound together in this great country because of freedom.

You know, recently I talked to President Putin of Russia. I told him this country mourns the loss of life as a result of the terrorist attacks, the terrorist attack on the school. I told him we stand shoulder to shoulder with them in fighting terror, that we abhor men who kill innocent children to try to achieve a dark vision. I'm also concerned about the decisions that are being made in Russia that could undermine democracy in Russia, that great countries, great democracies have a balance of power between central government and local governments, a balance of power within central governments between the executive branch and the legislative branch and the judicial branch. As governments fight the enemies of democracy, they must uphold the principles of democracy.

I also want to say something, as we gather, about Hurricane Ivan. I talked to the Governors of Mississippi and Alabama and Louisiana, *tambien mi hermano, el Gobernador de Florida.* I told him the people of this country—I told all four Governors the people of this country are praying for their safety. We pray that the storm passes as quickly as possible without any loss of life or loss of property, and that—I told them that the Government is ready to help.

I appreciate Hector. I want to thank you for your service. I appreciate Secretary Evans and Secretary Chao, members of my Cabinet who have joined us today. I'm proud of your work.

We've got Ambassadors here. This is an important month, by the way, and we're tracking a lot of big shots. [*Laughter*] Hans Hertell is with us. Hans, thanks for coming. He's the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, *mi amigo.*

Gaddi Vasquez, who's the Director of the Peace Corps. Roger Noriega is Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Eduardo Aguirre is the Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Al Gonzales is my lawyer. [*Laughter*] He is the White House Counsel to the President. Ruben Barrales is the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. I'm naming people that work in my administration. I think it's important to promote a diverse administration, to welcome all cultures, and we're better for it here in Washington. And I want to thank them for their service.

I want to thank the *Embajador de Colombia y tambien de Mexico y el nuevo Embajador de Espana.* Welcome today to the White House for the credentialing ceremony. I want to thank the three Ambassadors for coming. Welcome. *Bienvenidos.*

I want to thank the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee for the United States Senate, Chairman Lugar—great man—Senator Lugar from the great State of Indiana. I also appreciate Congressmen Weller, Diaz-Balart *de Florida, y tambien* Steve Pearce from New Mexico. Thank you all for coming. Proud you're here.

Brian Sandoval, *donde esta?* Anyway, he's here somewhere. He got a lousy seat—[*laughter*]—or no seat at all. [*Laughter*]

Marcos, thanks for your prayer. It was beautiful. Welcome. Tell everybody at home hello. That would be Houston, is where he lives. And Laura and I are *Tejanos*.

I want to thank Joaquin. Thank you very much. It was a spectacular performance. What a great athlete and an artist. Thank you guys. Your buddies brought out the best in you. It was really great. Thanks. Myrka—thanks for coming, Myrka. *Gracias.*

I want to thank Emilio. Appreciate you coming. *El amigo de mi familia,* Gustavo Cisneros. *Esta aqui. Gracias,* Gustavo, welcome. Jimmy, thanks for coming—Jimmy Smits, proud you're here. Elizabeth Vargas is with us. I'm proud she is here. I want to thank Alex Wallau from ABC Television for coming with us.

Eliseo—we've got some soccer stars? Where are they? *Donde esta los* soccer stars? Well, they're somewhere. Oh, there they are, yes. The three stars, Eliseo, Marco, *y* Amado. Thank you for coming. So how is the team this year, pretty good? Yes? *No hablas Ingles.* [*Laughter*] Eliseo is from El Salvador. Marco, *que pais?* Bolivia. Amado is from Honduras. *Bienvenidos*. Good luck in the season.

I want to thank members of the Hispanic Organization who are here today.

I do want to make special mention of the fact that Judge Reynaldo Garza of Brownsville, Texas, passed away this week. He was 89 years old. In 1961, President Kennedy appointed Judge Garza to the district court in Texas. Judge Garza was one of the first Hispanic Federal judges in America. He's a great Texan. Those of us who are from Texas were proud to say, "We're both Texans." He was the son of Mexican immigrants. He was a shining example of the American Dream. He was a good man, and he made this country a better place, and we honor his memory today.

People often talk about the Latino culture. Here's how I'd like to describe it: faith in God, commitment to family, and love of country. In this moment in our history, America is defending—depending on the unselfish dedication of patriots. Today, there are almost 200,000 Hispanic Americans serving in the Armed Forces. Eight of these incredibly brave men and women are with us today. I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for wearing the uniform.

Latinos have contributed to the defense of freedom abroad and to the advance of freedom inside our own country. This afternoon, Laura and I were honored to meet members of an Hispanic American family who struggled against discrimination and won a victory for all in this country. We welcome Sylvia and Gonzalo and Jerome and Sandra Mendez with us. *Bienvenidos.* Let me tell you their story. I think you'll find it so incredibly American and so uplifting.

Sixty years ago, their parents, Gonzalo *y* Felicitas Mendez, tried to enroll their children as students in a mostly white elementary school closest to their house in Westminister, California. That was 60 years ago. Unfortunately, in those days, America had a—our vision wasn't as clear as it should be. They were turned away from that school, and they went to an older *barrio* school. I'm told it was a rickety,

wooden building bordered by an electric cattle fence. The mom and dad didn't like it. They didn't like their children being treated that way. They loved their children. And so they—and so the dad saved his money, 1945, and he went into a Federal court to sue with four other families for equality and fairness. That's 1945.

He said, "I'm just doing this for my children." What he really meant to say was, "I'm just doing this for every child." He was fighting so that everyone in this country has a chance to realize the American Dream.

A lawyer named Thurgood Marshall filed a friend of the court brief in the lawsuit, and the Mendez family won their case. Their effects reached far beyond a single neighborhood school. Inspired by the *Mendez* decision, Governor Earl Warren signed an order desegregating all the schools of California. Five years later, Thurgood Marshall would use the same arguments against segregation when he argued *Brown* versus *Board of Education*. And Earl Warren, who had become Chief Justice, would write the Supreme Court opinion that ended segregation in schools across America.

Today we honor your family and your mom and dad.

When Laura and I were taking our picture, one of the beautiful girls said—women said the No Child Left Behind Act is great. It's in the spirit of the Mendez family that the No Child Left Behind Act is flourishing, because we're fighting against another kind of discrimination in that act. It's called the soft bigotry of low expectations. We should never allow a system to exist in where they walk into a classroom and say, "This child can't read because of the color of their skin." You can't condemn somebody to failure because their parents don't speak English as a first language. That's not what we stand for here in America.

And so the laws we passed with Republican and Democrat help are challenging that soft bigotry of low expectation. We believe every child can learn. We want to know if every child can read and write and add and subtract early, before it's too late. We're going to stop this business about just shuffling children through the school, year after year, without learning the basics. We'll correct problems now. We're raising the bar. *No dejamos a ningun nino atras.* No child will be left behind in America.

Recently, I talked about a school in Georgia, northeast Georgia, called Gainesville Elementary School. It's mostly Hispanic, mostly poor. It's the kind of school where people just say, "Well, gosh, these kids can't learn. Give up. Move them through." This year, 90 percent of the students passed the State tests in reading and math. That's a fantastic statistic, isn't it?

We wouldn't know if we didn't measure. We wouldn't know if we didn't ask the questions about whether a child can read and write and add and subtract. We wouldn't know if we didn't correct problems early, before they're too late. And fortunately, the school has got a principal that has challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. Here's what he said: "We don't focus on what we can't do at this school. We focus on what we can do. We do whatever it takes to get the kids across the finish line."

That's what we're going to do here in this country. As we celebrate this important month, our mission, our goal, our deepest desire is for every child—every child—including those whose parents don't speak English as a first language, to be able to realize the promise of this country by making sure the public schools have high standards in excellence in every classroom. And that's what we're going to do.

As we celebrate this important month, we also need to celebrate ownership, because that's part of the American experience. We want more people owning their own home. I think there's nothing better than people opening up the door where they live and saying, "Welcome to my

home." *"Bienvenidos a mi casa."* [*Laughter*] "Thanks for coming to my piece of property." And we must be dedicated to the proposition that ownership ought to extend to every neighborhood and every group.

I set a goal to have 5.5 million new minority homeowners by the end of this decade. And we're on track to meet the goal—1.6 million new minority homeowners bought homes in the last 2 years. It's a fantastic statistic, I think. I think it's part of helping bring hope into people's families.

Also I'd like to talk about entrepreneurship. I mean, the Latino community is entrepreneurial. I mean, you talk about small-business owners who have got vision and drive and desire, sit down with Latino businessowners. They have a great sense of business and balance sheet and, as importantly, a great desire to own their own business. And one of the most hopeful aspects of our society today is the number of Hispanic-owned businesses that thrive throughout America. I love it when I meet an Hispanic entrepreneur, particularly somebody who came up with an idea at their kitchen table and said, "I want to own something. I want to own my business." And now they're employing people. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Think about that. And the role of Government is to encourage the expansion of small-business opportunity and entrepreneurship through every society, every part of our society. And we're doing just that in America, and our country is better for it.

Listen, we're a diverse nation, but there are things that bind us, our love of freedom, our belief in God, our understanding of the importance of family, our desire to realize dreams, the deep desire for people to live in a free society. I'm proud of your heritage. I'm proud of the ancestry. I'm proud to call Latinos Americans, and I'm proud to be your President.

God bless, and welcome to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi; Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Hector V. Barreto, Administrator, Small Business Administration; Luis Alberto Moreno Mejia, Colombia's Ambassador to the United States; Carlos Alberto De Icaza, Mexico's Ambassador to the United States; Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza, Spain's Ambassador to the United States; Nevada State Attorney General Brian Sandoval; entertainers Marcos Witt, Joaquin Cortes, and Emilio Estefan; actor Jimmy Smits; television personality Myrka Dellanos; Elizabeth Vargas, reporter, and Alex Wallau, president, ABC Television Network; professional soccer players Eliseo Quintanilla, Marco Etcheverry, and Amado Guevara; and Shawn McCollough, principal, Gainesville Elementary School. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The National Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation of September 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in St. Cloud, Minnesota
September 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here in St. Cloud. I understand I am the first sitting President—[*applause*]—I am glad I came, and the other Presidents missed a lot. Thanks for coming out today. It's such

an honor to be here. I really want to thank you for being here. A little early in the morning, I know. [*Laughter*] It seems like I provided a pretty good excuse for some kids to miss school. Don't make a habit of it. [*Laughter*]

I'll tell you what I'm doing. We're taking a bus trip across your beautiful State. I'm asking for the vote. That's what I'm doing today. I'm here to tell you in St. Cloud, I want your vote. And I'm asking for your help. I know we've got a lot of people working hard here to register voters. Keep doing it. See, we have a duty in this country to participate in the elections, is what I believe we have. And I'm asking you to find people and register them to vote. And when you're registering people to vote, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. And then when you get people registered to vote, head them to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

So I told Laura I was going to St. Cloud. She said, "Tell everybody hi." I wish she were here. I know—I love Laura too. [*Laughter*] She is a great mother, a wonderful wife. You know, when I married her, or asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian in Texas. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you. Just, I don't want to give any political speeches." I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She is a great speaker, because she is a compassionate, decent soul. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in today, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Admittedly, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because he's a man of great experience, sound judgment, and he's a man who can get the job done.

I appreciate working with Mark Kennedy. He's a fine Member of the United States Congress. He's a good fellow. Every time I see him, he says, "Don't forget those Minnesota farmers." As you can tell by some ag prices, we haven't.

I appreciate your Governor, Tim Pawlenty. He's a fine man, too. I'm honored. Norman Coleman is not with us, but I tell you, he's a good one for the United States Senate. I'm proud to work with him. I want to thank all the other State and local officials who are here. I want to thank John Stone. I appreciate his—country music songs he sings. I'm honored that he has joined us today.

I want to thank my friend Lieutenant Colonel Joe Repya. He runs the veterans program for this campaign. First of all, I want to thank all the veterans who are here. I appreciate your strong support. And I want to thank my friend Joe for his leadership. He's scheduled to deploy to Iraq soon, and of course, Joe, you'll be in our prayers, and we appreciate your service.

I know Coach John is with us today, the great coach from St. John's University. We had him to the White House a while ago, and it was such an honor to receive such a class act. He is a wonderful man. He's got a great family. He lifts everybody's spirits, and I'm proud to have him on my team. Coach John, thanks for coming.

I want to thank the grassroots activists. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and turn out the vote. I can't thank you enough for what you have done. And I'm going to thank you for what you're going to do, and that is, keep working, because I'm going to be working right alongside of you. I want to win, and I know we are going to win.

I like getting out with the people. I like to get out and tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years. I believe every child can learn, and every

school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I thought it was wrong to shuffle children through the schools, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. So we increased Federal help, but we also are now measuring. And we're measuring so we can determine problems early, before they're too late.

[*At this point, the audio system failed, and a portion of the President's remarks were not available.*]

The President. ——schools. We're closing an achievement gap in America, and we are not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to fix problems, not pass them on to future Presidents. Medicare needed to be strengthened. People say, "What do you mean by that." I'll tell you what I mean. Medicare would pay $100,000 or so for heart surgery, but it would not pay for the prescription drugs necessary to prevent the heart surgery from not being needed. It didn't make any sense, did it, not to pay drugs that would stop the heart surgery from being needed and yet pay for the heart surgery?

I worked with Republicans and Democrats. We're modernizing Medicare. Prescription drugs will be available for our seniors, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation, the spirit of our farmers, workers, small-business owners. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

Listen, when you're out gathering the vote, remind people what we have been through. We have been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and that affected economic growth by the way. And secondly, we passed laws, tough laws. It's now abundantly clear to everybody in America, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And the attacks of September the 11th hurt us. They hurt our economy. But our economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. We're overcoming these obstacles.

You tell folks out there that our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years, that we've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of last year, that the national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, below the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your great State is 4.4 percent. This economy is strengthening, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch. I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why, with your help, we're going to carry Minnesota and win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live is changing. Think about how much it's changed since our dads and granddads' generations started working. I mean, it used to be the man worked outside the home, and one job, one career, had one pension plan, one health care account. Today, people oftentimes change jobs and careers. The most fundamental shift in the workforce has been women work both inside the home and outside the home now. And yet, the fundamental systems of our Government have not changed. See, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training were created for yesterday, not tomorrow. In a new term, I will work to transform these systems so that all our citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own

choices, so you can pursue the great promise of our country.

Any hopeful society requires a growing economy. And I've got a plan to keep this economy moving forward. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. We need to reduce the burden of regulation on small-business owners if we want to keep this economy growing. We need to stop junk lawsuits if we want to keep this economy growing.

To make sure this country's economy is strong and people can find work at home, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that uses biodiesel and ethanol. It's a plan that says we can burn our coal cleaner and explore for natural resources in an environmentally friendly way. But it's a plan that understands that in order to keep America's economy strong, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep this economy strong, we've got to have good agriculture policy. I worked to phase out the death tax, so families can pass their farm from one generation to the next. We're working with our farmers and ranchers on the Conservation Reserve Program, so we can improve land, protect wildlife, and help our farmers. We've got a dairy policy that treats all people equally across this country.

And to make sure our farm economy is strong, we're going to continue to open up markets around the world. See, here's the issue when it comes to trade. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods, and it's good for you to do so. If you're a consumer and you have more choices, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality, with more products available. And so what I'm telling you is, is that we're going to continue to say to countries like China, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. See, they're an issue because I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over $2 trillion of new Federal spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, that's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? [*Laughter*] First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion worth of new programs. There's a tax gap. Guess who's going to get stuck if he has his way?

The other thing about the language "taxing the rich" is, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, so you get stuck with the tab. We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This Tax Code of ours—we need to change the Tax Code of ours. It's a complicated mess. It's full of all kinds of special interest loopholes. You realize the Tax Code is over a million words long. That's why Americans spend about 6 billion hours annually trying to fill out the tax returns. Listen, we need to simplify the Tax Code. To keep this economy growing, we need to simplify the Tax Code. To treat our citizens fairly, we need to simplify the Tax Code. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to change the Tax Code for the good.

A changing world is one in which the jobs—the nature of the jobs change. See, look at your own community. Look at the health care industry. It's changing the workforce. But oftentimes our workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. In order to keep jobs here at home, we've got to help our workers gain the skills they need to fill the jobs. That's why I'm such a big backer in the community college system. I believe

we ought to make community colleges more accessible for worker training programs, and we will do so.

I also recognize most new jobs are filled with people with at least 2 years of college. Yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe we ought to fund early intervention programs at our high schools to help at-risk students. I know we need to emphasize math and science in our high schools. Over time we will require a rigorous exam before graduation from our high schools. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to also reform our health care systems. Health care costs are rising rapidly. They're burdening our economy. They're leaving too many people uninsured. I have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. When it comes to health care, we have a difference of opinion, and it's a big difference of opinion in this campaign. My opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide when it comes to health care.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured are small-business employees and their families. I want to change law to allow small firms to pool together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big companies can purchase insurance.

My opponent opposes this plan. He calls it association health plans, and he opposes them. He says that health plans such at these, association health plans, would hurt consumers. No, what hurts consumers is not having health insurance. What hurts consumers is small businesses don't have the same advantages that big businesses have. Under my plan, the same laws that protect workers at large companies will protect consumers at small companies. It is time to stop the excuses. It is time to act to give more Americans quality health insurance coverage.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. These are important for our consumers. These are tax-free way to save for your own health care needs. Small businesses will be given tax credits that encourage them to put money into health savings accounts for their employees. We want more people to have their health savings accounts. So they make decisions based on the advice of their doctor, not somebody working at a distant HMO. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need to expand community health centers all across our country. These are places where the indigent and poor can find preventative care and primary care help. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we're going to spread health information technology throughout our society.

In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the costs of health care. I hear from people everywhere I go about the problems of these junk lawsuits. I hear from ob-gyns how hard it is to practice their profession. I hear from pregnant women who are worried about the fact they can't find a good doc. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice: I am for medical liability reform—now.

See, I think the problem in this campaign that my opponent has is that it's a plan that is massive, and it's big, and it puts the Government in control of health care. And you can tell it's massive by the price tag. This week an independent group estimated the cost of Senator Kerry's plan would be $1.5 trillion. That's trillion with a T. [*Laughter*] And that's big even for

a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] The only possible way for him to pay for this plan is to tax you.

The other problem is that it expands the Government. See, now let me give you an example. His plan will crowd out private health insurance, giving businesses an incentive to drop the health care plans they currently provide. That's the reality of expanding Medicaid coverage. A recent study showed that the plan would cause 8 million low- to moderate-income workers to lose private health coverage they currently get at work and be placed on Medicaid. Now, here's the problem with that: Medicaid is a Government program. And when the Government is in charge, bureaucrats make the decisions, deciding what doctors you can see and what health services are covered. That's the exact opposite of what we believe. I believe that when we reform and strengthen health care, the health decisions must be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In changing times, it helps to promote—it helps families to promote ownership. If you own something, it brings stability into your life. During my administration, the homeownership rates in America are at an all-time high. More and more people are owning their own home. It's a fantastically hopeful sign for our country when people are opening the front door where they live, saying, "Welcome to my house." Welcome to my piece of property." Over the next years, we'll continue to expand ownership to every corner of America to help our families bring stability in times of change.

And we've got to understand, our retirement systems need to be strengthened. If you're a Social Security recipient, nothing is going to change. I don't care how hot the political rhetoric gets; you're safe. Nothing changes. There's ample money in the Social Security trust to take care of you. For baby boomers like me, there's money in the trust to take care of us. But we need to think about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. And I believe, in order to strengthen Social Security for the young, they must be allowed to take some of their tax money and set up a personal account, a personal savings account that strengthens Social Security, a personal savings account they call their own, and a personal savings account that Government cannot take away.

Listen, we have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. It's a clear difference. My opponent's programs will expand Government. Our programs will expand opportunity. And I believe that is necessary because I trust the American people. I trust the American people to make the right decision with their own money. I trust the American people to make the right decisions about schools. I trust the American people to make the right decisions about their health care plans. I trust the American people, and the Government must do so as well.

There are some things in this world that aren't going to change. In changing times, values matter. The values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence and integrity, will provide stability in changing times. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening the intelligence services.

We're staying on the offensive. We're striking the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll work to advance liberty around the world, in the broader Middle East and elsewhere, and we'll prevail—we will prevail. Our strategy is succeeding—it's succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorists; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for fundraising for the terrorists; Libya was pursuing—secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, because we led, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key leaders and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We knew he was the sworn enemy of America, and we knew that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. And they came to the conclusion that I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they voted to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence. And when they said, "Show of hands for the authorization of force," he said, "Yes."

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all options. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I went to the United Nations. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat. They voted by 15 to nothing in the U.N. Security Council for Saddam Hussein to disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. I believe when bodies say something, they better mean it. I believe when a President speaks, he better mean what he says.

Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world again, as he had for over a decade. He wasn't interested in what the free world had to say. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived inspectors that were sent into his country. So I have a choice to make at this point in time, diplomacy isn't working. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, because we acted in our self interest, more than 50 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan are now free—50 million people. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan where young girls won't allowed to go to school because the Taliban was so backward and so barbaric that they wouldn't allow for education for young kids, that their mothers were taken to the public square and whipped sometimes in sports stadiums and killed, because they wouldn't toe their line.

Today, over 10 million citizens—3 short years after the Taliban has been removed—10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming presidential elections. It's unbelievable.

In Iraq, there's ongoing acts of violence. This country is headed toward democracy. There's a strong Prime Minister in place. They have a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. It

wasn't all that long ago that Saddam Hussein was in power with his torture chambers and mass graves, and today, this country is headed towards elections.

Freedom is on the march, and that helps us in America because free societies don't export terror. Free societies are hopeful societies, which leads to peace. Free societies will join us in fighting the terrorists, instead of harboring them. No, we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. It's not only in our self-interest to do so, but when America gives its word, America will keep its word under my administration.

Our mission is clear in Afghanistan and Iraq. We'll help these new leaders to train their armies so citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of protecting their people against a few who would try to destroy the hopes of the many. We'll help them get their elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great military. I'm incredibly proud of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. I've traveled around our country, at bases here, and I've been overseas and seen them at bases overseas. I'm telling you, these troops are fantastic. They are people of great courage and decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And they deserve the full support of our Government. I made a commitment that we'll give the troops that which they need in order to complete their missions. That's why last September I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion in funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, supplies needed for troops in combat in both Afghanistan and in Iraq. And we received great support for that request. Matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out gathering the vote, remind your fellow citizens that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops—only four—two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him, said, "Why did you do that vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Yes. I don't know, here on the town square of St. Cloud, whether many people talk that way. [*Laughter*] I doubt it.

They then said—well, he's—kept pressing. He said he's proud of the vote. And he—finally, he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

You know, knowing what I know today, even though we haven't found the stockpiles of weapons we thought were there, I'd have still made the same decision. America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. I would have made the same decision because he had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to an enemy. I would have made that same decision because I'll never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001.

Now, during the course of this campaign, the fellow I'm running against has probably had about eight positions on Iraq: for the war but wouldn't provide the funding; then he was the antiwar candidate; then he said, "Knowing everything we know today, I'd have done—did the same thing;" then he said, "Well, we're spending too much money"—that's after he said we weren't spending enough money. [*Laughter*] And so yesterday in a radio interview, he tried to clear things up. He said, there were no circumstances—none—under which we should have gone to war. Although he said his own vote to go to war was the right vote, and it was right to hold Saddam

Hussein accountable. [*Laughter*] The radio interviewer concluded, "I can't tell you what he said." [*Laughter*] Let me be clear: Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops in the field, the Iraqi people, to our allies, and most of all, to our enemies.

It is critical——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. It is critical—it is critical that the President of the United States speak clearly and consistently at this time of great threat in the world and not change positions because of expediency or pressure.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies have made in our efforts. We work hard to convince people to join us—about 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, and some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. I speak to leaders of those countries often and thank them for the contributions their folks have made to help us. It's in their interests that they work to make the world a freer place and a more peaceful place. In the next years, I'll continue to work to build alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

At the heart of my policy is my deep belief in the transformational power of liberty to change the world. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I spend time with Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister of Japan. It wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with Japan. If you really think about it, in the long march of history, it really wasn't all that long ago that Japan was a sworn enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm sure your dads, granddads, loved ones did the same thing.

Yet after World War II was over, my predecessor, Harry Truman, citizens of this country had great faith in the ability of liberty to transform an enemy into a friend. And so they worked with Japan to build a democracy. There was a lot of skeptics during then. You can understand why. We're trying to help an enemy grow into a democracy. People couldn't fathom that the people—the country with whom we were at war could conceivably be an ally. And yet because we had great faith in the ability of liberty to transform countries, I today sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace we all want, talking about making sure this world is a more peaceful place.

See, I believe that millions in the Middle East want liberty, that in their silence, they want there to be a free society. I believe women in the greater Middle East long to be able to realize their hopes and aspirations in a free society. I believe in freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty because freedom is not America's gift to world, see? That's not what I'm telling you. I believe in the transformational power of liberty because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and women in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we will help more people in our country realize their dreams. We will spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the country. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us—none of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." You know, I'm

doing my best to console these—thank these folks that had been in the rubble looking for a buddy. A guy grabbed me by the arm, he looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your beautiful State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that said if I—if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. Now you can tell them a sitting President came to St. Cloud, Minnesota. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. at Dick Putz Field. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; entertainer John Stone; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USA (Ret.), Bush-Cheney '04 Minnesota Veterans Co-Chair; John Gagliardi, head football coach, St. John's University; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in a Discussion on Health Care in Blaine, Minnesota
September 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here today. Pleased be seated. Please be seated. We got some work to do here. I'm here to ask for your vote; that's what I'm doing today. I'm here to ask for your help. I believe everybody has the duty to vote in America, and I'm asking that you register your friends and neighbors, encourage them to do their duty in democracy. And while you're out registering people to vote, make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats—you know, people like Zell Miller. And then after you register them to vote—I know a lot of you are working hard in the grassroots here—as you register them to vote and election time comes upon us, head them to the polls. And then when you head them to the polls, say, "If you want a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back into office."

What a great place to spend the day, the great State of Minnesota. I tell you, what a fantastic bus trip we're having. Just had a sandwich in Anoka, the Halloween capital of America. And I started my morning in St. Cloud. Actually, I didn't start my morning in St. Cloud. I started my morning at the White House. And I said to Laura, "I'm heading to Minnesota." She said, "Well, tell everybody hello." So I am. The First Lady sends her best.

This is a true story—kind of true. [*Laughter*] It may have been slightly embellished at times. [*Laughter*] So I said, "Laura, will you marry me?" She said, "Fine." She was a public school librarian, by the way. And she said, "I'll marry you, just so long as I don't have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, I didn't—she didn't hold me to that promise. America got to see a fabulous mom, a great wife, and a wonderful First Lady in New York City. I'm really proud of Laura.

Today, at the end of this interesting dialog we're going to have on a lot of issues, we're going to focus mainly on health. We've got some citizens from the area here who are going to discuss different aspects

of the health care plan we have, so you can better understand why I believe our plan is the best. But at the end of this, I hope you'll find there's a reason why I'm running again, that I have a reason to seek the vote, that I have a vision for this country that is one that will make the world a safer place and a better country for all of us.

And I just got off the phone with the FEMA Director, Mike Brown, who's down in the Southeast. And as you know, Hurricane Ivan hit the coast very hard. The States of Mississippi and Louisiana, most particularly Alabama and Florida, were hit hard. And I know the citizens of that part of the world will be glad to hear that people in the great State of Minnesota are praying for their safety, praying for their lives.

I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I'm proud of my runningmate. Now, listen, I admit it—I admit that he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race—[*laughter*]—kind of like old Weber. I didn't pick him for his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience, his judgment, and he can get the job done.

I'm proud of your Governor. You've got a great Governor in Tim Pawlenty. He's an innovator. He's a good thinker. He's got a pretty good sense of the politics here in the State. He told me something on the bus. He said, "You know something, Mr. President, you're going to carry Minnesota." And I believe him. [*Applause*] Thank you all. Okay. All of us in the political arena love applause, but we've got work to do here today.

I've got something I want to share with you. I've got some things on my mind I want to tell you. Before I do, I also want to thank my friend Mark Kennedy, Congressman Mark Kennedy. You've got to put this guy back in office. He's a great United States Congressman. He has earned your support, and I'm looking forward to working with him in my second term as President of the United States. We've got a great relationship. I think it's important to have a Congressman who can call over to the White House and the President answer the phone. I'll answer Kennedy's calls. I want to thank Debbie, his wife, Debbie. She is a—Kennedy is a smart guy. He sends the better half the family out to campaign on his behalf. Thank you, Debbie, for working hard.

Jimmy Ramstad—Congressman—I appreciate you, Congressman. Thanks for coming. Proud you're here. I'm honored to—I mentioned Zell Miller a while ago. He's a strong, strong citizen.

You know, Randy Kelly is as well. I am proud that the mayor of St. Paul, Minnesota—[*applause*]—thank you. I'm proud to call him friend and supporter. There are a lot of people just like him out there that wonder about the future of this country. They forget all the political noise, and they're looking at vision. That's what they want. They want somebody who can lead this country to a better tomorrow. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored to have your support. I'll treasure it.

I appreciate Vin Weber being here. Thank you for coming, Vin, former Congressman. I want to thank all the State and local folks who are here. Thanks for serving your State and your cities and counties.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists for what you have done and, more importantly, what you're going to do. We're coming down the stretch. Now is the time to be getting on those phones and reminding people that we have a duty to vote. And I'm honored you do so. So when you tell them to vote, tell them that we've got a vision in this campaign for a safer world and a more hopeful America.

And a hopeful America really means that you've got to have an understanding that we're living in changing times. Think about how the times have changed since our dads and granddads were coming up. You know, in the old days a person would likely have one career, one job, and mom would be

at home. And our society has changed significantly now. People have more than one career. Often, they change jobs several times. Women are now working in the home and outside the home in the workplace.

These are different times, and yet the systems of Government have not changed. Health plans need to change with modern times. The pension plans need to change with modern times. The Tax Code needs to change with modern times. The worker training programs need to change. The work rules need to change. The labor laws are old. They were written in the past. We need to be thinking about the future.

You say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. Since a lot of women work outside the home, there ought to be flex-time and comp-time available for employees so that people can balance their needs of their family and the needs of the workplace. We need modern work rules.

Like the Social Security fund. If you're a senior citizen, you don't have a thing to worry about when it comes to getting your check. You know, I don't care what the political rhetoric tells you, the promise is going to be kept. The Social Security trust has got plenty of money to fulfill the promise for our seniors. And baby boomers like me and a couple of others I see here—[*laughter*]—we're in good shape when it comes to Social Security.

So we need to worry about our younger kids and our grandkids when it comes to Social Security. There's not enough—the demographics have changed. The Social Security trust is weak when it comes to our children and grandchildren. That's why I believe we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account that will help them realize the promise of Social Security, a savings account they call their own, a savings account that Government cannot take away.

These are changing times. The nature of the jobs are changing in America. You know what I'm talking about. I mean, the health care industry, for example, is booming in parts of our country. I suspect it is in this great State of Minnesota. You've got some of the great health care technologies in the world being developed here. But oftentimes there's a skills gap in America. In other words, the jobs exist, but the workers aren't trained for the jobs which exist.

And that's why I'm such a big believer in community colleges, to make sure that workers have got an opportunity to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Our worker training programs need to change to adapt to modern times so people can fulfill and realize their dreams here in this country. What I'm telling you is, one of the reasons I'm seeking the office is because I understand many of the systems of Government were designed for the past, and I think we need to change those systems to stand side by side with people so they can realize their dreams.

Our view of Government is that Government ought to help people realize their dreams. I'm running against a fellow who believes that Government ought to dictate to people, and that's a fundamental philosophical difference.

Now, I want to talk to you about our economy right quick, because we can change systems all we want; if people can't make a living, it's not going to matter, see. Now, I—as you're out gathering the vote, remind people what we have been through. This economy has been through a lot in a quick period of time.

We've been through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to correct—that means go down—5 months before we came to office. Then the recession came.

Then we had corporate scandals in America. And make no mistake about it, those corporate scandals hurt. They shook

people's confidence. We passed tough laws now, and it's abundantly clear that this country will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then the terrorists attacked. And they estimate it cost us a million jobs in 3 months after September the 11th, 2001. But we're overcoming these obstacles. Our economy is growing. It's growing at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is 4.8 percent. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

We're adding manufacturing jobs. People say, "Why do you think?" I say, "Well, I'll tell you why I think: One, our workers are great; two, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong; three, the farmers and ranchers know what they're doing; and four, we cut the taxes." The question is not what we did to overcome the obstacles. The question is, what are we going to do to keep the growth; what is the vision to make sure this economy continues to grow?

My vision is this: In order to keep jobs here in America, in order to make sure people can realize their dreams through working, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want to find work here, this needs to be a place where people are willing to risk capital and employers are willing to expand. That means this: Less regulations on small businesses; tort reforms so small-business owners aren't subjected to harassment in the courts; an energy policy which encourages conservation, uses technologies to come up with new ways to use and conserve energy; an energy policy which uses corn and soybeans in a wise way, with biodiesel and ethanol; an energy policy which encourages clean coal technology; an energy policy which uses latest technologies so we can explore wisely for natural gas. In order to keep jobs here in America and to keep this economy growing, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We need to open up markets in order to keep jobs here in America. Listen, there is a tendency for people to say, "Well, I'm going to put policies out there that will isolate us from the world." That's called economic isolationism. That would be a big mistake for workers in the State of Minnesota. It would be a big mistake for Minnesota farmers. We've opened up our markets, and that's good for you. If you're a consumer and you have more product to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And so, what I say to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I say that to not only China but elsewhere, because I believe America's small-business owners, entrepreneurs, farmers, ranchers, workers can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

Before we talk about health care, I want to talk about another key issue, and that's what we do with your money. I believe that—I know we will continue to be wise with how we spend your money. In other words, to keep jobs here, Government has got to be wise with how the people—how the people's money is spent. That means setting priorities.

We set priorities in Washington. The priority is defending this country and supporting our troops in harm's way. That's a priority. We've increased Federal spending on education by 49 percent since I've been the President. We've got plenty of money to do what we need to do up there if we set priorities. You'll hear me talk a little bit about tax relief in a minute, but I—with one of our panelists here. But the whole philosophy is, is that after we've set priorities, I think the people can spend their money better than the Federal Government can. It's a philosophical difference——

Audience member. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Yes, sir, thank you. Okay. Now, the other issue is taxes. This is an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over $2 trillion of new money so far, and we're just coming down the stretch. It's easy to stand up in front of audiences and tell them what they want to hear in politics, believe me, particularly when you're spending somebody else's money. And the question is how he's going to pay for it.

And he's got that answer we've all heard before: "I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich." Now, you've heard that before. Here's the problem. One, you cannot tax the rich enough to pay for over $2.2 trillion in new spending, so there's a tax gap. And generally, when there's a tax gap, you get to fill it. Secondly, by running up the top two brackets in the Tax Code, you're taxing small businesses—ninety percent of small businesses pay individual income taxes, because they're classified as a Subchapter S or sole proprietorship. Ninety percent of the small businesses. Yet 70 percent of all new jobs are created by small businesses. So when you're talking about running up the top two brackets, really what you're talking about is taxing the job creators here in America, and that's bad economic policy.

And finally, when you hear them say "tax the rich," be careful. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, because they don't want to pay. And you get stuck with the tab. But we're not going to let him stick you with the tab. We're going to carry Minnesota in November and win a great victory.

All right, let me talk about health care. The subject that we're going to focus on today is health care. We want health care to be available and affordable. We want people to be able to afford health care, and therefore, we need to be thinking about—need to deal with the rising cost of health care. And we want health care to be available. Here are some interesting ways to do so.

We're going to talk about Medicare in a minute, with Jerry. Do you realize that over half of the unemployed in America, working unemployed—uninsured, working uninsured, work for small businesses. Think about that. That means small businesses are having trouble affording health care. But over half are employed. And so one way to make sure that small businesses can afford health care is to allow them to pool risk so that they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do.

Consumers will be protected under Federal law under this plan. It's a plan to help small businesses afford health care. That's what we want to do. We want to help them afford health care. Fifty percent of the people work for small businesses who are working uninsured. Why don't we help the small businesses?

I'll tell you another way to help small businesses afford health care. It's to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good docs out of business. This is an issue. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients and hospitals. I support medical liability reform—now.

We need to promote health information technologies. My hope is that most Americans have a personal electronic health record within the next decade. That's a fancy way of saying that when you have a system where docs who can barely write—well, they can write; you just can't read it—handwrite every file, there's inefficiencies in the system. One way to help with health care costs is to modernize the health care industry. We've got a great project going on in Washington, DC, to bring technologies into the health care field. It's going to save money.

Another way to help save money is to promote generic drugs to the market more quickly. We are doing that in Washington, DC.

Let me talk real quick about a subject I know that is on your mind. I think it's important for me to tell you what I think about importation of drugs. Listen, we're studying the issue. I'll tell you why we're studying it. I don't want people bringing in drugs that will hurt our seniors, and neither do you. I know it sounds attractive to some, the importation of drugs. And it may work. But sure enough, if we're not careful, drugs manufactured in the Third World over which we have no control could use Canada as a way to get into this State, and then we've got a problem, a safety problem.

We have a duty in the Federal Government to protect the consumer. And so I've got the—I've got Tommy Thompson and his crowd looking to make sure that before we have an importation program, that you're safe, that we make sure that people are—have got a safe product that does what it says it will do.

And in the meantime, we're going to keep promoting the generic drugs quickly to the market place. And that will help hold down the cost of drugs. We're going to talk about another way to hold down the cost of drugs for seniors here in a minute.

Let me talk about, right quick, about what we call community health centers. And we've got—Peggy Metzer is with us today. She is a soldier in the army of compassion. Community health centers are—well, I'll let you explain. Where do you work?

Peggy Metzer. Thank you, Mr. President. Ladies and gentlemen, there is a story that needs to be told, and it's about the frontline of health care happening every day by committed and dedicated doctors and nurses and other people at the grassroots level where it makes a difference. Were it not for the President's initiative, this would not be happening. The Cedar Riverside People's Center medical clinic might have closed its doors 3 years ago, after we'd been in service for over 30 years. Again, were it not for the President's vision, for his dedication and care that health care does get to the frontlines where it makes the biggest difference, we wouldn't be open today. So I want to thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Let me ask you some questions. So who shows up? Who is the clientele? When you open the door, who is likely to walk in the door at your community health center?

[*At this point, Peggy Metzer, chief executive officer, Cedar Riverside People's Center, made further remarks.*]

The President. What she's saying is—it just makes sense to me, otherwise I wouldn't be doing it. [*Laughter*] We're going to expand these community health centers so poor people have got a place to find primary care and preventative care. It makes a lot of sense. I think it's a wise use of your money to expand and increase the number of community health centers all across America. As a matter of fact, the goal I've set is every poor county in America has a community health center.

It's much better—it's much better if folks who need help get help at the community health center than in an emergency room of a local hospital. Not only do taxpayers save money, it's a more compassionate way to help people.

And the interesting thing about community health centers, the doctors who practice there are exempt from lawsuits because of Federal law. The problem is, is that since the trial lawyers are so strong in the Senate, we can't get any more liability protection than we've got. But at least your docs and you——

Ms. Metzer. We are protected, thank you.

The President. Yes, see, that's important. You've got people who are ob-gyns who

feel comfortable about practicing there because they're not going to get sued. It seems like if we're willing to extend legal liability to these health centers, we ought to be extending legal liability to private clinics and hospitals as well, so ob-gyns can do their job.

Ms. Metzer. It's such an honor to be here and to see the person who was able to see through the middle of the complexities and the confusion and the confounding situation with health care. And thank you for seeing through the middle and getting to the bottom line.

The President. Glad you're here. Good job. Pass that mike over there.

One of the things I went to Washington for is to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. I'll tell you why we had a problem in Medicare: Because medicine was changing, and Medicare didn't. Let me tell you what I mean. The Medicare system would pay for heart surgery, like $100,000 worth—that's your money—and it wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't seem to make sense to me. It certainly wasn't very cost-effective, but more significantly, it wasn't very compassionate for our seniors. After all, we would like to prevent the heart surgery from needing to occur.

So I worked with Congress to change Medicare for the better, so seniors have got more options to choose from, so seniors, starting in 2006, will have prescription drug coverage. And by the way, in 2005, for the first time, Medicare is going to pay for screenings so that we can prevent disease from occurring now, rather than have to treat it later. That seems to make sense for taxpayers.

As we waited for the prescription drug coverage to kick in, we decided to send out prescription drug discount cards. If you're a poor senior, you get a $600 credit per year for your card. Over 4 million seniors have signed up for the card. Interestingly enough, it's just not "a" card, there's a variety of programs from which the seniors can choose. You know why? I believe people ought to be making choices. I told you, the difference between what I believe and what others believe is that Government ought to stand side by side with people to improve their lives, not dictate to their lives. If there's only one choice, it means the Government is dictating. If you've got choices to make, it means you've got a better chance of designing the program that fits your needs.

Jerry Markie is with us—aren't you? [*Laughter*] So he's here for a reason, because he's got a drug discount card. I want senior citizens in the State of Minnesota to hear this story because I think you're going to find it very interesting.

Ready to crank it up?

Jerry Markie. All set to go.

The President. All right, let's go.

[*Mr. Markie made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, listen to what he's saying here. The cards—this is good use of—it seems like to me, good policy to enable this good man—I think he saved, like he told me, $350 a month because he's using this discount card. This is just wise policy. It's a lot better policy to empower him than have the Government dictate to him, like my opponent would like to do.

[*Mr. Markie made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Markie. And that's the truth. If we didn't have the insurance card, we would be paying that out of pocket. And that amounts to $4,200 a year. Just think of that.

The President. You can use that, can't you?

Mr. Markie. You betcha. That's a sizable——

The President. Take mom out to dinner more frequently.

Mr. Markie. More than once. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right.

[*Mr. Markie made further remarks.*]

The President. I'll complete the thought—any time you can save money, that's good. [*Laughter*] Right?

Mr. Markie. Yes. You just talked about Celebrex. I have eight drugs. That's just one. We take the six, as I indicated. And you save—$166—$15, that's almost 150 bucks right there, per prescription.

The President. See, here's what we're talking about. We're talking about a health care vision that empowers people, that helps people. And that stands in contrast to a vision that's going to increase the scope of the Federal Government. Now, listen to the debate in health care. I want our fellow citizens to listen carefully to the difference between the plan that I'm talking about and the plan my opponent is talking about.

I'll give you an example. He believes we ought to increase the amount of people covered by Medicaid. All that does is crowd out people who have got insurance plans through small businesses and move them from the private sector to the public sector. I just think that's the wrong decision to make, because once you're on the public sector, making decisions for you in health care, it means you and the doctor aren't making your decisions. It means unelected officials are making your decisions. Bureaucrats are deciding health care. The nationalization of health care would be wrong for the American citizen.

Let me tell you about a really interesting idea, an idea that has got a lot of advantages. They're called health savings accounts. We've got an owner of a health savings account with us, and he and I are going to explain to you how they work. And he's going to start. But this is Dan Kelly. He works for Mercury Office Supply. I just want you—as he explains how this works, I want you to think about a philosophy that says decisions will be made between doctors and patients and a philosophy that says, "We want people owning their own health care accounts, so that if they change jobs in this changing world, the health care account goes with them from one job to the next." And as they get older and accumulate savings tax-free in the health savings account, that asset becomes something they own and can pass on to another generation.

Danny Kelly, straight here from Mercury Office Supplies.

Daniel Kelly. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. How is the business?

Mr. Kelly. It's pretty good. It could be better, but——

The President. Good. Tell us how a health savings account works.

[*Daniel J. Kelly, operations manager, Great River Office Products, doing business as Mercury Office Supply, made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, so, here's the way it works, again. He's got it going right. I'm just trying to add a little emphasis to it. He buys a high-deductible plan that says, for example—I guess yours is—the insurance pays for any cost over $5,000.

Mr. Kelly. Yes, because it's a family plan.

The President. Which means the cost of that plan is significantly less costly than a regular insurance plan. He or his company, whoever pays for it, is out a lot less money for insurance. Then, if the deductible is $5,000, the company and Dan put in $5,000 pre-tax. And the $5,000 earns money tax-free*. And the $5,000, if you have to use it for routine medical expenses, comes out tax-free. And if you don't spend the $5,000, it rolls over to the next year tax-free. So in other words, it's his money. Is that right?

Mr. Kelly. It's my money. I choose how I want to spend it.

The President. Say that again.

Mr. Kelly. I choose how I want to spend it. I choose the doctors. I choose the medicine, whatever I feel is best for my family. It's my choice.

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* White House correction.

The President. Yes, let me stop you there. Oh, not yet. [*Laughter*] See, the operative words, as far as I'm concerned, are, "I choose." See, it's not somebody in Washington choosing; it's not an HMO choosing. Danny says, "I choose. I make the choice." Now, if somebody makes a choice, there's a responsibility that comes with that. Think about this—this has got a built-in incentive, doesn't it, for right choices in life. I mean, for example, if you watch that money in your own account begin to dwindle, you may want to walk a little more on a daily basis—[*laughter*]—take to the foot in order to make yourself more healthy. In other words, there's kind of a preventative medicine built in to a plan when it says, "My money. I choose." In his case, he and the business contribute. The business pays for the entire premium on the——

Mr. Kelly. Correct, on half the deductible.

The President. ——on the catastrophic care, and then you and the business share on the contributions on what goes into the account. This is an innovative plan. They're beginning to spread across America. If you're a small-business owner, look into them. Fifty percent of the uninsured here in America who don't have health care work for small businesses. And so what I think we ought to do is help small businesses set up HSAs through tax credits. I think the working uninsured ought to be given direct tax credits to set up HSAs. I believe this product is going to help change medicine for the better, because it keeps the doctor and the patient in charge of health care decisions.

And guess what else about the—about Kelly's family that I think you'll find interesting is that—remember the tax relief I talked about earlier, that kind of got the economy going, I think—his family saved $2,400 in '03 and $2,400 in '04. Now, in the land where we're throwing around zeros like they don't matter—that would be Washington—that doesn't sound like a lot. It's a lot to this guy. How many kids have you got?

Mr. Kelly. I have three kids.

The President. Three. How old?

Mr. Kelly. One is—well, 11 months, one will be turning 3 tomorrow, and the other will be turning 5 in about another month.

The President. And what did you do with the money, the 2,400?

Mr. Kelly. Buy milk. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, good. He has a healthy baby, doesn't he? See, he's got extra money in his pocket. It could help meet the health savings accounts needs, so his family has got a health savings account that works. His money matters. Once Government meets its priorities, I believe families like the Kellys ought to have more of their own money. The $2,400 tax relief mattered a lot, and Congress must make the tax relief permanent. Running up the taxes on the American people right now makes no sense. [*Applause*]

Okay, let me talk about one other subject. Thank you all. A couple of points I want to make. Changing times—in changing times, there are some things that aren't going to change. The values we try to live by won't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we must support the institutions that give us stability, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. In changing times, we must not be afraid to call upon our faith institutions to help people who hurt. In changing times, we must stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts.

We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I'm going to tell you one other thing: I will continue to appoint judges who know the difference between using the bench to write the law and strictly interpreting the law.

Now, I want to talk about one other subject. I'm just getting started here. [*Laughter*] I want to talk about how to make the world a safer place. I would like to share

with you some of the lessons I learned from September the 11th. The first lesson I learned and I hope the country learned is that we're facing an enemy that has no conscience. It's an enemy that is just really hard for us to understand. They will kill like that in order to shake our will. You can't negotiate with these people. You can't try to sit down and have discussions with them. You can't—it's impossible to try to rationalize with them. And that's why we're using every asset at our disposal to find them around the world so we don't have to face them here at home.

That's the first lesson; that's our duty. That's the solemn duty of our Government, to protect the American people. I wish I wasn't giving this talk. We didn't ask for what happened, but we're darn sure going to respond to it, in order to protect the American people.

Secondly, this is a different kind of war, and it's important to understand that. It's a war in which the enemy will try to find a host nation so they can become an active parasite. And therefore, it's important for me to make clear a doctrine that says, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." [*Applause*]

Now, when the President says something—hold on for a minute—when the President speaks, he better mean what he says. I meant what I said. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on for a minute. Thank you. Hold on for a minute, got a lot of work to do.

And so the Taliban heard from us, and they rejected what our Government said, and they're no longer in power. A lot of brave Americans went in and did hard work and removed the Taliban. Let me explain what happened as a result of that action. First, Al Qaida has no place to train in Afghanistan. Remember, they were training thousands of people—thousands—so they could burrow into societies, including our own, to create havoc.

Let me step back real quick. These are people—I would call them ideologues of hatred who use terror as a tool to intimidate. Their vision is backward. The Taliban—to indicate the kind of vision they have for the world, in Afghanistan young girls didn't get to go to school because of the Taliban. That's backward. Their moms would be taken into the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate.

Not only did we deal with the host that was providing safe haven for the parasite, Al Qaida, not only will they no longer train there, but 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election in Afghanistan. It's amazing. Think about that. It's an amazing thought, isn't it? You remember a while back when—remember when the Taliban pulled these four women off the bus and summarily executed them because they were involved in democracy? A lot of naysayers thought, "Well, this is the end of democracy in Afghanistan." Three years—3 years time, 10 million citizens have said, "I want to be a part of freedom. I want to participate." Freedom is a powerful force in this world.

And we are better off and America is safer because we have an ally in the war on terror in Afghanistan. And we're safer the more freedom marches around the world. And we're safer when others see an example of what a free society is like. It's not easy work in Afghanistan. Listen, we had some troubles getting from point A to point B when it came to our own democracy. The Articles of Confederation weren't exactly a smooth-running period here in America. But Afghanistan is headed toward Presidential elections. It's amazing, when you think about it.

Third lesson, when we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. That's one of the lessons of September the 11th. We must take threats seriously before they come to hurt us. We wouldn't have to say that prior to September the 11th. Prior to September the 11th, when we saw a threat overseas, we could say, "Well, we'll deal with it if we feel like

it, and we may not, because we're fine here at home. We're safe." We no longer have that safety anymore. That attack on September the 11th showed that we're vulnerable, and therefore, when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it materializes.

And so I saw a threat in Iraq. Iraq was a tough decision. I saw a threat—or my administration saw a threat—one, we saw intelligence that said weapons and the capability of making weapons. Secondly, we remembered he had used weapons. He'd actually used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. And he was a sworn enemy of America. He was a guy shooting at our pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had terrorist ties. Remember Abu Nidal? He was the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He was in Baghdad, and so was his organization. Zarqawi—he's the person that beheads people in Iraq today—he was in and out of Baghdad, as was the people in his organization. He paid the families of suicide bombers. There's terrorist ties. And of course the biggest threat is, somebody who could have the capability of making weapons of mass destruction or had weapons of mass destruction would pass that capability on to an enemy who would like to inflict more harm on us.

So I look at the intelligence and remember the history and went to the United States Congress and said, "This administration sees a threat. What do you all think?" And Members of the Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence we looked at, and they remembered the same history we remembered, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence I looked at, and when they said, "Do you authorize the use of force," he voted yes.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all options. I've got to be able to say to the moms and dads and husbands and wives of our soldiers that I tried everything I can to deal with the threat before it fully materializes, in ways other than militarily. So I went to the United Nations. My hope was that we could solve this problem diplomatically. I was hopeful that the free world might convince Saddam Hussein to come to his senses.

And so the U.N. debated the issue, and the U.N. Security Council voted 15 to nothing on a resolution that said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when international organizations speak, they better mean what they say, in order to make the world a more peaceful place. The world spoke.

He didn't listen. As a matter of fact, he hadn't listened for a decade. This was not the first resolution that the U.N. had passed. I think it was like number 17, if I'm not mistaken. I can't remember the exact number. I believe it's in double digits at least. In other words, they passed a resolution, he ignored; they passed, he ignored; they passed, he ignored, which only strengthened Saddam Hussein.

And so, at this point—and not only that, remember they sent the inspectors into Iraq, and as intelligence shows, he systematically deceived them. So I had a choice to make. And here's the way I view the choice. Diplomacy had failed. We tried what we could do to convince him to disclose and disarm. Do I take the world of a madman and forget lessons of September the 11th, or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*]

Okay, hold on, we've got work here. We did not find the stockpiles we all thought were there. But we do know he had the capability of making those weapons and he had the capacity to pass that capability on to an enemy. And after September the 11th, that is a risk I believe our country could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. [*Applause*]

Okay, hold on a minute. Thank you all. A couple of other lessons learned. When we put our kids in harm's way, they deserve the full support of the Federal Government. All of us in positions of responsibility must be able to say to our troops and loved ones, "We're giving you what you need to do your job." It's a solemn duty of the Federal Government. That's why I went to the Congress in September of last year and said, "Look, we need $87 billion for supplemental funding." That would be funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, hazard pay, health benefits, that which is needed to support our troops in harm's way—a legitimate request. More importantly, it was a necessary request.

And we got great support from members of both political parties. People understood that we have a duty at the Federal level to support our troops. The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops, and two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. When asked about the vote, he said this: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." Now, I don't know if they're talking that way here in the town square of Blaine or not. I don't think so. [*Laughter*] And they pressed him further, and he said he's proud of the vote. He finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. [*Applause*]

Okay. That bus is warming up. I've got some more I've got to say. Thank you all for the generous applause. I've got something else I want to tell you. We're headed toward peace. I believe that liberty can transform societies for the better. That's what I believe. The heart of my conviction is I believe that liberty is a transformational power. I believe that this is a theme throughout our history and throughout the history of the world. Think about this when you're talking to your friends and neighbors about this campaign. Think about this when you're thinking about a loved one who is serving in historic times now.

I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi. We have a serious discussion. He is the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, my dad went to war against the Japanese, your dad and granddads did as well. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America, and it was a bloody conflict. And after we won World War II, fortunately my predecessor Harry Truman and others in the United States believed that liberty could transform an enemy into a friend. And there was a lot of skeptics then. And you can understand why. We had just been to war. A lot of people's lives were harmed as a result of that war. And so there were doubters as to whether or not liberty had the power to transform. But nevertheless, there was great faith in those days about the capacity of liberty. And they helped Japan—our predecessors helped Japan become a democracy. And as a result, I sit down at the table today, talking to Prime Minister Koizumi about keeping the peace we all want.

Think about that. Someday, someday, an American President is going to sit down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it. That's what's happening. That's what you're seeing right now. That's what you're seeing.

These are historic times. It's essential that we have this great faith in the ability of liberty to transform the world. Those are the stakes in which we live. It's a chance to really use our influence, with friends and allies, to lead toward a more peaceful world. And that's why the American President must be clear in his thoughts, must not send mixed signals to

the enemy or allies, must be firm in our resolve. You can't chase the political winds. You've got to have an unshakable faith in the ability of liberty to transform the world for the better. And by remaining resolute and firm and strong, this world will be peaceful. And we can look back—this generation of Americans can look back and say, "The world was a better place, and our children and grandchildren have a better chance to grow up in a peaceful, peaceful world."

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at the NSC Sports Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; former Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Debbie Kennedy, wife of Representative Kennedy; Mayor Randy Kelly of St. Paul, MN; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Rochester, Minnesota
September 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm ready to serve this country for 4 more years. Thanks for coming. Rochester, Minnesota, is a fantastic city. I appreciate—I know something about it. You see, my mother is a trustee of the Mayo Clinic, and I'm still listening to my mother, after all these years. And she said, "When you get over to Rochester, you tell them to keep doing what they're doing, and Barbara Bush sends her best."

Thanks for coming out today. Today, as I traveled your State on the bus, I've been on the telephone getting updates on the devastation being caused by Hurricane Ivan in Florida and Alabama and parts of Mississippi and Louisiana. Federal teams are there to do everything possible to help the folks down there. I know all my fellow Americans join me in sending our prayers and concern for the families who lost loved ones and for those whose lives are being affected by this devastating storm.

I also want to express my sympathy and concern for the people just down the road in Austin, Minnesota, and the surrounding areas who have been affected by flash flooding there.

I've had a great day traveling your State—St. Cloud, Anoka, the Halloween capital of America—[*laughter*]—Blaine, Minnesota, and right here in Rochester. What a great way to spend a day. I kind of like to spend an afternoon in the ballpark. I also like coming to ask people for their vote, and that's what I'm doing here in the great State of Minnesota. I want your vote. I also want your help. I'm traveling on this bus to let people know that I'd like your help coming down the stretch in this campaign.

We have a duty in this country to vote. And I'd like you to go out and register your friends and neighbors to vote. Remind them we have an obligation in a free society to go to the polls. And when you're registering people, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And after you get people registered to vote—and voting time is around the corner—get them headed to the polls, and tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger

America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

My only regret of today is that Laura is not traveling with me. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't ever have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to her word. The American people in New York City got to see a compassionate, strong, fine First Lady in Laura Bush. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Gil Gutknecht, the fine United States Congressman from this part of the world. I appreciate his service. I appreciate working with him to do what's right for our country. He's a stalwart friend, and he's a great Member of Congress.

Today I had the privilege of being on the bus with your Governor, Tim Pawlenty, who has done such a fine job for the people of Minnesota. I'm proud to work with United States Senator Norm Coleman. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank the people running for office.

I want to thank the grassroots activists. You are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and do all the hard work and never get enough credit. I'm here to give you credit for what you have done and what you're going to do, as we're coming down the pike. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will carry the great State of Minnesota.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out amongst the people and tell people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I didn't like a system that just shuffled kids through the schools, year after year, without learning the basics. So we raised standards. We measure early to solve problems before it's too late. We believe in local control of schools. We're closing an achievement gap here in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. I went up to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing. Medicare wasn't. Medicare would pay $100,000 for heart surgery and would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors. It certainly didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. We've modernized Medicare. In 2006, our seniors are going to get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers, our small-business owners, our farmers, and ranchers. And that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Listen, when you're out gathering the vote, when you're out there in the hustings convincing people to go to the polls, remind them what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We had corporate scandals. We passed tough laws in Washington. By the way, it's now abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And the attack on our country hurt. It hurt people looking for work. They estimate in the 3 months after September the 11th, we lost a million jobs.

But we're overcoming these obstacles. This economy of ours is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.7 million new jobs in the last 12 months. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of 1970s, 1980s,

and 1990s. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is less than 5 percent. This economy is overcoming the obstacles we have faced, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and with your help, we're going to win a great victory in November.

Listen, the world in which we live is changing. You know, when our dads and granddads were coming up, a man usually worked at one company all his life, and there was a pension plan and health care. And women stayed at home. This world of ours is different. Men change—or people change careers and jobs often. And women not only work inside the house; they're now working outside the house. And yet the systems of our Government, the fundamental systems haven't changed with the times. Tax Code, health care, pensions plans, worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. In the new term, we'll transform these systems so all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make your own choices and to pursue the great American Dream.

A hopeful society is one in which the economy grows. The best way to keep jobs here in America is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. To make sure we have jobs here, we've got to lessen the regulations on our job creators. To make sure we have jobs here in America, we've got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are plaguing small-business owners.

To create jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I proposed a plan over 2 years ago that encourages conservation, that uses technologies to explore for hydrocarbons in environmentally friendly ways, that promotes clean coal technology, that uses ethanol and biodiesel. It's an energy plan that understands in order to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets for our farmers and entrepreneurs. We open up our market, and it's good for you. When you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at better quality and better price. And so what I tell countries like China and elsewhere is, "You treat us the way we treat you." I say that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. They're an issue. I'm running against a fellow who's promised 2.2 trillion—that's with a "T"—new dollars so far. And we're coming down—we haven't even got to the stretch run yet. [*Laughter*] So they said to him, "Well, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's easy, we're just going to tax the rich."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You've heard that before, haven't you? Yes. First of all, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2.2 trillion. There's a tax gap. If he has his way, guess who's going to get stuck with the bill? You've heard the rhetoric about taxing the rich before. Well, the rich hire accountants and lawyers for a reason, so you get stuck with the tab. We're not going to let him raise your taxes. We're going to win in November.

Speaking about taxes, this Tax Code of ours is full of special interest loopholes. It's a complicated mess. It's a million words long. The American people spend 6 billion

hours a year on taxes. I think we need to do something about the Tax Code. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to make this Tax Code more simple and more fair for the American people.

Listen, in a changing world, jobs change. You know as well as anybody here in Rochester, Minnesota, that the health care field offers fantastic opportunities. But oftentimes, there's a skills gap in America. You know, workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the new jobs of the 21st century. That's why I've laid out a comprehensive plan to make sure our worker training programs are modernized. That's why I'm such a big backer in the community college system, to enable our workers to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In this changing world, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Yet one in four of our students gets there. So in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll emphasize math and science. Over time, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation. See, by raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we've got to do something to reform our health care system. People in this town know what I'm talking about. See, Government must understand that it should stand side by side with patients and doctors, not try to dictate to patients and doctors. A good health care system is one that honors the provider and the patient. When it comes to health care, my opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured are small-business employees and their families. That's because small businesses are having trouble affording health care. I want to change the laws to allow small firms to pool together and purchase insurance at the same discounts big companies get. My opponent opposes this reform because he says it will hurt consumers. No, what hurts consumers is not having health insurance. Under my plan, the same laws that protect workers at large companies will protect consumers at small companies. It's time to stop excuses, and it's time to act to give Americans more quality health care coverage.

We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll help the working uninsured purchase health savings accounts. We'll help small businesses with health savings accounts. We want there to be a tax-free plan for Americans from all walks of life to be able to call a health plan their own. If they change jobs, they ought to be able to take the plan from one job to the next. If they save money in their plan, it ought to be theirs tax-free. We want plans where they make the decisions, not faceless bureaucrats and HMOs.

We're going to continue to expand community health centers to make sure the indigent and the poor get primary care and preventative care. It's better they get care in the health centers than in emergency rooms of hospitals. We're going to continue to expand health information technology, which will reduce costs.

But I'll tell you what else we need to do. We need to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business and running up the cost of your medicine. Listen, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Listen, we have a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible. This is a big issue in this campaign, and there is a big philosophical difference. My

opponent's plan is a massive, big-Government plan. And you can tell it is, because it costs a lot—[*laughter*]—1.5 trillion, with a "T," and that's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

Two problems with the plan. Only one way to pay for it, is to raise your taxes, and the other problem is he's expanding Government. For example, he's going to increase Medicaid coverage, which will crowd out private insurance. It will mean 8 million families are now going to be on the Government's insurance policy. The problem with that is, is that when you're on a Government insurance policy, it means the Government is in charge of the decisionmaking. When you're on a Government insurance policy, bureaucrats make the decisions, deciding what doctors you can see and what health services are covered. That's the wrong plan for America. The right plan for America is to have a practical plan that keeps the decisionmaking between doctors and patients, not bureaucrats in our Nation's Capital.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In a new term, we'll continue to promote ownership in America. In changing times, ownership brings stability to people's lives. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America today. It's a hopeful statistic, isn't it? More and more people are opening up the door where they live, and they're saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." In a new term, we'll continue to spread ownership to every corner of America.

And we've got to think differently about retirement plans as well. We've got to do something about Social Security. Now, if you're a senior on Social Security, the Government has got enough money in the Trust Fund to take care of you. I don't care what the politicians tell you, you have nothing to fear when it comes to Social Security. As a matter of fact, baby boomers like me, and a couple others out there I see—[*laughter*]—are just fine when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set it aside in personal savings accounts to help fulfill the promise of Social Security, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

In this world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a time of change, we will support the institutions that give our lives directions and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely

unchallenged as it planned attacks. Because we acted——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Because we acted, the Government of Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. They concluded Saddam was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He came to the same conclusion we came to, that Saddam was a threat, and he voted yes for the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must try all avenues to solve the problem. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence we looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered, and by a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council voted to declare to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when international bodies speak, they must mean what they say, in order to make the world peaceful.

But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world said. He ignored this resolution like he ignored resolutions and resolutions and resolutions for the decade before. When the United Nations sent inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I'm faced with a choice: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles that we thought would be there, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that was a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted to defend our country, more than 50 million in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free. Think about Afghanistan. Three years ago, many young girls couldn't go to school because the Taliban was so backward and barbaric, and their moms would be pulled out in the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line of these backward people. Today in Afghanistan, 10 million people, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election.

There's a lot of violence in Iraq. I understand that. But Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is becoming more free. Parts of the world where people never dreamt there would be liberty are becoming more free. And we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. When America gives its word, America will keep its word under my administration.

We're also serving an historic cause that will make us safer and make generations of Americans grow up in a safer world. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of supporting them, and that makes us all safer.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We will help new leaders to train their police and armies, so they can do the hard work of defending their countries against the few who would deny the ambitions of the many. We'll help them have elections. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I'm proud of our United States military. I've traveled to bases across our country and around the world. I've seen their great courage and wonderful decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in great hands.

And I want to thank the military families who are here. We appreciate your service and your sacrifice. The Federal Government owes your loved ones all the support necessary to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress last September and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This was vital legislation. It was important legislation. It was so important that we received great bipartisan support in Congress. As a matter of fact, only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding for our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, remind citizens that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. So they asked him, they said, "Why did you make the decision you made?" And you might remember his famous answer: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." You know, I doubt many people talk like that in Rochester, Minnesota. They pressed him further. He said he's proud of the vote. Finally he just said, "It's a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

The Commander in Chief must be clear and mean what he says. In order to make this world a more peaceful place, when the President of the United States speaks, he better mean what he says. During the course of this campaign, my opponent has probably seven or eight different positions on the war in Iraq. He's for it and wouldn't fund. Then he became the antiwar candidate. Then last summer he stood there—I believe it was on the edge of the Grand Canyon—and said, "Well, knowing everything we know today, I would have voted to go into Iraq." Then he got pressure and said, "Well, maybe that wasn't the right thing to do." Then he said, "We're spending too much money." That's right after he criticized me for not spending enough money.

So yesterday in a radio interview he tried to clear things up, and here's what he said: He said there were no circumstances, none, under which we should have gone to war, although his own vote to go to war was the right vote, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. [*Laughter*] Even the radio host said, "I can't tell you what he said." [*Laughter*]

Let me be clear about something. Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops in the field, the Iraqi people, our allies, and most of all, the enemy.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making. I

particularly want to thank the lady Member of Parliament for being here from our strong ally Great Britain. Welcome. We put together a coalition of nations all bound together to make this world a better place. There are some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Please don't listen to the language by some who said this coalition is feeble and not strong. It's a strong coalition. The next 4 years, I'll continue to work to build coalitions. But I'm never going to turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of our strength is to advance freedom. I like telling people about the fact that I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. You know, it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that our dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. Think about that.

Because of Harry Truman and Americans who believed in the power of liberty, after World War II, we helped Japan become a democracy. There were a lot of skeptics during that period of time. You can understand why. People were saying, "Wait a minute. We just fought these people and here we are helping them become a democracy. That doesn't make any sense." It did make sense. It made sense because today I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan talking about the peace we all want, talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

Someday, an American President and a British Prime Minister are going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren are going to be better off.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe women in the greater Middle East want to have a free society so they can realize their dreams. And I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming systems of Government, we will help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We will continue to work to spread freedom and peace around the world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I'm never going to forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console a—one of the fellows came out of the rubble. He looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I have been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at Mayo Field. In his remarks, he referred to

Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Theresa May, Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on the Millennium Challenge Account
September 16, 2004

The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a groundbreaking initiative that encourages all nations to embrace political and economic reform and has enjoyed bipartisan support since I announced it 2 years ago. The powerful combination of trade, open markets, and good government is history's proven method to defeat poverty on a large scale, to vastly improve health and education, to build a modern infrastructure while safeguarding the environment, and to spread liberty and enterprise.

Already, the MCA has encouraged countries to govern justly, invest in their people, and promote economic freedom. The MCA will support these efforts, helping the poorest countries seize the opportunities of the global economy and meet the needs of their people for better health and education, cleaner water, and a brighter future. I urge Congress to ensure that the MCA can fulfill its promise as a bold new vision for international development and a powerful expression of the generous spirit of the American people.

Remarks at a Victory 2004 Reception
September 17, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here.

Al, thanks for your hard work. I appreciate your gathering up a little help here, as we're coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*]

I feel great about the election. I want to thank you for your help. We're making good progress. I want to thank you all here. I know we've got a lot of Latinos here. *Gracias por su apoyo.*

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Si. Vamos a ganar, con su apoyo. Thank you all for coming.

You know, Laura and I are traveling our country a lot, and it's exciting to get out amongst the people. It really is. I'm enjoying it. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm is high. Came off a bus trip in Minnesota yesterday, which was very successful; heading down to North Carolina today. [*Applause*] Yes. My energy level is high. My vision is clear, and we're going to win.

So I said to Laura—so when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. [*Laughter*] You know, in New York City the people got to see Laura. You know, there's a lot of pressure on, and she gave a great speech. She's a compassionate, decent soul. She's a wonderful mother, a great wife. I'm telling the people around the country that the reason to put me back in is so Laura

will have 4 more years. [*Laughter*] I'm really proud of her. She's in West Virginia and South Carolina and Pennsylvania today. So she sends her best.

Dick Cheney is doing a great job. I'm proud to be running with him. I like to remind people that he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] And then I tell them I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, sound experience, and a person getting the job done for the American people.

I also want to thank Suzanne Lord. Al gets the credit; Suzanne probably did all the work. But thank you. Thanks for being here. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the Victory 2004 national finance chairman. This is a Victory Committee fundraiser. This is—the money goes to help turn out the vote in key States. It's really important. And Mercer has done a great job. He was the finance chairman for Bush-Cheney, did such a fine job that we deputized him to do the Victory Committee. And I appreciate my friend's hard work.

I want to thank my friend Raul Romero. [*Applause*] Yes. *Donde esta,* Raul? *Alli.* It's good to see you, friend. Thanks for bringing so many of your friends here. I'm honored to have your continued support. Raul is a *Tejano*. I know him well from Texas. He's a good friend, and you got to count on your friends in politics, you know. If you don't have any friends, you're not going anywhere in politics. [*Laughter*] And I, fortunately, have got a lot of friends, many here in people like Raul. I appreciate you coming.

I want to thank my friend Jim Langdon. He's a Texan, too. I appreciate him being here, and his hard work. I want to thank Julie Finley, Dick Hug and Lois, and Shelly Kamins and Lynne. Thank you all for putting this good group together, and thank you all for coming.

I'm telling the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead. That's what I'm doing and will continue to do so. I tell people that I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And I came to Washington to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. And we've done so, by raising the standards in schools, by measuring early so we can solve problems before it's too late, by spending extra Federal money but, in return, insisting upon results. And there is an achievement gap in America that is narrowing, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of public schools.

I tell people that I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide good health care for our seniors. I came to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing. Medicare wasn't. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. It means that we can pay $100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. We have strengthened and modernized Medicare, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

I tell people that I believe in the energy and innovation of America's workers and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs, and that's why we unleashed the energy with large tax cuts. And they're working.

Our economy is—I remind people on the campaign trail that we've been through a lot. The economy of our country has been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. That hurt. Those corporate scandals hurt. It shook the confidence of the investor class. It shook the confidence of the consumers. I also tell them that we passed tough laws that now make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We've overcome the attacks. That attack of September the 11th cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. I say we're overcoming it because

our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national—we've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is below the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and the 1990s.

I tell the people that my most solemn duty is to protect the American people, and that if America shows any uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. It's not going to happen on my watch.

I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And from what I hear and what I see, the American people want a consistent, steady, principled leader. And that's why, with your help, we're going to win.

I understand the world in which we live is changing. It's very important for me to explain that to the American people, that we are now part of a changing world and the role of Government is to change the fundamental systems of Government to help people. The changing world occurs because we've got women in the workplace today. Fifty years ago, women were at home. The changing world occurs because people change jobs or careers often in a lifetime. Fifty years ago, people only had one job and one career. And yet, the fundamental institutions of Government, our health care, our pension plans, worker training programs, or the Tax Code, hasn't changed. They were designed for the days of yesterday. I believe they need to be designed for tomorrow, and so I will do so over the next 4 years.

A hopeful society is one in which Government systems help people realize their dreams. A hopeful society is also one that has a growing economy. It's an issue in this campaign, is who's got a vision to make sure this economic recovery is sustained economic growth.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations. It means tort reform, legal reform for our small businesses and all businesses, for that matter.

We need to get an energy plan to my desk. I proposed a comprehensive energy plan to the United States Congress. It's stuck. It's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's got a very important electricity title that modernizes the—help modernize the electricity grid. It says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways and use coal technology—clean coal technology so we can use abundant resources at home. I'm telling the people if we want jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to have wise trade policy. We open up our markets for goods from overseas, and it's good for the consumers we do so. If you're a consumer for a product and you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And what I'm telling the American people is, over the next 4 years I will continue to insist others treat us the way we treat them. I will continue to remind China that they must open up their markets to our products. And I say so because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure the economy continues to grow, we'll be wise about how we spend the money, the people's money. And to make sure the economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign. My opponent has proposed at least $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far—[*laughter*]—and we've still got the month of October to go. [*Laughter*]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, it's simple, just tax the rich." Well, first, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion in new spending. So there's

a tax gap, and guess who's going to get to fill the tax gap? You are, yes.

And secondly, we've heard the rhetoric before, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants so that the middle class gets stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax anybody, because we're going to win in November.

I'm serious about fixing the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. And I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to make the code more simple and more fair. In order to make sure jobs stay here and to make sure this economy grows, we need to spend less time filling out tax forms and more time in constructive work. And so I'm serious about fixing this Tax Code, and the people want me to help fix the Tax Code.

You know, one of the interesting challenges we face here in this country during changing times is to make sure the workers have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You know, I'm going down to North Carolina today, and I've met textile workers who lost their job but who are able to go back to a community college and gain the skills necessary to become employed in the health care sector, for example. Because of some education, because they're able to enhance their skills and enhance their productivity, they're able to find higher paying jobs in the jobs of the 21st century. So one of the real challenges for us is to make sure that the worker training programs are relevant and actually fulfill the need of making—of matching skills with people who want to work.

And as well we've got to do something about our high schools, because most new jobs in a changing world require 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there, which means we better have good remedial education, good intervention programs for at-risk students in high school. We've got to make sure we emphasize math and science. You know, as the No Child Left Behind Act gains steam and—and over time we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. See, by raising standards in high school and by increasing Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, it will mean more Americans are able to start their career with a college degree.

Health care is an issue in this campaign. I see Vin Weber there. He and I spent a little time yesterday in Minnesota, where I was explaining our health care vision. It's a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible, and we have a difference in opinion in this campaign. I mean, it's a clear difference on health care. My opponent wants Government to dictate the health care decisions. I want you to decide the health care decisions.

Here are some of the practical, commonsensical ideas that I'm talking about on the campaign trail. More than half of the working uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. One reason why is because they're in the marketplace alone. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can purchase insurance at the rates big companies get to purchase insurance. My opponent disagrees with that. Those are called association health plans, and they make a lot of sense.

Another way to help people with their health insurance is to expand health savings accounts, tax-free health savings accounts. These make a lot of sense because it enables a patient and a doc to interface. It lets a person control his own money. It means a person can take that health savings account from one job to the next. Remember, people are changing jobs and careers during the course of a lifetime here in America today.

I've got a plan to help small businesses better afford health savings accounts for their working uninsured. We're going to allow low-income Americans to have a tax credit that they can apply to a health savings account. Health savings accounts are

a practical way of helping reduce the cost of medicine and making sure people have got insurance.

We're going to continue to expand community health centers. I think they make sense, because community health centers are places where the indigent and the poor can get primary care and preventative care without having to go to an emergency room of a hospital. I told the people, when I was running, we were going to renovate or expand 1,600 clinics. I'm meeting that goal. The goal in a second term is going to be every poor county in America have a community health center.

A big issue in the campaign is medical liability reform. People are now beginning to understand what these junk lawsuits mean for their health care. The junk lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and more and more citizens understand that. And junk lawsuits are running good docs out of the practice of medicine. If the goal is to make health care more available and affordable, this country needs medical liability reform—now.

I'm looking forward to the health care debate. My opponent's plan is a massive, big-Government plan. And you can tell by the size of the price tag it's massive, and it's big. [*Laughter*] They estimated the cost of his health care plan to be $1.5 trillion. That's with a "T." [*Laughter*] And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

He wants to expand Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid, you're crowding out families from small businesses, from private health plans in small businesses. In other words, you're moving people from the private sector to the public sector. And what's wrong with that is that all of a sudden you have Government officials deciding what coverage you get, and you have Government officials deciding decisions for you. His plan is the exact opposite of what we believe. We believe when it comes to health care decisions, they ought to be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats here in the Nation's Capital.

I've spent a lot of time talking about ownership in the campaign. I believe ownership helps bring stability in changing times. During my administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We want more people owning their own home. It's a fantastic statistic.

We're working hard to make sure more Latinos own their own home and people from all walks of life own their own home. I can't think of anything more important than promoting ownership throughout America. I love the fact somebody opens up the door where they're living and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And I think in order to make sure the retirement system, Social Security works well for a younger generation, we've got to incorporate ownership into Social Security. I tell the people where I go that if you're on Social Security, you don't have to worry about the Government fulfilling its promise. Now, I know there's going to be political rhetoric trying to say something different than that, but it's not a fact. Social Security trust is solvent when it comes to those who've retired. Finally—frankly, the Social Security Trust is in pretty good shape for baby boomers.

But we've got to worry about the youngsters, our kids and our grandchildren, when it comes to the solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money, set aside a personal savings account that will help Social Security fulfill its promise, a private account that they can call their own, a private account they can pass on to the next generation and a private account that Government can't take away.

I also spend time out there reminding people that in a changing world some things don't change: The values we try to live by, courage and compassion, and reverence and integrity; the institutions that

are fundamental to our lives, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe in a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how our country responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. It's very important for me to continue to lay out our strategy. We've got to lay out our strategy. We've got a clear strategy. We'll continue to defend the homeland. We'll transform our military to meet the threats of the 21st century. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. It is best to strike the terrorists elsewhere, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we will continue to spread freedom and peace, and we're going to prevail.

Our strategy is working. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people about what life was like 3 years ago, compared to today. Maybe this will help you: Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat, headed by a sworn enemy of the United States; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks.

Because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; Saudi Arabia is after Al Qaida; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida key members and associates have been brought to justice.

America and the world are safer. This progress involves careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. I knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his ties to terror. When people say, "What ties to terror," remind them about Abu Nidal, the killer of Leon Klinghoffer, and his organization, or Zarqawi—he's the person who beheads people, trying to shake our conscience and shake our will; he was in and out of Baghdad, as were some of his cohorts—or the fact that Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. He had a history of using weapons of mass destruction. It's important for the President and the country to always remember one of the lessons of September the 11th is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

My administration saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I went to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, came to the same conclusion we came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Members of Congress authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at very same intelligence I looked at and, having looked at it, concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and voted yes when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits the troops into harm's way, he must try all options before the military. I was hoping diplomacy would work, so I went to the United Nations. And the United Nations looked at the same intelligence we did and remembered the same history we remembered and concluded, with a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council, that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. I believe when international bodies speak, they must mean what they say. I believe when the President speaks, he must mean what he says.

Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to another U.N. resolution. We hoped he

would. We would hope he'd listen to the demands of the free world, but he didn't. He not only didn't listen to the United Nations Security Council, but when the U.N. tried to send inspectors in there, he systematically deceived them. So I have a choice at this point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best when it comes to a madman, or take action to defend the country? Given the choice, I will defend this country every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles we thought would be there, that we all thought would be there. But Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that is a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th, 2001. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. Afghanistan 3 years ago was run by these barbaric people. When they hear me talk about an ideology of hate, I'm talking about people like the Taliban. Young girls weren't allowed to go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public square or killed in sports stadiums if they didn't toe the line of these backward people.

Today, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October Presidential election. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago that four women were pulled out of a bus and executed by some of the Taliban holdovers because they were trying to—I think they were registering people to vote or just registered to vote. And the world was, "Oh, no, the elections won't be happening. It's too dangerous." People want to be free. And if given a chance, they will exercise their rights. And look what's happened in Afghanistan.

Despite ongoing acts of violence in Iraq, that country has a strong Prime Minister; they've got a National Council; and they are going to have elections in January of 2005. The world is becoming a better place because freedom is on the march.

We stand for free societies in the Middle East because they'll be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments, the resentments that cause people to kill in the name of a hateful ideology. We stand for free governments in the Middle East because we know they'll fight terrorists instead of harboring them. I talk to people a lot about why freedom will make us more secure—that's why. Free societies are hopeful societies. And free societies will be allies against these hateful few who have no conscience, who kill at the whim of a hat—at the drop of a hat.

So the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help these new leaders train Afghan and Iraqi citizens so they can do the hard work of preventing the designs of a few from stopping the hopes of the many. We'll help them train their police and help them train their armies so they can defend themselves. We'll help them have these elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops are coming home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great military. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of a fantastic military. It's been my honor to have met many who wear the Nation's uniform. These are extraordinary citizens of great courage and great decency, and they deserve the full support of the Federal Government. That's why, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding of $87 billion to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And this was an important request. It was for ammunition, spare parts, body armor. It was for fuel, hazard pay, health benefits. This was an important piece of legislation—so important, support was overwhelming in the United States Congress, so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against it, 2 of whom

were my opponent and his runningmate. Do you realize this? Do you realize that four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops? Only 4 of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him why, and he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion," right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] And he said he was proud of the vote. And finally he just said, "It's just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

A President must be clear, and a President must mean what he says. During the course of this campaign, my opponent has, I think, seven or maybe eight different positions on the war in Iraq. He was for it but didn't fund the troops. Then he became the antiwar candidate. Then I think it was at the edge of the Grand Canyon that he said, well, knowing everything we know today, he still would have voted for it. Then he said we're spending too much money, and he was on a national talk show earlier that said, we weren't spending enough money. And then he did a radio interview 2 days ago to try to clear it all up. [*Laughter*] And here's what he said: There were no circumstances—none—under which we should have gone to war, although his own vote to go to war is the right one, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. [*Laughter*] Even the radio talk show guy said, "I can't tell you what he said." [*Laughter*]

Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send our troops in the field, to the Iraqi people, to our allies, and most of all, to our enemy.

We've got a strong alliance, and during the next term I'll continue to work with our friends and allies to try to stop proliferation, to continue to help Afghanistan and Iraq. There are nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. And it's important for the President to continue to reach out to other nations. But I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. I like to share this with the people of our country, this little conversation about Koizumi, because it helps make the point of what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. Koizumi, of course, runs a country that—with whom—with which we were at war. My dad fought against the Japanese. Your dads, relatives, loved ones fought against the Japanese too. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman believed that liberty could transform societies. Fortunately, a lot of Americans agreed with him. I'm sure some didn't. You can imagine how hard it would be to say, after having lost a loved one in a war against the Japanese. They said, "Why do we care? Why do we want to work to help them become a democracy?"

But Truman did. And as a result of doing the hard work, of helping an enemy transform itself by becoming a democratic society, I now sit down at the table with the leader of Japan, talking about the peace that we all want. Think about that for a minute. See, liberty has the ability to take—transform an enemy into an ally, so we can work on the peace together.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace in the greater Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

These are historic times. This is a historic moment in history, as far as I'm concerned. We're helping to change the world for the better by spreading freedom. And it's hard work. It's hard work for a society to go from one that had been brutalized by a tyrant who condoned mass graves, cut off the hands of the guys that came to see me in the Oval Office because his currency

had been devalued. It's hard work. But it's necessary work, and it's work that will succeed, because I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I tell the people, this young century is going to be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we're going to build a safer world, a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, more Americans will be able to make their own choices and realize the dream that are available in this country. We'll continue to spread ownership and opportunity to every part of our country. We'll pass the values of our Nation on to a new generation, and we'll work for peace and freedom.

And I want to thank you for giving me a chance to be your President. I'm excited about this campaign. I'm looking forward to the next days. I like coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] And I appreciate your help. We'll put your good, hard work and your help to good use. We're going to turn out the vote, and we're going to win in November. And I'm honored to have you on my side. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:41 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Washington. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in a Discussion on Women's Issues in Charlotte, North Carolina
September 17, 2004

The President. Thanks for being here. Go ahead and be seated. We've got some work to do here. [*Laughter*] Thanks for such a warm welcome here in the great State of North Carolina. It's nice to be back here. I'm here asking for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help.

Gosh, there's a lot of people back there. Can you hear me back there? [*Applause*] That's good. Thanks for coming.

The first thing I'd like you to do is ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And while you're doing that, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And then after we get them registered to vote, when it comes voting time, head them to the polls and remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Listen, we've got an interesting way to talk about some issues today. One of the things you've got to know is, I've got a reason to run again. I'm asking for the vote because there's more to do to make this country a safer place and a better place for everybody, a more hopeful place for those of us who live here in America. And so I asked some of our fellow citizens here to share some ideas, or to discuss some of the ideas I have about a new term. I think you're going to find it interesting. I hope you do.

Before I begin to talk with them about ways to make this country a more hopeful place, I do want to tell you that I lucked out when Laura said yes. One way to maybe look at this race is, you can judge the nature of a fellow by the company he keeps. I'm keeping great company when it comes to Laura Bush. I'm proud of her. Listen, when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*]

I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. The other night the country got to see what I've seen in Laura for all these years: She's compassionate; she's decent; she's strong; she is a great mom, a wonderful wife, and a fantastic First Lady for our country.

I want to thank my friend Elizabeth Dole. She's a great United States Senator for the State of North Carolina. I want to thank my friend Robin Hayes. I appreciate you being here, Congressman. I'm glad you're here. Nice to see you, sir. Congresswoman Sue Myrick, she's here. Thanks for coming, Sue. It's great to see you. Richard Burr, is he here? Where is he? Burr, how are you? I'm in town not only to talk about my race; I'm in town to talk about his race. He needs to be elected to the United States Senate.

I want to thank Pat McCrory, the great mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Cherie Berry is with us today. We got some statehouse folks. We got Patrick Ballantine, the next Governor, with us today.

I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here today. These people put up the signs and do the hard work. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do, which is, coming down the pike, turn people out to vote. We carried North Carolina last time, and with your help, we're going to carry it this time.

I know Teresa Earnhardt is with us today. I'm proud you're here, Teresa. It's good to see you. Thanks for coming. There you are. Appreciate you being here. I was going to the NASCAR race in New Hampshire on Sunday, but I'm going down to help provide as much comfort as I can to the folks whose lives have been turned upside down by the hurricane that hit the coast so hard. I know it's affecting parts of North Carolina. We send our prayers to the people whose lives are being affected in your great State, and we stand ready to help when this storm passes through.

I appreciate you all coming. Let me tell you something about what I believe. I believe Government should stand side by side with people, not try to tell people how to run their life. I believe the proper role of Government is to help people help themselves, not dictate to people. There's a fundamental difference in this campaign in philosophy of Government. And in the course of the next days coming down the stretch, people are going to see a clear difference.

Today I also want you to understand I understand the world of ours is changing, and the fundamental systems of Government must change with the changing world. The Government of the—the society of ours has changed dramatically. For example, in the old days, women used to stay at home. Now they're staying at home and working; they're inside the house and outside the house. That's a fundamental shift in our labor market. And yet, the labor laws haven't changed. So we're going to talk about flex-time and comp-time today, to help women juggle the needs of work and family. We want the labor laws to be family-friendly here in America. We want them to adjust with the times.

In the old days, you know, the dad or granddad worked for one company and one career, and today, people are now changing jobs and careers oftentimes. And yet, the worker training programs haven't adjusted with the times. If you've got a workforce where people are changing jobs often, you've got to have a worker training program that helps train people for the jobs which actually exist. And so we're going to talk about how to make sure the worker training programs here in America work.

See, what I'm telling you is many of the systems of Government were designed for yesterday. I'm running for President to make sure they're designed for tomorrow—our tax system is designed for tomorrow, our health care systems are designed for

tomorrow, our pension plans are designed for tomorrow. I want to make sure Government helps people be able to realize their dreams here in the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

[*At this point, a portion of the President's remarks were missing from the transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.*]

I already worked through one mike. [*Laughter*]

In order to make sure there's a hopeful society, we've got to make sure this economy continues to grow. Now, when you're out gathering the vote, remind your friends and neighbors what this economy has been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. That meant some people forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen. We passed laws that now make it clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of our country. And we went through that attack on our country on September the 11th, 2001, that cost jobs. It affected our economy.

We're overcoming these obstacles. These are obstacles in the way for economic growth and vitality. We're overcoming them because we've got great workers, great farmers and ranchers, great small-business owners, and because of tax relief.

The economy has added 1.7 million jobs since August of last year. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate here in North Carolina is 5 percent. The tax relief we—the economic stimulus plan we passed is working. And so the fundamental question is, how are you going to make sure this recovery is sustained economic growth? I'm going to talk a little bit about that, if you don't mind.

First, we need an energy plan to make sure jobs stay right here in America. In order to make sure people can find work, this country must have an energy plan. I submitted one to Congress that said: We're going to encourage conservation; we'll use renewables like ethanol and biodiesel; we'll use clean coal technologies; we'll use technologies to explore in environmentally friendly ways for natural gas. But it's a plan that understands this: In order to make sure people can find work here in America today and tomorrow, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure we have jobs here in America, we need to do something about these junk lawsuits that are threatening small-business owners. In order to do something about making sure we got jobs here in America, we got to be wise about our regulatory policy. Many small-business owners fill out regulations. I can't guarantee you whether anybody in the Federal Government has ever read them. [*Laughter*] But I do know paperwork is costly.

In order to make sure jobs stay in America, we got to have wise trade policy. Now, we've opened up our markets for foreign goods, which is good for the American consumers. If you have more choices in the marketplace, you're more likely to get the product you want at a better quality and a better price. So what I'm saying to other nations is, "You treat us the way we treat you." That's why we were the first administration to invoke the China Textile Safeguard. That's why we were the first administration to file a WTO case against China. The message is clear: If you want to trade with us, you treat us fairly, because Americans can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, if the rules are fair.

Two other things I want to tell you about in order to make sure jobs are here. See, I've got a six-point economic plan to make sure the recovery that we're witnessing is a lasting recovery, so people can realize their dreams here in America. Listen, a hopeful society is one not only that changes fundamental systems to help people, but it's one in which the economic vitality is strong enough for people to be able to

find work or start their own business or have a chance to realize their dreams.

Now, we got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington if we're going to make sure this economy continues to grow. Here's my view of things. We're going to set priorities, and then we're going to let you keep as much money as we possibly can. Because once the Federal Government meets those priorities, I think you can spend your money better than the Federal Government can.

To make sure this economy grows, we got to keep your taxes low. We're going to talk to a small-business owner here in a minute, a woman-owned business. One of the most amazing—one of the most important changes that has taken place in this changing world is that there are 10 million women-owned businesses here in America. What a phenomenal change in society, isn't it?

I think tax policy ought to encourage the formation of women-owned businesses, and I think tax policy ought not to harm women-owned businesses. Do you realize most businesses today—small businesses are Subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships, which means they pay tax at the individual income-tax level? So when you cut individual income taxes, you're really helping small businesses. You're helping women-owned small businesses.

I think raising taxes on small businesses would be a mistake. It would hurt our economy. I'm running against a fellow who's promised $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending so far, and we haven't even got to the stretch run yet. So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's simple. We'll just tax the rich." You run up the top two brackets of the individual income taxes, you're taxing about a million small businesses here in America. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses, and you're taxing the job creators.

That doesn't make any economic sense. You've heard the talk before, haven't you, "We're just going to tax the rich." Yes. The rich hire accountants and lawyers, so you get stuck with the bill. You can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending. There's a tax gap. And guess who gets stuck with that tax gap? You do. But we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay. Thank you. We've got work to do here.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We've got a little work to do. Thanks. I told you one of the most amazing statistics is the fact there's 10 million small-business owners. I think, in the State of North Carolina, I think 45 percent of the small businesses are owned by women. That is an incredibly hopeful statistic, isn't it? It's a fantastic statistic. See, when I talk about a changing world, that's what I'm talking about.

And so we got one of those entrepreneurs with us today. Stewart Gordon is with us, a businessowner, The Buttercup, Inc. What do you do?

Stewart Gordon. We're a gift and stationery shop, and we started 29 years ago, five women with an investment of $500 each—only in America.

The President. Wait a minute. You're obviously still in business.

Ms. Gordon. We are. We're still going strong.

The President. Do you have employees?

Ms. Gordon. We have 37 talented women that work with us. We own our own building, and we have a good time. It's a nourishing environment, not only for us, our staff, but also for our customers. We are true "steel magnolias." So with determination and a little hard work, The Buttercup is strong.

The President. Good. The Buttercup is a Subchapter S corporation. That means they pay tax at the individual income-tax level, and so when you hear them coming

out of Washington saying, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich," keep The Buttercup in mind. See, when they run up the top two brackets, companies like The Buttercup get affected. And if they start taking money out of The Buttercup's coffers, it's less likely the women who work there are going to be able to keep their jobs.

How many people did you hire this year, do you know?

Ms. Gordon. We hired six.

The President. Six people. See, that's what's happening in the economy. Six people hired by this small business here, six there. This economy is growing because the small-business sector is strong. Tax policy ought to help women-owned business, not hurt women-owned businesses. Let's talk about flex-time, do you want to?

[*Ms. Gordon made further remarks.*]

The President. See, Federal labor law—[*applause*]—hold on for a minute—labor law prevents there to be maximum of flex-time. The labor law is stuck in the past. It was written when women stayed at home. The world has changed. We've got women now working in the house and out of the house, like I said, and that's good for our economy. But the labor laws need to adjust to allow moms to be able to juggle the needs of the workplace and the family. I'm running again because I want to change systems of Government that prevent people from realizing their dreams.

If you make it easier for a mother—or a father, for that matter—to be a good mom or a dad, it's more likely they're going to be a better employee and have a higher quality of life.

Good job. Are you ready? Yes, she's ready. Frances, you're ready. My old buddy Frances. We met before.

One of the things we've changed is to change this concept of Government—getting people dependent upon Government. We changed welfare laws in a more compassionate way, as far as I'm concerned. We made the system more compassionate so as to help people realize their dreams.

And Frances Cunningham is with us—my old buddy, right?

Frances Cunningham. I'm here.

The President. Until I asked her to come on the stage. [*Laughter*] Mother of two.

Ms. Cunningham. Yes. Can you hear me?

The President. Oh, yes, they can hear you loud and clear.

[*Ms. Cunningham made brief remarks.*]

The President. You're doing good.

Ms. Cunningham. Thank you.

The President. Frances is a great story, you know. She was on welfare. They have a great welfare department here. They said, "Let's help—let's help somebody help themselves." That's what I'm telling you about. We're changing systems so people have a chance to realize dreams.

Now what she's saying, she wants to go to the next level. Hopefully, somebody is listening out there in the camera that says, "Wait a minute, maybe Frances could make a"——

Ms. Cunningham. And I have been promoted on my job, and it just opened up a lot of doors for me. And I'm sure a lot of women out here understand, you know, when you have to depend on the Government to help you, that is fine for a while—to help you get your life in order. And it's been great. And I just encourage business to just help one another and help people and help us to become better citizens out here and mothers and fathers, you know?

The President. That's good. You're doing great. Listen, she has the hardest job in America, though. I want you to know she's got the toughest job in America—a single mother is the toughest job in America. And we need to help. And I appreciate you. You did great.

I want to talk to Kema Jenkins. We're going to talk to Kema right now——

Ms. Cunningham. Can I say one more thing?

The President. Absolutely. You've got the mike, and it's still on.

Ms. Cunningham. I just want to thank my supervisor.

The President. Where is your supervisor?

Ms. Cunningham. That's her, right there.

The President. Good job. Thanks for coming.

Ms. Cunningham. She's been very supportive.

The President. Appreciate you being here.

Ms. Cunningham. Give her a handshake for me.

The President. Handshake right now? Well, let me finish the thing here. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Cunningham. Okay. All right. Thank you. And Mr. Jacobson, he's not here, Department of Social Service director. He's been like a mentor.

The President. That's good. See, people can make a difference in somebody's life. We can change one America one heart and one soul at a time if somebody just takes time out of their life to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself.

Are you ready, Kema? I told you one of the real challenges we have is to help people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We've got a really interesting story here in Kema Jenkins. She is a—she's a good soul who—well, tell us. You used to work for?

Kema Jenkins. A textile company. That is now——

The President. Yes. You don't want to say its name? No? Okay. Pillowtex—I will. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Jenkins made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me—if I can help say what you just said. Look, the Government needs to help people gain the skills necessary to fill jobs. I know what it's like here with the textile industry, and so do you. It's been hit hard. But the amazing thing about your economy is that it is diversifying. There are health care jobs available. And the Government, I think, has a responsibility to help people like Kema gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

Nobody likes jobs going away. But there's new opportunity. In a changing economy like ours, there are new opportunities for people. When an economy changes, it certainly creates dislocation, and I understand that. And that's not good. But what is good is that jobs are replaced with higher paying jobs so long as the people have the skill set necessary to fill the jobs. And that's what we're talking about here. Women need help. If they get laid off from work, they need help. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system, in helping people go back and gain the skills.

You can't say—Government can't pass a law that says Kema has got to go back to school. She's got to make up her own mind. She said, "I want to embetter myself," and "Is there a place to find help?" I think it's a legitimate use of your taxpayer—of your money, is to help somebody like Kema be able to realize dreams in the workplace.

Now, let me ask you something. One of the interesting things about education—I didn't see you all over there; that's the end zone. Okay, never mind.

One of the interesting things about education is that as you increase your skill level, you increase your productivity. It means you're a more productive worker. And when you become more productive, you make more money. One of the interesting things about a changing economy is that our workers are more productive than ever before. That means instead of using a hoe, you use a backhoe. Or instead of using, you know, a regular old standard typewriter, you use a computer. In other words, that's an example of becoming more productive.

But that creates a challenge for us. It creates a challenge for us in our society

because the more productive workers become, the faster the economy has to grow so people can find work. That's why my six-point plan is essential to making sure people in a productive world can find work.

So you worked there for Pillowtex for a while and—so what's the difference in pay? I'm not—maybe not exactly numbers. More, less, same?

Ms. Jenkins. I'm going to be making more this year than I've made the past 21 years at Pillowtex.

The President. Yes. See, that's the great opportunity for women. It's the great opportunity for women in the workplace. If you can help a person with the skill set necessary to work, help them become more productive, they make more money. She's making more money in the beginning of a new career than she made at the end of her other career.

And that's what's happening all around America. That's why it's important for us to change fundamental systems to help women—and men, for that matter—realize their dreams. And that's what we're talking about. It's helping people. It's a difference of philosophy. As opposed to saying, you know, "You will be dependent on Government," or, "You will do this, or you will do that," my philosophy says, "Can we help you, and can we help you help yourself." In a changing world, helping people help themselves creates a more hopeful America.

Let me talk about health care right quick. It's an issue in this campaign. There is a fundamental difference between what I believe and my opponent believes when it comes to health care. I believe the best health care decisions are made by doctors and patients. I believe it is essential that the Federal Government does not run your health care.

And I put out some practical plans to help people. Do you know that about 50 percent of the working uninsured work for small businesses? And the reason why they're uninsured is because small businesses have trouble purchasing affordable health care for their employees. And yet, most small-business owners want to purchase affordable health care for their employees. I see a lot of the women businessowners here nodding. They—the best way to help small businesses and their employees and their families is to allow small businesses to pool together, to bind together across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get to do.

Those are called association health plans. My opponent is against them. I think they make a lot of sense. Government should help people solve problems. The—health savings accounts are a very interesting way for people to save money when it comes to health care and to help small businesses afford insurance for their employees. Health savings accounts are basically catastrophic plans with a high deductible and that the employer and employee contribute, based upon the contractual arrangement, tax-free money into an account. So, in other words, if you've got—say, the insurance company will pay for everything over $2,000, you cover from zero to 2,000 either as a contribution to your employee or the employee puts it in, and it's your money. And if you spend the 2,000, you replenish next year. If you spend nothing on your health care because you're a good exerciser, you make good choices, you've been lucky, things went well, that 2,000 is your money. It earns interest tax-free. You carry it over from one year to the next, and then you've got a nest egg for the next year.

And basically what it says is, it says that people make decisions on health care, not some faceless bureaucrat. It means that you've got a chance to control this health care plan. In a changing world, people change jobs and careers quite often, which means you take your health savings account with you wherever you go.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we're going to spend some money to make sure that children who are eligible for the low-income health programs

at the government level get signed up. See, there's too many of the kids not signing up what they call SCHIP. It's a good program, and we ought to encourage families to take advantage of the low-income health programs for our children.

I also want to tell you another interesting idea. Actually, we're doing it right now. To make sure health care is available for all of us, we're going to expand community health centers. Now, community health centers are places where the indigent and the poor can get primary care and preventative care. It's a good use of your money to expand community health centers. It's better that people get this kind of care and get this kind of care at a community health center and not in an emergency room of a local hospital. And so, in a second term, we will expand community health centers to every poor county in America.

Two other things on health care I want to talk about—want to talk about Medicare. I went to Washington to fix problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. We had an issue in Medicare. We had an issue in Medicare. A lot of senior women were affected by a Medicare system that hadn't modernized. People say, "What are you talking about?" I say, "Well, Medicare would pay for the $100,000 for the heart surgery but would not pay for the prescription drugs that might prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place." That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for Medicare recipients. It didn't make any sense for taxpayers.

And so we're modernizing the system. They've got drug discount cards now available for our seniors. I urge our seniors to look at the drug discount card. People are having great savings when it comes to prescription drug coverage, particularly our poor seniors, because we're helping them with the purchase of drugs. In 2005, there will be preventative screenings paid for by Medicare for the first time ever in the system. It helps us solve problems by diagnosing problems early. And in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage, and the system makes sense.

And finally, we've got a healer with us today, a doc, Andrea Torsone. One reason why it's hard for small businesses to afford health care, one reason why your health care costs are going up, one reason why docs are becoming less available for people is because these junk lawsuits are beginning to hurt the health-care industry significantly. If you're a doctor and you're getting sued all the time or your neighbor is getting sued all the time, you're going to practice defensive medicine so that you can defend yourself in a court of law. That costs—practicing of defensive medicine, in other words, you're prescribing more than you need to do; you're just doing the extra X ray here or extra test there—that costs the Federal Government $28 billion a year, to practice defensive medicine. I mean, there is a direct correlation between these lawsuits and the cost of Government.

We need to do something about it. Too many good docs are leaving practice. Too many women are having trouble with keeping their ob-gyn, particularly the ob part of the ob-gyn. And they're getting run out of business. I've talked to too many women who are pregnant, and they don't have their local doc because the local doc had to surrender the practice due to the high cost of premiums caused by lawsuits. And that's not right. That's not right. Good health care for women and good health care for every American depends on having a legal system that is reasonable. We need medical liability reform—now.

And this is an issue in this campaign. This is an issue in this campaign. There's a fundamental difference of opinion. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-hospital and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and patients. We're for medical liability reform in this campaign.

All right, Doc. You are a—what kind of doc?

[*Andrea Torsone made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, this is a problem. Here is a kind, compassionate soul who is obviously talented and went to school because she wanted to deliver babies. And the cost of doing medicine is so high because of lawsuits that she no longer does so. It's just one less person to help a woman, and it's—we got a national problem with this issue. She said her premiums have gone up 300 percent in a very brief period of time. That's because it's like a legal lottery out there, and you just keep filing these lawsuits, one after another. And it's happening, State after State. Good people are saying, "I'm through. I wish I could practice. I wish I could heal. I wish I could help, but I can't afford it anymore."

And this is a living example of why we need medical liability reform in Washington, DC. Listen, I believe that this is a national issue. I believe it is a national problem. And I know it's causing our budgets to go up, and that's why I submitted a plan to the House and the Senate. It passed the House. It's stuck in the Senate because there's too many trial lawyers in the United States Senate.

I also want to share some thoughts with you about my most important duty, which is protect you and your children. That's the most important duty I have. Let me share some lessons I've learned from September the 11th.

One, we face an enemy that has no conscience. They—it's hard for us to understand people that will kill for the sake of an ideology of hatred, but they do. And therefore, you cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best. You cannot sit down and maybe think, "Well, gosh, there's a chance we can rationalize with them." You cannot. And that's why our strategy in this Government is to find them in places around the world so we do not have to face them here—is to bring them to justice in foreign lands. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on a second. Thank you all, but not yet.

Secondly—I've got more than one lesson to share with you. Secondly, this is a different kind of struggle. It's a different kind of war. There are places where these people can hide and wait and plan. And therefore, I laid out a doctrine which said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as equally—you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the President says something—hold on for a second—when the President says something, he better mean what he says in order to make this world more peaceful. I meant what I said. I meant what I said.

The Taliban ignored what we said. And thanks to a lot of really fine, fine soldiers, the Taliban is no longer in power in Afghanistan. And we're better off for it. The world is safer for it, and so is America. No longer does Al Qaida have a safe haven. See, these people are like parasites, and they try to find a weak host so they can eventually kind of become the host. And as a result of removing the Taliban from power, we're safer. These Al Qaida no longer have safe haven there. There's still some hiding in remote regions of that part of the world, and we're after them. Day after day, we're slowly but surely dismantling the Al Qaida network. Seventy-five percent of their leaders and associates have been brought to justice. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to keep the pressure on. That's our duty to the American people.

But I also want to tell you what else happened in Afghanistan. This is a country where many young girls didn't get to go to school. When I talk about ideologies of hate, I'm talking about people that would not allow girls to be educated. That's part of an ideology of hate. Their mothers were taken to the squares of that country and

whipped or killed in some cases, in the sports stadium, because they would not toe the line of this dark ideology. That's the way these people think. There is no freedom, in their view. As a matter of fact, freedom frightens them, freedom of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of speech.

Today, in Afghanistan—this is 3 years ago, which really isn't very long, when you think about it—3 years after these people were brutalizing much of that society, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Isn't that fantastic? Think about that. This is a society which has gone—which is going from darkness to light because of freedom. And we're better off for it. We're better off that Afghanistan is a free country. It helps us to have an ally in the war on terror there, as opposed to a place where the terrorists can hide.

Third lesson is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. That's one of the lessons of September the 11th. It's a harsh lesson, but it's one we must never forget. Prior to September the 11th, planners and thinkers in Washington, DC, could see a threat and say, "Well, we don't have to worry about it because it could never come and hurt us." That's what we thought. It wasn't that way during the cold war, admittedly, but we had a plan, mutually assured destruction. But after the cold war, we thought we were safe, didn't we? If you really think about the time, 3 short years ago, we felt like we were protected. And so when we saw threats we could decide to deal with it if we wanted to deal with it or not. After that day, every threat must be taken seriously.

In Saddam Hussein, I saw a threat. I saw a threat because he was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He was our enemy. As a matter of fact, they were firing missiles—he was firing missiles at U.S. aircraft enforcing the world's sanctions. We had been to war with Saddam Hussein before. He had been to war in his neighborhood. In other words, he was a destabilizing influence. He had terrorist ties. Abu Nidal killed Leon Klinghoffer, if you remember. Remember that incident? The guy was in Baghdad, as were people in his organization. Zarqawi, the beheader, was in and out of Baghdad, and he had a poisons network in Iraq. He was a terrorist. Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. Suicide bombing is a terrorist activity. He had terrorist ties. He also had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction, and he had used weapons of mass destruction. And the intelligence I looked at and the intelligence Congress looked at said he actually had them there.

So I saw a threat. And I went to the United States Congress and said, "We got an issue here that we're going to have to deal with." Members of the Congress of both political parties looked at the very same intelligence I looked at—the very same intelligence—and they remembered the same history I remembered, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and when they said, "Do you authorize the use of force," he voted yes.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, before the Commander in Chief looks a mom or dad in the eye and says, "I'm sending your son or daughter into harm's way," we must have tried all options—all options. And I was hopeful diplomacy would solve this problem. I was hopeful that we could diplomatically deal with the threat. And so I went to the United Nations, said, "We see a problem." They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council, they voted to tell Saddam Hussein, "You disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

Now, I told you when I say something, you better mean it if you're the President. I think when international bodies speak, they better mean it as well. And they said this. Saddam Hussein, as he had for resolution after resolution after resolution after resolution, ignored this one. He wasn't about to disclose, disarm. So he didn't believe there would be serious consequences, I guess. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors in, the U.N. sent inspectors in, he systematically deceived them. And I knew he was deceiving them. So I have a choice to make at this point in time: Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, hold on.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all.

A couple of other things I want to share. Let me share some other things with you right quick. We didn't find the stockpiles we thought we would find, the stockpiles that everybody thought was there. But I do know that he had the capability of making those weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to an enemy. And that's a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. The world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell, make no mistake about it.

Prime Minister Allawi is coming here next week. He's a tough guy who believes that Iraq should be free. And he cares about the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people. He is—I'm looking forward to meeting him. I think he's coming to speak to the Congress—I hope I didn't let the cat out of the bag. Everybody knows that? Okay, good. [*Laughter*] Hope he knows it. [*Laughter*] I'm looking forward to the American people hearing him. It's important that we hear from someone there on the ground who believes that people want to be free, believes that the people of Iraq really want to be free.

Here's our strategy in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We're going to help the Iraqis hold elections. The Afghan people are holding their elections soon. There will be free elections in Iraq in January of this year. People want to vote. People want to participate. We're going to help train Iraqi police and army so they can defend themselves against the few who are trying to stop the dreams of the many in that country. We'll help them, and we're making progress. We're making progress. It's tough. Of course it's tough, because there are killers there who are trying to shake our will and shake the will of the Iraqis. It's tough on the Iraqi citizens. These people are indiscriminately killing because they want to cause us to leave, and they want the Iraqis to grow weary of trying to be a free society. Listen to Allawi. He'll talk about what it means to be free.

Once we get these folks trained and get them on the path to stability and democracy, our troops are coming home with the honor they earned. And I appreciate those in the United States military. I'm proud you all are here.

Here's the fourth lesson I want to share with you. The fourth lesson is, when we put troops in harm's way, they deserve the full support of the Federal Government, full support. That's why I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion of support for our troops. And this is important funding, really important funding. As a matter of fact, it was so important that there was wide bipartisan support in the Senate and in the House. As a matter of fact, when I say "wide bipartisan support," I'm talking only 12 Members of the Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out rounding up the vote, when you're rounding up the vote, remind people of this fact. Only four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted not to fund the troops, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Now, you might remember, when they asked him, they said, "Why," and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." There's not a lot of folks in Charlotte, North Carolina who speak that way, I can assure you.

We've done hard work. We've done hard work. Because of the hard work we've done, this world is becoming more peaceful. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. It's the heart of much of what I think, is because I believe liberty can change enemies to allies and change distressed societies to hopeful societies. I like to share with people my feelings about Japan. You know, Prime Minister Koizumi is a friend of mine. I like him. He's a good guy to talk to. And he is the Prime Minister of a country with which we were at war during my dad's lifetime. After all, he was there, as was your dads and granddads. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago that Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America. We were fighting them. Young men went off to war, and a lot didn't come back.

And yet, after World War II, Harry Truman and other American citizens believed that if Japan became a democracy, the world would be better off. And that was hard work, really hard work. You can imagine why. You can imagine the moms here saying, "What do you mean, working with Japan to make a democracy? They just killed—caused great harm." And yet, there was this unshakeable faith that liberty could change societies. And as a result of that unshakeable faith of a prior President and citizens of this country, I now sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about keeping the peace. Think about that.

Someday, an American President, whoever he or she may be, will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about how to keep the peace in the greater Middle East. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

Liberty can change societies. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies help change the world. I believe everybody longs for freedom. And I believe this not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe it because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm here today to let you know I have a reason to seek the office again. I'm running to help transform systems of Government so people can realize their dreams. I'm running again to continue to lead so this world will be a safer place. I'm running again because I want to help spread the peace we all want. I'm running again because I have great faith in the American people and have great faith in the values that make us a great nation. I know where I want to lead. And I want to thank your help—for your help in helping us get there. With your help, we'll win a great victory in November of this year.

God bless. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:01 p.m. at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Representative Richard Burr of North Carolina, senatorial candidate in North Carolina; North Carolina Commissioner of Labor Cherie Berry; North Carolina gubernatorial candidate Patrick Ballantine; Teresa Earnhardt, chief executive officer and president, Dale Earnhardt, Inc.; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

The President's Radio Address
September 18, 2004

Good morning. Three years after the attacks of September the 11th, our Nation continues to confront the threats to our security. We're acting to protect the homeland, to track and disrupt terror networks across the world, and to hold to account the sponsors of terror. We're staying on the offensive, striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Americans also know that our long-term security requires a broader commitment. Our country is determined to spread hope and economic progress and freedom as the alternatives to hatreds, resentments, and terrorist violence. In hopeful societies, men and women are far less likely to embrace murderous ideologies. And free governments will fight terrorists in their midst, instead of harboring them. We know that to create a safer world, we must build a better world, and we are acting.

This week, I will speak in New York to the United Nations General Assembly, and I will talk about the great possibilities of our time to improve health, expand prosperity, and extend freedom in our world. America and many nations are taking a bold stand in the fight against HIV/AIDS. My Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief will provide an unprecedented $15 billion over 5 years to support the fight against the AIDS pandemic throughout the world, with the focus on the most afflicted countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. These funds are already at work helping to prevent new infections, provide treatment and care for millions of victims.

We've also joined with other nations to create the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. In 3 years, the fund has raised $5.6 billion in pledges and provided funding for projects in more than 90 countries. And we will persist in the effort until these diseases are defeated.

America and many other nations are also determined to turn the tide against global poverty by taking a new approach to economic development. It is now our policy to increase foreign aid to those governments that are serious about fighting corruption and improving education, health care, and economic opportunity for their people. Modern history teaches that honest governments that invest in their people and promote economic freedom can lift millions out of poverty and despair. And governments that truly serve their people deserve our help.

The health and well-being of developing nations also depend on the defeat of hunger and illiteracy. We have launched an Initiative to End Hunger in Africa by teaching modern farming techniques and providing drought-resistant crops to farmers on that continent. And through our Africa Education Initiative, we're training teachers, distributing textbooks, and encouraging more school enrollment.

America and many nations are also building a better world by standing with the liberated peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan as they move toward democracy. More than 10 million Afghan citizens have now registered to vote in next month's election. Iraq is approaching free elections in January. Terrorist enemies are trying to stop the progress of both those countries, and their violent and merciless attacks may increase as elections draw near. But all the world can be certain: America and our allies will keep our commitments to the Afghan and Iraqi people. Our long-term security—the safety of our children and grandchildren—will be served when the broader Middle East is home to stable, democratic governments that fight terror.

At the United Nations this week, I will make some additional proposals to expand

prosperity and accelerate the march of freedom in our world. Never in the history of the United Nations have we faced so many opportunities to create a safer world by building a better world. For the sake of our common security and for the sake of our common values, the international community must rise to this historic moment. And the United States is prepared to lead.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on September 17 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 17 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With First-Responders in Orange Beach, Alabama

September 19, 2004

Listen, thank you all for coming. Today I've been joined by Governor Riley and Governor Bush, Alabama and Florida, and Members of the Senate from Alabama, Sessions and Shelby, Congressman Jo Bonner, Congressman Miller from Florida, mayors from the affected areas, Mayor Russo, Bodenhamer, and Russell.

The devastation caused by Ivan is terrible. This was a big storm that caused a lot of damage and a lot of suffering. And I want to thank the people that are working hard to bring some sense of order in the lives of these citizens, folks at the State level and at the local level. I want to thank the FEMA workers for laying the foundation for what is going to be a recovery.

I was—I know people all across our country join me in praying for the families of those who suffered loss of life. I want to thank the search and rescue teams from all over the United States who are here, using every possible asset they have to find those who are still missing.

We understand thousands don't have power. I want to thank the power companies that understand that they have an obligation and a duty to restore power as quickly as possible. There are a lot of people working for the power companies, a lot of people stringing line from all over the southeast of our country. I want to thank them for taking time to come down here and help the people sorely affected by this terrible storm.

We toured the beaches in Florida and Alabama and saw how powerful this storm was. But the Governors and I fully understand there are people inland who have been affected. There are people in rural Alabama, small-town Alabama whose lives have been turned upside down by this storm as well, people in rural Florida who have been affected by this storm. And I want them to understand that when I talk about FEMA help, FEMA help not only extends to the beaches; it extends to people inland here in the State of Alabama and in Florida as well.

The amazing thing about these catastrophes is how the American people rise to the occasion. The amazing thing about devastation is how there is such compassion in the face of such devastation. When I was visiting with some of the residents, they were telling me the amount of—number of people that have showed up just to provide help, people that have heard a call to love a neighbor in a time of distress. And I want to thank all those who have

come to provide help to a neighbor in need.

I want to appreciate our National Guard troops who are here for providing stability. I went to the National Guard bureau convention in Vegas the other day and quoted a woman from Florida, from the Punta Gorda area, who said it brought her such great comfort to see those who wear the uniform, and I appreciate you doing that.

I want to thank the police and firefighters from this part of the world, who have been working overtime, for their compassion, for providing stability so people can, at some point in time, get their lives back in order.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to provide aid as quickly as possible. FEMA Director Brown is with me today. He has done an excellent job on the two hurricanes that hit Florida earlier. He will do an excellent job on this hurricane as well in making sure that all Federal aid is coordinated well with the State and local governments, making sure all the aid that is available gets down here as quickly as possible.

I also want to assure the farmers from this part of the world, the nurserymen in this part of the world that we will have a plan worked out to help you, that we have an obligation at the Federal level to provide assistance, and that assistance will be detailed so you understand what kind of help is available. As well we understand—fully understand that the highways have been affected here, that many of the roads are impassible. We're going to work with Congress to ensure that highways and bridges are repaired as quickly as possible.

I want to thank the—again, I want to thank the local officials for rising to the occasion. Most of all, I want to tell the citizens of this part of the world that we're praying for you, that we'll get help out here as quickly as we can, and that we ask God's blessings on you and your family.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. at Orange Beach Fire and Rescue Station 1. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor Steve Russo of Orange Beach, AL; Mayor David L. Bodenhamer of Gulf Shores, AL; and Mayor Tim Russell of Foley, AL.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in Derry, New Hampshire
September 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be back. Please be seated. Proud you all are here. Thanks for coming. Hey, buddy, how you doing? Thank you. It's great to be back in New Hampshire. We carried it in 2000. With your help, we'll carry it again in 2004.

That's what I'm here to ask for, your help. I do need your help. I need your help to register your friends and neighbors. I need your help to turn people out to the polls in about 40-something days. Who's counting? [*Laughter*] I'm here to talk to you about making sure that you understand I have a reason to run again. I want to keep this country—I've got an agenda, a vision for a safer world and a more hopeful America.

This is going to be a little different from most rallies. This is an opportunity for me to talk to some of your fellow citizens here and to talk about how we're going to make sure America is a hopeful place, talk to some business leaders and people who went back to get job training, talk about tax relief. I'm also going to answer questions,

which is kind of a New Hampshire tradition, if I remember correctly. And it's a great tradition. Traditional people take your politics seriously. Traditional people expect there to be a reason for running.

My only regret today is Laura is not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know, a lot of people feel that way. They kind of wish I'd stayed home and she came instead. But she's doing great. She is a great First Lady. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, I'll marry you, but I don't want to have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She gave a great speech in New York City at our convention. People got to see a strong, compassionate soul.

And I appreciate running with Dick Cheney. He's a great Vice President and a wonderful friend and a good partner. He doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment and his sound experience. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank Governor Craig Benson. I hope you put him back in office. He's a good man. [*Applause*] I appreciate it. New Hampshire is an entrepreneurial State. There's a lot of entrepreneurs here in New Hampshire, kind of independent-minded people who, all they want is a chance to succeed. Craig understands that. He knows the role of Government is not to create wealth but create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish. I agree with him. And that's one of the many reasons why I hope you put him back in as the Governor of this great State. I appreciate you, Craig.

I want to thank Congressman Jeb Bradley. I appreciate you being here, Congressman. Good to see you. He's got a great first name. [*Laughter*] At least that's what the Governor of Florida thinks. [*Laughter*] And I want to thank my friend Charlie Bass. I appreciate you being here, Charlie. They're two really fine Members of the United States Congress. Plus I'm pleased to be working with your Senators, Senator Gregg and Senator Sununu. They are great United States Senators, really good people too.

I had the honor of saying hello to Paul Needham today. He was the—a former Derry town councilor. He was the John Edwards for President cochairman. He's now a Bush supporter. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you, sir. I'm honored you're here.

The campaign welcomes people from all parties. We welcome all the Republicans, independents, and discerning Democrats—[*laughter*]—people like Paul and Zell Miller, people who care about—proud you're here.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Good to see you. I appreciate your national committeeman being here, old Tom. He's a good man and a great friend. I want to thank the people who put up the signs and put out the yard signs and make the phone calls. I can't thank you enough for what you have done and what you're going to do as we're coming down the stretch. It's important to get people to the polls.

Ours is a changing world. When you think about it, when our dads were coming up, or my dad was growing up, or your grandfather was growing up, a man only had one job, generally, and one career, worked for the same company all his life. Today, the world has changed dramatically. People change careers often and change jobs, and women are working not only in the house but they're working outside the house. The nature of our workforce has changed a lot, and yet the basic institutions of Government have not changed. The Tax Code has not changed. Pension funds have not changed. Health care plans haven't changed. Worker training programs haven't

changed. They were all designed for yesterday.

One of the reasons I'm running for 4 more years is so we can change the fundamental systems of Government to help people be able to realize their dreams. A proper role for Government is to stand side by side with people, not dictate to people. We have a fundamental disagreement in this campaign. There is a philosophical difference in the campaign. The proper role for Government is to encourage people to be able to have choices in life so they can realize their dreams, as opposed to creating programs where the Government tells you what you're going to do in life.

When you hear me talk about changing systems, let me start with Social Security. If you're a senior citizen, you will receive your Social Security check. I don't care what the politicians will tell you as they try to scare you into the ballot box. The promise of Social Security will be kept. And if you're a baby boomer, if you're a baby boomer like me, the trust fund is in pretty good shape. But we need to think about our younger workers, our children and our grandchildren. In order to make sure Social Security is available for them, I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account, not only to help fulfill the promise of Social Security, but a personal savings account they call their own that Government cannot take away.

I think our labor laws ought to change to recognize the changing times we're in. The labor laws were designed for yesterday. I believe workers ought to be allowed to have flex-time and comp-time so moms are able to juggle the demands of family and the demands of work. Government ought to be—have family-friendly work laws, not work laws designed for yesterday.

When I'm talking about changing systems, I'm talking about making sure that systems such as the Tax Code does its job. And one way the Tax Code can do its job—the job is to collect enough revenues in a fair way to meet the priorities of Government without complicating lives. I believe the Tax Code we have is a complicated mess. I believe it needs to be—I know it's full of loopholes. In order to make sure this economy grows, in order to make sure there's fairness, I'm going to lead a bipartisan effort to simplify the Tax Code.

In changing times, it's important to encourage ownership. If you own something, it brings stability in your life. One of the most hopeful statistics of the recent years is the fact that more and more people are now owning their own home. Think about that. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America today. That's important. We got a plan to make sure it continues that way. I want more and more people from all walks—I want to close the minority homeownership gap in this country, and we've got a plan to do that. There's nothing better than a fellow citizen opening up their door and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

When it comes to health care, the system ought to have a—be a patient and doctor-centered system, as opposed to a system of Federal bureaucrats. That's why I'm a big believer in health savings accounts. Health savings accounts are a tax-free way for individuals to be able to take care of catastrophic needs and, at the same time, be in charge of health care decisions. And as well health savings accounts allows a worker to take their own account from job to job, career to career.

If you own something, you have a better chance of controlling your destiny. What I'm telling you is, is that over the next 4 years, I will work to change the fundamental systems of our Government so that people have more choices and more opportunities to be able to realize their dreams and the great promise of the United States of America.

Now, look, I recognize that a hopeful society is one in which this economy has got to continue to grow. And when you're out there gathering the vote, you need to

remind our fellow citizens what this economy has been through. The stock market started going down before I got into office. As soon as we show up, we have a recession—[*laughter*]—which is three quarters negative growth. We started to come out of that, and we discovered that some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible America. See, when I say we usher in a period of personal responsibility, I'm talking about CEOs in corporate America that have a responsibility of telling the truth to their shareholders and their employees. The fact that people didn't tell the truth affected our economy. It affected the confidence of people. We sent messages loud and clear now: We're not going to tolerate dishonesty in our boardrooms. Thirdly, those attacks hurt us. Make no mistake about it, the attacks on our country affected our economy.

And yet, we've overcome these obstacles. This economy of ours is growing. As the Governor said, your unemployment rate is low. People are working in this State. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. That's okay. That's good. We're doing fine. Except the question is, how do we keep it going? That's the fundamental question of this campaign. What does it take——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. What does it take to make sure this recovery is sustained recovery, so that the economy is a hopeful place? I'll tell you what we need to do. We need to make sure we have reliable energy supplies. If we want this economy to grow, we've got to make sure that you can afford energy at reasonable prices. That means we've got to encourage conservation, the use of renewable sources of energy, using our technologies to make sure we can burn coal in an environmentally friendly way, explore for natural resources in an environmentally friendly way. In order to make sure jobs are available today and tomorrow, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, in order to make sure this economy stays strong and people can keep working here in New Hampshire, we've got to open up markets to U.S. products. There's a tendency in this country to say, "Oh, it's tough out there, so let's have economic isolationist policies." I strongly reject that. We've opened up our markets, and it's good for you. It's good for the consumers. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. So what I'm saying to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you. We've opened up our markets. You open up yours." That's why we filed a WTO case against them. That's why we filed anti-dumping edicts against them. We're enforcing the laws, because I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, if the rules are fair.

If you want to have jobs continue to grow, our society must do something about excessive regulation and all the lawsuits. You know, ask these employers, large and small, what it's like to live in a society where they're constantly afraid of being sued. We need legal reform in this country if we expect to keep jobs here in America.

And finally, in order to make sure we have jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign, make no mistake about it. I'm running against a fellow who's promised over 2.2 trillion new dollars of Federal spending so far, and that's a lot even for a guy from Massachusetts.

So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" That's a legitimate question, isn't it? "All these promises, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's simple, just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough by raising the top two brackets and

paying for all the new spending he's promised. So there's a tax gap, which means somebody has got to fill the tax gap. That's you. Secondly, they say "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, to kind of move out of the way and let the tax bill go elsewhere. That's you. We're not going to let him tax you in 2005, because we're going to win the election in November.

Listen, let me talk to some of our citizens here to help make my points. Kathy Helm is with us today. I'm proud that Kathy is here. She's right there. Those are your little squirts? [*Laughter*] The guy has got him a good-looking car. What are their names?

Kathy Helm. Steven, Thomas, and Lauren.

The President. Yes. And how old?

Mrs. Helm. Four weeks, five, and two-and-a-half.

The President. Great. She's a—and what do you—you got your hands full.

Mrs. Helm. Yes, I do.

The President. You are a stay-at-home mom, you told me.

Mrs. Helm. Yes, I am.

The President. That's a lot of work. What's your husband do?

Mrs. Helm. I'm sorry?

The President. Your husband?

Mrs. Helm. Tom.

The President. Yes, he works——

Mrs. Helm. He works at Southern New Hampshire University. He's the A/V manager there.

The President. Great. One of the things we did when we provided tax relief was to help families. Tax relief helped with the economic recovery. If people have got more money in their pocket, they're going to demand an additional good or a service, and when they demand that good or additional service, somebody has got to provide it. That's how the marketplace works as well. And when somebody provides it, somebody is going to work.

And so the Helms family received—how much did you get in tax relief in '03—2,200 it says here—1,700, yes.

Mrs. Helm. Yes.

The President. I'll answer it for you. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Helm. Thanks. Thank you.

The President. I know there's a lot of cameras over there—[*laughter*]—1,700, is that right?

Mrs. Helm. Yes.

The President. Yes. That doesn't sound like a lot if you're in DC, I guess, when you're dealing with a lot of zeros; 1,700, I presume, means a lot to you.

Mrs. Helm. Yes, it does.

The President. Yes. So what did you do with the money?

Mrs. Helm. Well, we bought a dining room table, one thing.

The President. Yes, that's good.

Mrs. Helm. Just nice for our new house.

The President. Somebody had to make it.

Mrs. Helm. That's right.

The President. Help raise your kids.

Mrs. Helm. That's right.

The President. See, we raised the child credit to $1,000 a child. She's got three children. That helps. She said she's married; we reduced the marriage penalty. The Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage. We created a 10-percent bracket to help families like the Helm family. In 2004, you're estimated to save 2,200.

Mrs. Helm. That's great.

The President. Is that right?

Mrs. Helm. Yes.

The President. Okay.

Mrs. Helm. That's what I hear. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's what I hear too. [*Laughter*]

So here's the point. I've asked Kathy to come for this reason. A lot of these tax relief—a lot of this tax relief is going to expire. By the way, this is tax relief my

opponent voted against. He voted against raising the child credit.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against lowering the marriage penalty. He voted against creating the 10-percent bracket. That's his history. He voted against it for a reason. See, he'd rather have the Federal Government spending the $1,700, as opposed to Kathy and her husband, Tom. That shows the philosophical difference we have in this campaign. I believe Government ought to set its priorities, fund its priorities, and trust people like Kathy to spend their money.

And if Congress allows this tax relief to expire, her taxes go up by a thousand dollars. That makes no sense for a family. That doesn't make any sense at all. Tell your friends and neighbors when they're headed to the polls, there's just a philosophical difference about who best can spend that $1,700. We believe the Helm family can spend it better than people in Washington, DC, can spend it.

Jim Bell is with us today. Appreciate you coming.

Jim Bell. Pleasure to be here, Mr. President.

The President. He said he's been training for this moment most of his life.

Mr. Bell. How am I doing so far?

The President. About as good as a Harvard man can be expected to. [*Laughter*] That's a cheap shot. [*Laughter*] Just kidding.

Mr. Bell. Okay.

The President. Listen, Jim is the president and CEO of——

Mr. Bell. EPE Corporation in Manchester, New Hampshire.

The President. Right. And what do you all do?

Mr. Bell. We are an automated factory that produces sophisticated electronics for about 20 customers in New England.

The President. Fantastic. A couple of points. Do you realize that most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level? Most people don't know that. About 90 percent of the small businesses in America are Subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships, which means they pay individual income taxes. You are a——

Mr. Bell. We are a Sub S corporation.

The President. Right. And so the first point I want to make is he's—you're a job creator, right? How many jobs have you created?

Mr. Bell. This year, 17.

The President. Yes, 17. That's good, 17 jobs. Do you also realize 70 percent of all new jobs are created by small businesses, guys like Jim Bell. They're dreaming. They're expanding. They're taking advantage of the environment, and they're creating jobs—17 jobs. And yet, my opponent says he's going to raise the top tax brackets. Guess who "the rich" is in this case? This corporation, who is creating new jobs in New Hampshire. It makes no sense to tax Subchapter S corporations just as the economy is beginning to expand. Why would you want to tax a job creator? You know why? Because there's a fundamental difference. He wants the Government to be able to decide things for people. We want to free up people like Jim Bell to invest and expand to create more jobs.

One of the—so when you reduce all taxes, which we did, we helped Jim's corporation. But as well we put some incentives in the Tax Code to encourage people to invest. And did you take advantage of that?

Mr. Bell. Well, your tax incentives were terrific for us this year. We've invested $100,000 in new equipment and capability.

The President. That's good.

Mr. Bell. And with that incentive, we had tax relief of about $34,000.

The President. See, the Tax Code sent a signal to Jim: Invest. Now, what did you buy? Invest means buy. What did you buy?

Mr. Bell. Well, we're in the automated factory business. In this particular case, we invested in automatic optical inspection

equipment, which is very sophisticated technological equipment.

The President. Right. And that's—two points on that. One is, somebody had to make the equipment. So the Tax Code—the tax plan—this economic growth plan we put out said to Jim, this is—it's to your advantage to buy equipment for your company, and he did. And somebody had to make this sophisticated machine. And when somebody makes the machine, it means there's another worker who's likely to keep a job, maybe more than one worker. So his decision ripples throughout the economy. So the tax relief plan encourages new job creation, is what I'm telling you. But as well it makes his workers more productive. In other words, he is now more likely to be able to compete, I guess.

Mr. Bell. You bet, sir.

The President. Otherwise, you wouldn't have bought the machine.

Mr. Bell. As a matter of fact, the machine was made in the State of California, so we're trying to pump that up a little bit too.

The President. That's good, yes. But your workers——

Mr. Bell. The workers are far more productive, are more competitive.

[*At this point, Mr. Bell made further remarks.*]

The President. That's great. Because you're a good business guy.

Mr. Bell. I'm working at it.

The President. See, here's one of the challenges we face. You know, people talk about outsourcing. Of course, we want jobs here. The best way to keep jobs here is to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business. To make sure we don't raise his taxes, to make sure we do something about the lawsuits that plague him, to make sure health care is reasonable in cost, to make sure he can stay in business—that's the best way to keep jobs here in America.

Let me talk about one other thing—two other things. One, I talk about a changing world. He's talking about his workers becoming more productive. It means the same worker can do more. Now, if that's the case, one of the challenges we have, in order to make sure people can find work, is that you've got to keep growing this economy. As the worker becomes more productive, there is a need to make sure you've got progrowth policies in place. And that's what a productive workforce does. But if you're a productive worker, you're going to make more money.

Mr. Bell. Absolutely.

The President. And that's what happens. So when you hear about productivity increases, it means he can compete. But it also means his workers are going to make more money, which is what we want. By the way, after-tax incomes in this country have risen since 2000. That means people have got more money in their pocket. That's what this administration is for. We want people walking around with a little extra money.

One final point. This is a family business.

Mr. Bell. Yes, sir.

The President. Yes. We've got a Tax Code that does not allow Jim and his wife to pass the business on to whom he wants. That's called the death tax. The death tax taxes assets twice. We need to get rid of that death tax forever, to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit is strong.

Thanks, Jim. Good job.

Mr. Bell. Thank you very much, sir.

The President. Excellent. Just kidding on the Harvard thing. [*Laughter*]

Jen Brier is with us. Jen, what were you doing—you were working as a—something. What were you doing before you went back to school?

Jen Brier. Before I went back to school, I was working at a mail-order catalog company, opening mail.

The President. Good. Then what happened?

Ms. Brier. I went to school, and now I'm a registered nurse.

The President. Right. So a job was available, but it required a new skill. It's kind of hard to go from catalog-mail opener to nurse, I presume.

Ms. Brier. Yes, it is.

The President. So where did you go?

Ms. Brier. I went to the New Hampshire Community Technical College in Nashua.

The President. Right. Remember when I told you that worker training programs need to change? One reason they need to change—and to make sure they're relevant—is because the job base is changing. In changing times, new jobs are created with new opportunities and new careers available. But there's a skills gap in our country. If we want jobs to stay here in America, we've got to make sure that people like Jen can go back to school. That's why I'm a big believer in the Pell grants. That's why we've got a focused effort on expanding our community college system here. Community colleges are able to design a curriculum to fit the needs of the local communities.

I know the Governor is a big believer in the community college system, and you found that, right? Did you know the job existed as a nurse before you went to school, or did you find out after you went to school?

Ms. Brier. That there was jobs in nursing?

The President. Yes.

Ms. Brier. Before I went.

The President. So somebody said, "All you've got to do is go back to school, and there's a job available for you"?

Ms. Brier. Well, I mean, you would look in the paper, and nurses were in demand.

The President. Good. They still are, right?

Ms. Brier. Absolutely.

The President. Yes, see, I want people listening out there to understand that if you're stuck in a job that you're dissatisfied with, there is money available to help you go back to school. How many people in your class to become a registered nurse? A lot?

Ms. Brier. Mine was a small class of, like, 12.

The President. Yes, so you didn't get lost, in other words. It must be kind of hard for some to go back to school—not for you, some.

Ms. Brier. Well, some people. I have a—we have a lot of older students that were graduating in our class. One of them was 52, who's now a nurse.

Audience member. That's not old. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, it's not old. Yes, now you're talking. But think about that. Seriously. Our society must provide opportunity for 52-year-old people who want to become a more productive worker. Education means that you become more productive and you make more money.

Ms. Brier. I do. My salary doubled.

The President. Yes, she goes back to community college, and her salary doubles. A changing workplace means that we have got to be smart about how we provide help for people to go back to community colleges. And we do it. We do it in the form of Pell grants. We've expanded Pell grants by a million students since I've been the President, and we do it in the form of loans. You're a loan person?

Ms. Brier. I did. All my school loans are from Federal loans.

The President. Yes, and it helps, by the way, that she saved $1,100 on income taxes as a result of the tax relief we passed. People say—now, you're going to get your master's degree?

Ms. Brier. I'm sorry?

The President. Somebody said—does it say here you're going to get your master's degree? Thinking about it?

Ms. Brier. I'm at the University of New Hampshire right now to get my bachelor's, and then I'll probably stay there to get my master's.

The President. This is fantastic. Learning is a lifetime experience, and Government ought to help people like Jen. Thanks for coming, Jen. I'm proud you're here. A more productive person makes more money.

Now, we've got Ken Holmes with us. He also is a job creator. And we're going to talk to him about health care. Let me say a couple of things about health care very quickly.

There is a philosophical debate—or philosophical difference, philosophical divide in this campaign. If you listen very carefully to what my opponent is saying, he's saying he's going to increase the role of Government in health care decisions. And I think it's a mistake. I really do. I think that leads to rationing. It means people get to decide for you what—that which you ought to be deciding for yourself.

We've got a different plan. First of all, it says we're going to take care of those who can't help themselves. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. That's a place for the indigent and poor to receive preventative care and primary care so they're not receiving it in emergency rooms and hospitals.

I believe we ought to make sure SCHIP, which is the low-income children's health care program, is accessed by everybody who is deserving of that program. We want to help these kids with good health care. I believe that we ought to continue the reforms of Medicare. I went up to DC to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. We had a problem with Medicare. The system was not modernized. It would pay for $100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That made no sense for our seniors. It made no sense for the taxpayers. We have modernized Medicare by giving seniors more choices, prescription drug cards, preventative care for the first time, and in 2006, prescription drugs.

If you're worried about health care costs in this country—and we should be—and if you're worried about availability for health care—and we should be—we need to do something about these junk lawsuits that are running docs out of business and running the cost of your medicine up. This is an issue in this campaign. It's an issue. A lot of ob-gyns are being run out of business. I've talked to many moms who had to drive miles to find an ob-gyn because their local ob-gyn simply couldn't stay in business.

I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice: I'm for medical liability reform—now.

And finally, we're going to help small businesses. Kenny Holmes is with us. Do you realize that 50 percent of the working uninsured work for small businesses? It says to me, if that's the case, we ought to help small businesses be able to afford insurance.

What do you do?

Kenny Holmes. I'm owner and general manager of North Branch Construction, a general contracting and construction management firm in the State of New Hampshire.

The President. Good. Building things. That's good.

Mr. Holmes. Yes, lots of things.

The President. That's even better. And health care is an issue with your company?

Mr. Holmes. It certainly is. We're an active member of ABC, Associated Builders and Contractors, our national association that has been pushing—I should say supporting your effort for association health plans for the last couple of years now.

The President. Now, here's what they are—that's the problem in Washington; we talk in words that people don't understand

what they mean. Association health plans mean the small businesses can pool risk, can join together across jurisdictional boundaries, across State lines, so that there's a larger pool of people to insure. The more people you insure, the more risk you spread, the cheaper the policies, the less expensive your policies are. That's what we're talking about.

So in other words, he ought to be able to combine with somebody from—a company from Texas or a company from California in the same industry, and they can write insurance with large pools, see? Association health plans means small businesses will eventually be able to get their insurance at the same discount that big businesses can get their insurance. And that makes sense. If 50 percent of the working uninsured work for small businesses, why not allow small businesses to bind together, to purchase insurance in pools? I'll tell you why: Because people in Washington, DC, won't let it happen, is why it's not happening.

He's a big believer in association health plans, and so am I, because I want people to have insurance. I want small businesses to be able to stay in business.

Your premiums are going up?

Mr. Holmes. They have been for several years.

The President. Yes. Lawsuits driving them up, the fact that you can't bind together is drawing them up too—driving them up.

Mr. Holmes. No question. We spend $240,000 a year now for our 55 employees to have insurance, and their families.

The President. See, what we want is commonsense, practical plans to address the needs of people, rather than plans that empower the Federal Government to make your health care decisions. In all we're doing in this health care reform debate, we're saying the decisions ought to be made between doctors and patients, not between—by bureaucrats in Washington, DC. And it's a fundamental difference in this campaign, and it's an important philosophical difference in this campaign.

Thanks for coming, buddy.

I want to talk about how to make America and the world a safer place. Then I'll answer some questions. Let me tell you some of the lessons that I have learned and the country must learn about the world we live in today. Our world changed, obviously, on September the 11th, 2001. We were confronted with an enemy that has no conscience, period. They will behead people in order to shake our will. They will try to sow chaos and disorder and try to affect our confidence. These people are ideologues of hatred. They stand for exactly the opposite we stand for. We stand for freedom of religion. They stand for a narrow view of religion. And if people don't toe the line, they will whip them in public squares. We believe in freedom of speech. They say, "If you speak wrong, you're in trouble." They're the opposite of what we believe in, and they use terror as a tool to shake our will.

You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot hope for the best. Our strategy is clear: We will stay on the offensive against them; we will bring them to justice so we do not have to face them here at home.

The second lesson is that this is a different kind of war, and these people will try to hide in countries. They're like parasites. Their desire is to take over the host. And so I issued a statement, a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." Now, when the President says something, he better mean what he says. In order to keep this world safe and secure, you better mean what you say when you speak. And you better say it so everybody can understand it. So I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist." I was speaking to the Taliban at this point in time, and they ignored what we said. And thanks to a great military, the Taliban are no longer in power. [*Applause*]

Okay, a couple of other points—we've got too much work to do here. [*Applause*] Thank you all—too much work here. And so we went in and removed the Taliban from power. Now, remember, Al Qaida was training there. They trained thousands of killers. And Al Qaida no longer has a safe haven. They're on the run in that part of the world, and we're safer for it. We're safer for it. We're safer because people now are free in Afghanistan as well.

Think about a society just 3 years ago in which these barbarians were—they weren't allowing young girls to go to school. An amazing society, isn't it? Can you imagine growing up in a world—you can't—we can't possibly think that way in America. I told you, these people are just the opposite of us. We believe every human being matters, that every soul counts. And yet, young girls were not allowed to go to school. Their mothers were executed in sports stadiums if they stepped out of line.

Today, in Afghanistan, 10 million citizens, over 40 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. What a fantastic—and the world is better off for it. Nobody would have predicted that 3 years ago. Nobody could have envisioned after we went in that democracy would be on the march. Freedom is powerful. I don't care what your religion is. I don't care where you live. Freedom is a powerful concept. People long to be free in this world.

Another lesson of September the 11th, another lesson is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. Prior to September the 11th, if we saw a threat, we could deal with it if we felt like it or not, because we never dreamt it would come home to hurt us. So if we saw a gathering threat overseas, maybe it's something to pay attention to; maybe it wasn't. Today, that world changed. Today, we've got to take every threat seriously because we saw the consequences of what can happen. We're still vulnerable.

So I looked at the world and saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat. He was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He had ties to terrorist networks. Do you remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. Leon Klinghoffer was murdered because of his religion. Abu Nidal was in Baghdad, as was his organization. Zarqawi—still in Baghdad, creating havoc in Baghdad, trying to stop the march to democracy is what he's trying to do right now, but he was there. Saddam Hussein was paying the families of suicide bombers. That's support for terror. He was dangerous. He also used weapons of mass destruction against his own people and against a country in his neighborhood. Saddam Hussein was a threat.

We had been to war with him once. Many politicians prior to my arrival in Washington had said we better—it would be naive to the point of grave danger not to confront Saddam Hussein—that would be Senator John Kerry—"naive to the point of grave danger." I went to the Congress and said, "I see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, the very same intelligence, and they came to the same conclusion as I came to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat, and they authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at that intelligence, as he had for many years, since he had been in Washington for a long period of time, and voted yes when it came to the authorization of the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief ever commits a troop into harm's way, we must try all options. The decision to go to war is the toughest, by far the toughest decision I'll ever have to make. And I knew that. And that's why I went to the United Nations, because I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I knew we had to deal with a threat, but my hope was—is that, finally, Saddam Hussein would listen to the free world. And I stood up there, and I laid

out the case, and they looked at the intelligence, and they voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when international bodies say something, for the sake of peace, they must mean what they say.

Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. This wasn't the first resolution he ignored. I think it was 17 resolutions—17 times the free world spoke. He wasn't paying attention, because he was hoping we would look the other direction, because he was hoping we would forget. As a matter of fact, it is documented that he systematically deceived the inspectors the United Nations sent in. Diplomacy wasn't working. The world had given Saddam Hussein a chance, a last chance to listen to the demands of the free world. And he made the decision, and so did I. I had to either trust a madman, or forget the lessons of September 11th, or take the tough decision to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

Today my opponent continued his pattern of twisting in the wind, with new contradictions of his old positions on Iraq. He apparently woke up this morning and has now decided, no, we should not have invaded Iraq, after just last month saying he still would have voted for force, even knowing everything we know today. Incredibly, he now believes our national security would be stronger with Saddam Hussein in power, not in prison.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Today he said, and I quote, "We have traded a dictator for a chaos that has left America less secure." He's saying he prefers the stability of a dictatorship to the hope and security of democracy. I couldn't disagree more. And not so long ago, so did my opponent. [*Laughter*] Last December, he said this: "Those who doubted whether Iraq or the world would be better off without Saddam Hussein and those who believe we are not safer with his capture don't have the judgment to be President or the credibility to be elected President." End quote. I could not have said it better.

He also changed his mind and decided that our efforts in Iraq are now a distraction from the war on terror, when he earlier acknowledged that confronting Saddam Hussein was critical to the war on terror. And he's criticizing our reconstruction efforts, when he voted against the money to pay for the reconstruction.

Forty-three days before the election, my opponent has now suddenly settled on a proposal for what to do next, and it's exactly what we're currently doing. We're working with the international partners; we're training Iraqi troops; we're reconstructing the country,* we're preparing for elections. They're going to have elections in January.

Our work in Iraq is hard work. There are people there who want to stop the march to democracy. That's what they're trying to do. They want us to leave. They want us to quit. Our work in Iraq is absolutely essential—Iraq—essential for our country's security. For our children and grandchildren to grow up in a safer world, we must defeat the terrorists and the insurgents and complete our mission in rebuilding Iraq as a stable democracy.

I'm going to New York after this, and in the next couple of days, I'll be meeting with Prime Minister Allawi, the Prime Minister of Iraq. He is a strong and determined leader. He understands the stakes in this battle. I hope the American people will listen carefully to his assessment of the situation in his country. We must show resolve and determination. Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to the enemy. Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to the people in Iraq. Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our allies. And mixed signals are the wrong signals to send to our troops in combat.

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* White House correction.

A couple of other points I want to make. Any time we put our troops into harm's way, they need to have the full support of the United States Government—the full support. And that's why I went—and went to the Congress and said, "We need $87 billion of money to support our troops in harm's way." These were for troops in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And I was pleased to get strong support. Bass and Bradley, they were strong in their support. Sununu and Gregg were strong on that support.

The support was so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against it, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate. When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out there gathering the vote, remind people of this fact: Four people in the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and did not vote to fund our troops, two of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked my opponent, "Why? Why did you make that vote?" He said, "I voted for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." That's not the way people talk here in New Hampshire. He went on and said, well, he said he's proud of the vote, and finally he said, "It's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Let me tell you what else I believe. I'm kind of winding down here, getting ready for questions. Let me tell you what else I believe. I believe that liberty can transform nations from places of hopelessness to hope, from places of darkness to light. We're seeing that in Afghanistan today. Ten million people registering to vote is a phenomenal statistic. It is such a hopeful number, isn't it, in spite of the fact that the Taliban were pulling women off buses and killing them because they were trying to register to vote. People want to be free.

I believe liberty can transform enemies into friends, because I've seen it firsthand when I've talked with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I want you to think about this now, as you're contemplating the historic opportunity we have in the world today. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that we were fighting the Japanese as the sworn enemy—sworn enemy. My dad, your dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese. Yet after World War II, Harry Truman, Harry S. Truman believed that we should work to help Japan become a democracy. He believed that liberty could transform societies.

There was a lot of skeptics then, a lot of people who doubted whether or not the hard work that went into that—to changing Japan was worth it. You can understand that. First of all, there are skeptics in every society. And secondly, a lot of people in this country's lives had been turned upside down as a result of the war we had just fought, and they had trouble realizing that an enemy could become a friend.

But there were some people in this country who just refused to yield to the value that we know, that liberty is a powerful, powerful part of everybody's soul. And today, I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi—I'm going to be doing so here in the next couple of days in New York too—as a personal friend, but we're talking about keeping the peace. We're talking about how to make this world a more peaceful place. We're talking about the peace that we all long for. Think about that. Here I am talking to the head of a former enemy, working together to make the world a better place.

And that not only means helping Iraq get up on its feet; that means feeding the hungry. Do you realize, our country feeds more empty stomachs than any country in the world by far? That means helping those poor souls on the continent of Africa deal with HIV/AIDS. We're by far the most generous nation when it comes to helping people ravished by the pandemic of AIDS. We're working with people together to make this world a better place.

Someday—we will succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan by being firm in our beliefs, unyielding to the demands of those who

want us to quit, those terrorists who are trying to kill people to get us to leave. That's what they're trying to do. We'll be successful. Everybody longs to be free. And when we are, we'll be able to look back and say, "The world is better off." Someday, an American President and an Iraqi leader are going to sit down, talking about keeping the peace, talking about how to make a part of the world that is so desperate for freedom become a more peaceful place. And our grandchildren and our grandchildren's children will be better off for it. [*Applause*]

Okay, what—not yet, not yet. The stakes are high. These are historic times. I clearly see where I want to lead this country. I know what we've got to do the next 4 years to make this country a safer place and the world a more hopeful place. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and explain why I'm running again.

Now, let me answer some of your questions, and then—yes, sir?

A Soldier's Letter

Q. I work at a local school, and two of the ladies' sons were deployed with the Marine Corps to Iraq. And they asked us to do something. So—I'm nonmilitary, myself, but grew up in a military family. My father served '41 to '68 in the National Guard too. I had local veterans—I sent out for shirts from the Marine Corps down in DC, and I had local veterans sign them, from World War II to Desert Storm, some of the names, Jim Panis—[*inaudible*]—U.S. Navy; Lieutenant Harold Heck, Mobile Riverene Force, Vietnam, Silver Star winner; a three-star general.

Anyway, Mr. President, I got this letter from one of our local boys. He'll be home October 2d. I'd like to read it to you.

The President. Okay. Thank you.

Q. You people think the last generation was the greatest. Wait until you hear this one. "Dear Mr. Hussey, Sr."—I'm a senior too, like your father. "The gift you sent me"—this is a 19-year-old kid, just out of Londonderry High—"Dear Mr. Hussey, the gift you sent me almost brought tears to my eyes. I want you to thank the men who signed it, who came before me, so I might have the opportunity to enjoy the freedoms of America. Now is my time to return the favor. I gladly serve, and I am honored to have a unique connection with the generation before me. War is something that no one can really understand unless they've served in the military and been in combat. Unfortunately, I have lost friends here, but I will never forget them and those who paid the price before them.

"The t-shirt you sent me is hanging right above my rack, and every day or night when I get back from patrolling or setting up an ambush site, if I feel tired, worn, hungry, I look at the names of those who took their time and, for some, their lives for this country of ours, and I feel renewed strength for the coming battles. Before I joined the Corps, people would ask me why I wanted to join, especially during a time of war. I replied, 'Men have died for this freedom that they believed in, and if we forget this privilege, they will have died in vain, and it would have been for nothing.' Especially now, with the loss of my buddies, I understand what they felt and what drives me as a Marine.

"Thank you again, Lance Corporal Jesse Braggin," who will be home October 2d.

The President. There you go. Thank you, sir. Thank you. I appreciate you reading that. Let me——

Audience member. We love you, President Bush!

The President. Thank you. I met with many families who have lost a loved one in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it's—you know, it's a hard part of the job, and it's a necessary part of the job. And I assure them that their loved one will not die in vain because we will complete the mission. And the mission will make the world a better place. And that's what you've got to tell this guy when he gets home, that his service and the service of those buddies

of his who lost their life were part of securing America.

Because, one, Prime Minister Allawi says we've got to defeat them in Iraq, otherwise we'll face them here. It's essential that people understand the world has changed. It's a different world we live in.

Secondly, that by helping Iraq become a secure nation, and by training Iraqis so they can do the hard work of defending their freedom against the few who want to stop the march to liberty, we're making ourself more secure. A free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will make the world a more peaceful place. A free Iraq will set such a vivid example for women in the Middle East, who long for a chance for success. It will provide a vivid example for the reformers in the Middle East. It will say that here is the future for you. Free societies do not export terror. Free societies are allies in the war against these killers.

And you tell that guy, thank you for your service, and God bless him.

Men of Truck Number 2/Iraq

Q. Mr. President, my brother is in NYPD, emergency service unit, Truck Number 2. I just wanted to say—you mentioned the—his partner in the State of the Union Address. You mentioned his father, John Vigiano, and the two boys.

The President. Yes, I know them well.

Q. I just want to say, thank you, as being a beacon of strength at a time of need for our country.

The President. Thank you, sir. Your brother was their partner?

Q. My brother-in-law is Rob Beeger, Truck Number 2.

The President. Yes, yes.

Q. I've got a picture of them with you.

The President. What a great family. You're not going to believe this family. Two sons go in the rubble and don't come out. It's really important we never forget that day. It's just important. It's a part of our history.

You know, I—you've got a question, or do you want to keep going?

Q. I actually have a question for you as well.

The President. Okay, good. [*Laughter*] I was about to wax eloquently—[*laughter*]—or at least wax. [*Laughter*]

Q. Is that from the top of my head? [*Laughter*]

The President. See, you probably appreciate my comments about Vice President Cheney. [*Laughter*]

Q. I just don't have the curls, either.

The President. That's right. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Q. I hear a lot of things in the press in regards to what's happening in Iraq. I don't appreciate the fact that the press only presents a certain point of view. I hear different things, and one thing I've learned—I did a little bit of studying—I was wondering if you can tell me a little bit about Salman Pak. And we know about Zarqawi and how he's causing all sorts of problems in Fallujah.

And the other question I have real quick is, is that I watched a special on FOX News last night on the U.N., the oil for food scandal. And the thing is, is that when it comes down to the oil for food scandal, we have a lot of countries that opposed us at the very beginning of the war that have a lot of money staked in with Saddam. And I was just wondering if, when you address the U.N., do you plan on bringing it up to these countries?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] There is an investigation going on. Paul Volcker is leading the investigation, and it's best that the investigation run its course.

Zarqawi—look, here's the situation. It's tough as heck in Iraq right now because people are trying to stop democracy. That's what you're seeing. And Iraqis are losing lives, and so are some of our soldiers. And it breaks my heart to see the loss of innocent life and to see brave troops in combat lose their life. It just breaks my heart. But I understand what's going on. These people

are trying to shake the will of the Iraqi citizens, and they want us to leave. That's what they want us to do.

And I think the world would be better off if we did leave—if we didn't—if we left, the world would be worse. The world is better off with us not leaving. It's a mistake to pull out. Can you imagine what Iraq would be like today if Saddam Hussein were in power? It would be terrible for them, and we'd be dealing with a guy who had just totally ignored the demands of the free world. The sanctions weren't working. We know he had the capability of making weapons, and it was just a matter of time.

No, we didn't find the stockpiles we thought would be there. But his desire to make weapons and the ability to make them and the ability to work with these terrorist organizations was a threat we could not afford to take.

Secondly, if we put an artificial timetable out there on withdrawal, all the enemies says is, "We'll wait them out." Our mission has got to be to help to train the Iraqis, get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as we can, and then our troops come home, but to complete the mission. It makes no sense to pull out of there early. If we pull out of there early, Iraq will come even more dangerous. See, we've got to get it right in Afghanistan and Iraq, and we will. And now, it's a matter of will.

You asked me what's it's like there. It's tough. But Prime Minister Allawi is the best way to—the best person to talk to there. He said this is desperation by these people. They're watching TV screens too. They're watching the reactions of people around the world. They see countries pull out of Iraq. They saw what happened when one country pulled out after a citizen was beheaded. They saw what happened after elections in Europe. They know that people are—can grow weary of this battle. We've got to be firm and strong. I believe we're right in what we're doing. And I believe democracy in Iraq is going to happen, and I believe the world will be better off for it.

Yes, sir.

Freedom for Iraq/Marshall Plan

Q. My grandfather came over as a—an immigrant. My father was a career Army officer. I was a career Army officer. My son is a lieutenant in Iraq, cavalry platoon leader, fighting the war on terrorism right now. My—we have—well, first, all three of us, our three generations, fully support your foreign policy and the third world war we must fight against the terrorists.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Beyond that, the questions are, why don't either the Defense Department or the State Department provide a weekly briefing on all the good things we're doing in Iraq? It's not just fighting over there.

The President. Right. Now, look, what's he's talking about is the number of children who've been immunized. It's—a phenomenal number of children have been immunized—or the new schools that have been built and opened or the fact that power now is up to prewar levels. I mean, there are positive developments going on in the world in Iraq, and they're headed to elections.

Look, Prime Minister Allawi has been—the sovereignty was transferred 3 months ago, and now they're going to have elections in January. Saddam Hussein wasn't about to have elections. And they're headed to elections. And again, I repeat, it's hard. It's hard because people—there are people who fear what freedom means. Remember, the ideology of these people is the opposite of what we stand for. They don't believe in elections. They don't believe in free thought. They don't believe in free religion. They don't believe in free press. And that's why they're stopping—that's why they're trying to stop the march of freedom.

And I appreciate that.

Q. The second thing is that I grew up in Europe when the Marshall plan was in effect. What I don't understand is why we

don't remind the American people of the Marshall Plan and the amount of time it took to rebuild Europe.

The President. Yes, I appreciate that.

Q. We can't leave Iraq on a timetable that Senator Kerry says. We have to stay there until the job is done.

The President. I agree.

Q. We have to——

The President. No, I appreciate that.

Q. We have to say that this is our generation's Marshall plan, that we need that done, and that, yes, we are—many of our troops are having to sacrifice, but if we don't do it, the world will be a lot worse off place.

The President. Yes, sir, I agree with that, Colonel. Thank you very much.

Yes, ma'am. Here's your chance.

Chechen Terrorist Attack in Beslan, Russia/ Domestic Security

Q. Hi. I was wondering, my friend and I go—we're seniors at Londonderry High School, and we are wondering what your plan is to protect our schools—like what happened in Russia—what your plan is for that.

The President. I appreciate that. Yes, what happened in Russia was so appalling, and it just crushed—it's such a crushing moment, when you think about it. It's really hard to envision people that way. But that's the nature of the folks we're dealing with. Obviously, look, every school has got to be on alert. Every school has got to be diligent. Every school has got to be ready to make a quick response to local police. Every school has got to be—just recognize the nature of the world we live in.

And what we're doing at the Federal level is we're trying to figure out who is coming in the country and why they're coming in the country, if they're leaving the country when they're supposed to be leaving the country. We're using the PATRIOT Act. Let me talk real quick about the PATRIOT Act. It's a tool that is now at the disposal of our law enforcement.

Do you realize, before the PATRIOT Act was passed that elements of the FBI couldn't talk to each other? The intelligence side and the operating side could not talk to each other about sharing intelligence. And I don't see how you can bust terrorist cells if you can't get your intelligence folks and your operators to be able to discuss things. We tore—the PATRIOT Act tore the wall down. Every action in the PATRIOT Act requires a court order, before the Government can move. In other words, your rights are protected.

The tools in the PATRIOT Act have been used against drug dealers for years. I believe we ought to extend the PATRIOT Act. I know—not believe it; I know we need to extend the PATRIOT Act, with the constitutional safeguards for our U.S. citizens. If it makes sense to use elements of the PATRIOT Act to chase down drug dealers, it certainly makes sense to use the PATRIOT Act to try to prevent the kind of horrible actions that took place on September the 11th and elsewhere around the world. And so we're doing everything we can to protect you. That's what we're doing. We're trying to find people before they get here.

The other thing we're doing is, the best way to protect the homeland is to stay on the offense, is to keep pressure on these people. We've brought 75 percent of Al Qaida to justice, and we're still working. Every day we're working to find people

Yes, ma'am. Go ahead. Please, do.

Judicial Nominations

Q. In Stratham, I spoke with you very briefly, personally, and I just want to share with these people. My son came back from the 101st. He was a year in Iraq. And I trusted his life under your leadership. As Commander in Chief, I thank you for that. He is now going to school. He's in college. He just started this year, and the Government is paying for it. And I thank you for that too.

And I do have a question. My question is, as we—you have great courage because you stand on some platforms that are quieter than the war on terrorism, and that takes great courage. One is your value for life and your value for the institution of marriage.

The President. Thank you.

Q. My question—my question is what's—what's frustrating is that there are judges that are taking the law into their own hands. And what do you do about that?

The President. Well, that's when you appoint people that will not write law from the bench but strictly interpret the Constitution. That's what I have done. I put good people up. And you know, a lot of our judges got through, particularly at the district level, but they've held up a lot of really good appellate judges—"they" being a handful of Members in the United States Senate. They're playing politics with American justice. And another reason to put me back in office is because I'm going to knock back—knock it back down. I'm going to keep naming the people that I've told the people I'd name if I got elected President of the United States, so that there is proper balance between the executive branch and the legislative branch and the judicial branch.

Yes, ma'am. You've got a question there? Yes, you.

Stem Cell Research

Q. I wanted to say, first of all, wonderful presentation.

The President. Thank you. [*Laughter*] I'm glad you came. [*Laughter*] And more importantly, I'm glad I called on you. [*Laughter*]

Q. Second of all, I wanted—I promised my parents that if I got the opportunity, to send their warm and gracious regards.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And my brother, who's a corporal in the United States National Guard, is proud to be serving the country, especially under your watch. He will be leaving for Iraq in early November for the better part of 2 years.

The President. Two years?

Q. Well, 18 months is his——

The President. That's his call-up, for 18 months?

Q. Yes. So very proud. My question, and I hope I'm not out of place asking this because it's not as prevalent an issue——

The President. Okay.

Q. Stem cell research?

The President. Yes, let me talk about it.

Q. Please. I have, like, a very personal concern about that. My two cousins, my aunt's two only children both have cystic fibrosis, neither of them expected to live beyond 25. One of them is 22, and the other one is 20.

The President. I'm sorry.

Q. And—it's just a concern.

The President. I appreciate it. It's a very legitimate question. I'm glad you asked it because I'm the only President so far in our history, the first President ever, to have allowed Federal dollars to be spent on research on stem cells—on stem cell lines.

Now, look, let me tell you about this issue. It's a very sensitive issue because in order to create a stem cell line you have to destroy life. In other words, there's a—you take an embryo, and you destroy the embryo, out of which comes a stem cell line. And before I made my decision, there was some 70 lines in existence. And I felt that those lines would be ample enough to be able to allow science to go forward to determine whether or not stem cell research would yield the results we all hope that it yields. And so I agreed to allow Federal funding to go forward on existing stem cell lines so that further life would not be destroyed.

Out of those 70 lines, some 22 are functional now. And out of that 22 lines, there's over 300 different projects that are going forward. In other words, there is an active effort to determine whether or not embryonic stem cells will yield the results we hope they yield.

I'm also a big believer in funding adult stem cell research, which does not require the destruction of life. My hope is your hope, that out of the research that exists, that we'll be able to find cures for the diseases. And one of the things that this country will be confronted with over the next decades, particularly as technology advances, is we'll be confronted with very profound ethical decisions that are going to be important decisions.

Cloning, for example, will be a decision that we have to make. I mean, does it make sense to destroy life to create life, is another decision. These are all very valid decisions. And that's what happens when you're the President. You've got to weigh all the evidence, and you think clearly about your philosophy as well as the facts, and decide. And I decided. And I think my decision was balanced and fair, and it balanced good science with good ethics. Thank you.

Last question, then I've got to go. Yes, sir.

2004 Election

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President, and welcome to Derry, New Hampshire.

The President. Thank you, sir. It's great to be back.

Q. I'm a retired chief petty officer in the United States Navy. And I can tell you from the observing of your unworthy opponent, I would not want to serve under him as Commander in Chief. I was directly involved in the Cuban missile crisis—I mean directly—serving aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier *Intrepid*, which is now the Naval Aviation Museum in New York. And I hope someday you'll visit. I'm a member of that organization. My heartfelt prayer to you, sir, is, stay the course and win the election in '04.

The President. Thank you, sir. I can't conclude on a better note. Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. at the SportsZone. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Craig Benson of New Hampshire; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Thomas D. Rath, national committeeman, New Hampshire Republican State Committee; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Paul A. Volcker, chair, Independent Inquiry into the United Nations Oil for Food Programme.

Statement on the Final Report of the United States Commission on Ocean Policy

September 20, 2004

I commend the members of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy for their hard work and welcome their Final Report.

Our oceans sustain an abundance of natural wonders, enable the transportation of vital goods, and provide food and recreation for millions of Americans. My administration is working with every level of government, the private sector, and other nongovernmental organizations to advance the next generation of ocean policy. In order to foster more effective management and conservation of our ocean and coastal resources, my administration has launched and supported numerous innovative science, management, and policy initiatives. We have created a new integrated ocean observing system with international partners, embarked on deep oceans research with a state-of-the-art research ship, and

advanced legislation to strengthen the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We are also building an improved, market-based system to help restore our fisheries and keep our commercial and recreational fishing industries strong. Working with Congress and State Governors, my administration looks forward to building on these initiatives assisted by the work of the Commission.

Message to the Congress on Termination of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya
September 20, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with subsection 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b)(IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that terminates the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12543 of January 7, 1986, and revokes that Executive Order, Executive Order 12544 of January 8, 1986, Executive Order 12801 of April 15, 1992, and Executive Order 12538 of November 15, 1985. I have determined that the situation that gave rise to this national emergency has been significantly altered by Libya's commitments and actions to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programs and its Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)-class missiles, and by other developments.

Executive Order 12543 of January 7, 1986, imposed sanctions on Libya in response to policies and actions of the Government of Libya that constituted an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Those sanctions were modified in Executive Order 12544 of January 8, 1986, Executive Order 12801 of April 15, 1992, and supplemented Executive Order 12538 of November 15, 1985.

Based on Libya's recent commitments and actions to implement its December 19, 2003, commitment to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programs and its MTCR-class missiles, and other developments, I have determined that the situation that gave rise to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12543 has been significantly altered. My order, therefore, terminates that national emergency with respect to Libya and revokes Executive Orders 12543, 12544, and 12801, and lifts the trade, commercial, and travel sanctions imposed against Libya based on that national emergency. The order also revokes Executive Order 12538, which blocked the import of petroleum products refined in Libya into the United States.

While the order formally lifts sanctions under the national emergency with respect to Libya, it will not lift a wide variety of other sanctions imposed on Libya due to its designation as a state sponsor of terrorism under section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act (restriction on foreign assistance), section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act (restriction on arms exports), and section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (restriction on exports of certain items on the Commodity Control List), as well as other statutory restrictions applicable to Libya.

I have enclosed a copy of the order, which is effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on September 21, 2004.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 20, 2004.

NOTE: The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Rally in New York City
September 20, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming.

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. So I said to Pataki, try introducing me at the convention. If it works out well, you can introduce me here tonight. [*Laughter*] He gave a great introduction at the convention, for which I am grateful. And I appreciate his leadership, and I appreciate his friendship.

I also appreciate the friendship of Rudy. I had the privilege of traveling with Rudy in New Mexico. They've even heard of him there. [*Laughter*] And he did a great job. It was a lot of fun. Thanks for coming.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Well, okay, you'll never have to give a speech." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people got to see a compassionate, strong, kind person.

I want to thank—I also want to thank Libby and Emily Pataki for joining us, and Judith Giuliani for joining us as well. I wish Howard Mills all the best in his race for the United States Senate. I want to thank Lew Eisenberg for his hard work to make this event successful. I want to thank Al Hoffman for his hard work. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, Sandy Treadwell, Mike Long. Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. Vito Fossella is here. Where is old Vito? Somewhere around here. He's a Congressman. He's a great guy.

Thanks for coming. My spirits are high. I'm honored you're here. I appreciate the support we receive here in the great State of New York. And a couple of folks slid across the border from New Jersey and Connecticut as well. [*Laughter*] I'm proud you're here. I'm not much of a prognosticator, but things seem to be going awfully well in the three States I just mentioned. I'm enjoying myself on the campaign trail.

We've got a great country, and I love to get out amongst the people. Laura and I are traveling a lot. The crowds are huge. Enthusiasm is high. We're going to win in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. I'm ready for the stretch run. I know where I want to lead the country. I look forward to telling the people what I believe. I believe that schools can do a better job of teaching our children. Listen, I went to Washington to challenge this practice of just shuffling kids through schools year after year, grade after grade. It's what I call challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations.

We've raised the bar. We've increased funding. But in return, we're now saying, "Why don't you measure early so we can correct problems early, before they're too late." And the achievement gap in America is closing, and we're not going to turn around. We're not going to go backwards. We're going to stay on this path to excellence for every child, *por cada nino, por cada nino.*

I went to Washington to fix problems. I believed that we needed to fix Medicare. You know, medicine has changed; Medicare hadn't. We would pay $100,000 for heart surgery but not a dime for prescription

drugs that might prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. We used to call it "Medi-scare" because politicians were afraid to talk about it. I'm not afraid to take on the tough issue. We've modernized Medicare. Our seniors are going to get prescription drug coverage in 2006, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurs can flourish. I believe that good Government policy unleashes the innovation and energy of our farmers, ranchers, small-business owners, dreamers, doers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

Listen, we've been through a lot when it comes to this economy. I don't need to tell people in New York what it's been like. We had a recession. We had some corporate citizens forget what it means to be responsible citizens, and they didn't tell the truth. That affected our economy, by the way. We passed laws that now say, "We're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America, pure and simple." The attacks on this city hurt us. They say we lost about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th, but we've overcome these obstacles. This economy of ours is growing at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Over the past year, 47 of the 50 States have added jobs, including the great State of New York. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

A President's most solemn duty is to protect the American people. And here's what I believe: I believe if we show any uncertainty or weakness in this decade, this world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I've got a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and more hopeful America. I'm running with what I call a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives.

I also understand the world in which we live is changing. Listen, the workforce has changed. Years ago, a man would be the worker, and he would have one job, one career, and receive one pension plan, one health care plan, and that was it. This world we live in is really different. People change careers and jobs. Women are working both inside and outside the house.

And yet the fundamental institutions of our Government have not changed with the times. Think about it: The retirement systems haven't changed; the health care systems haven't changed; the Tax Code hasn't changed; worker training hasn't changed. I'm running for 4 years to change the basic systems of Government to reflect the world we live in, so people will have a better chance of realizing the great dreams of this country.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Vamos a ganar. Mis amigos Latinos estan aqui.

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

The President. I've got some more I've got to say. [*Laughter*] I'm talking about a hopeful world, and you can't be hopeful unless the economy grows.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Si. [*Laughter*] America has got to be the best place in the world to do business. If we want jobs to be created here, this has got to be the best place in the world.

So people say, "What do you mean?" I'll tell you what I mean: Less regulations, legal reform, an energy policy that encourages conservation and renewables and uses our technology to change how we consume and use energy. But in order to keep jobs here, we have got to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Trade policy has got to be wise. I tell the people, we've opened up our markets for foreign goods, and that's good for consumers. If you've got more to choose from,

you're going to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. So what we're saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you." The best trade policy is to level the playing field, because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere in this world.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Okay. *Un momento.* [*Laughter*] Whoo! Only in New York. [*Laughter*] I love this city. What a great place—tremendous diversity. *Un momento.* [*Laughter*]

I've got to talk about taxes. [*Laughter*] Let me tell you something, if we want the economy to grow, we've got to keep the taxes low. This is an issue in this campaign. The guy I'm running against says, "Well, I've got $2.2 trillion of new spending, and I'm going to pay for it by taxing the rich." First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich. Secondly, by running up the top two brackets, you're hurting every S-corp and every limited partnership in America that's creating most of the new jobs in this country. Thirdly, the American people don't buy that, because they understand people hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—[*laughter*]—to stick them with the tab. [*Laughter*] He's not going to tax the American people, because we're going to win in November.

A couple of other things about a changing world. Listen, there's a skills gap in America. We've got communities where jobs have left, and there are new jobs being created. And so what we've got to do is fill that skills gap through good policy, Pell grants for community colleges. We've got great ideas to make sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Two out of—one out of every—two out of every four jobs are created—require a college degree. And yet, one in four of the students gets there. It's a problem. That's why I'm for remedial education in high schools. I believe over time we've got to have rigorous exams before they graduate. I want to expand Pell grants so more people start their careers with a college diploma.

The health care system is an issue. We've got an issue in health care in this country. And there's a great philosophical divide. The guy I'm running against, Senator Kerry, wants to nationalize health care. He wants the bureaucrats to make the decisions for the doctors and patients.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Exactly what he's for. For example, he wants to crowd out small businesses—health insurance for small businesses by raising Medicare, putting more people on Medicaid. That's just bad policy, in my judgment. The best way to deal with health care is to make sure the poor have got health care at places like community health centers, is to expand the children's health insurance programs to take care of low-income families that need help, is to expand health savings accounts, is to promote association health care plans so small businesses can pool risk, get insurance at the same rate that big businesses get.

I'll tell you what else needs to happen, we've got to stop these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business. It's an issue in this campaign. Everywhere I go, people that understand the high cost of medicine occurs because of these frivolous lawsuits. They also understand they're having trouble finding good docs. You talk to what it's like—to people what it's like to be an ob-gyn here in America these days. Many young pregnant moms are having troubling finding an ob-gyn. They travel miles to get the help they need. I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. I think you've got to make a choice, and I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs, and I'm standing with the patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

I'm going to talk about Social Security in this campaign. I'm going to remind the seniors who are on Social Security, you're fine. You don't have to worry. The trust

has got you taken care of. Baby boomers like me are fine when it comes to Social Security. But we need to be worrying about our children and grandchildren. That's who we need to be worrying about when it comes to retirement. I believe younger workers ought to take some of their tax money and set it aside as personal savings accounts so Social Security meets the promise for them, an account they call their own, an account they can pass on to whomever they want, and an account the Government can't take away.

I also will tell you, in times of change, things shouldn't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. I believe in a culture of life in which everybody matters and every person counts. I believe in family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. And I'm going to stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how we respond to terrorism, and terrorism is a continuing danger. You know, since September the 11th, we have been on the offense, and we'll stay on the offense. We're pursuing these terrorists around the world, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens depend on it.

We've got a clear strategy. We're going to defend the homeland. I appreciate the first-responders in this great city. You know what I'm talking about when it comes to defending the homeland. Police and firefighters and EMS squads of New York City are fabulous people. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening the intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here in America.

And we'll work to advance liberty in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere, and we're going to prevail. We'll prevail. If we're steadfast, if we're steady, if we're strong, we'll prevail. I—our strategy is working. Just think about this. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist killers; Saudi was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it plotted and planned for death and destruction. Today, because we acted, because the United States has led, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests on Al Qaida leadership; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; Iraq now has a free army, which is fighting for its freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leaders and associates have been brought to justice.

Progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of America. He was firing weapons at American pilots, which were enforcing the world's sanctions. He harbored terrorists. Abu Nidal was a coldblooded terrorist killer who killed Leon Klinghoffer. Abu Nidal and his organization was in Iraq. Zarqawi, the person who likes to behead people in order to shake our will, was in Baghdad. He had a network of people in that country.

Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. Saddam Hussein possessed and used weapons of mass destruction. He was a threat. We had been to war with him once. He was hoping the world would turn away and not watch him. I went to Congress and said to Congress, "We see a threat." And I went to Congress because after September the 11th, our Nation must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. Prior to September the 11th, we would see a threat, and say, "Well, it may come to hurt us or may not. We can deal with it if we want, or we can ignore it." No longer do we have the luxury of doing that in this country. It is essential that this country never forget that lesson.

So with that in mind, I went to Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they authorized the use of force. Now, before a President ever uses force, he ought to try all options in order to deal with the threat. Listen, committing troops into harm's way is, by far, the toughest decision I'll ever have to make, and it's a serious decision. And I was hoping that diplomacy would work. So I went to the United Nations. They looked at the same intelligence. They concluded, 15 to nothing, that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

I believe when a President speaks, he must mean what he says. And I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what they say. Saddam Hussein—he ignored the resolution, just as he had for over a decade. He was hoping the world would forget him. He was hoping we would grow tired and weary. But we weren't growing tired and weary, because we remember the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. He also systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I have a choice to make at this point in time. Diplomacy had failed. He had been given his choice, his last option to listen to the demands of the free world. He ignored that option. So I have a choice: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of Saddam Hussein, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Listen, I thought we would find stockpiles of weapons. Everybody did. But Saddam still had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to a terrorist enemy. And that's a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And our country is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. And as a result of defending ourselves, as a result of defending ourselves, 50 million people are free.

Think about what's happening in Afghanistan. Listen, 3 years ago, Afghanistan was a place where many young girls couldn't go to school because the Taliban were so backward and so barbaric. And their moms were pulled out in the public square and whipped and sometimes killed in a sports stadium because they wouldn't toe the line of these people that have only the darkest of visions. Today, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election in Afghanistan. It's unbelievable. It's powerful. What a powerful, powerful statement.

Think about that. There were people who said, "Oh, well, maybe some people don't want to be free in this world." Forget it. People long to be free. People from all religions long to be free, from all walks of life, and a free Afghanistan will make us safer.

Iraq—it's tough work in Iraq right now. These killers cannot stand the thought of a free society emerging in Iraq. They understand the stakes. And so do I. They understand a free society in Iraq will be a—stand in stark contrast to their ideology of hate, and it scares them, and therefore, they're willing to kill innocent people. And it's tough work. It's tough work. But Prime Minister Allawi, with whom I'll be meeting tomorrow, and who the country will get to see on TV, is one strong man who believes that Iraq will be free, who believes in the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people. There's going to be national elections in January in Iraq. Think about how far that country has come since the days of mass graves and torture.

Remember I told the story at the convention of the seven guys walking in who had had their hands cut off—seven Iraqi men came to the Oval Office. First of all, walking in the Oval Office is not easy. It's a powerful place. These guys walk in there,

and they're overwhelmed by the environment. I was overwhelmed by them. They'd come to America to get new hands put on. Fantastic story, to think about the contrast in societies. They—and I talked to them—they longed for freedom. Let me tell you something, when you build a free society, the institutions will be bigger than the people, and no longer will a dictator be able to cut off your hand just because he feels like it.

We'll stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. When this country gives its word, it will keep its word. And our strategy is clear—our strategy is clear. We're going to train the Iraqis and the Afghan citizens so they can defend themselves. And that's what we're doing, so they can do the hard work.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Gracias. [*Laughter*] She kind of shook me there for a minute—[*laughter*]—just as I was getting to the strategy. [*Laughter*] We're going to train the troops. We're going to put them on the path to stability and democracy, and as quickly as we can, our troops will come home with the honor they earned.

We've got a great military, by the way. I can't tell you how proud I am. We're going to support them. We'll support those in our military. We have a duty in this country to support those we put in harm's way. That's why, a year ago, I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding. And it was vital funding. This was not only for folks in Iraq. This was for troops in Afghanistan as well. And the support was strong for that piece of legislation, because most people in the Congress understood how vital it was. Only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. [*Laughter*]

And when you're out there campaigning, remind them, four people voted to authorize the—four Senators voted to authorize the use of force and not fund our troops. Two of those were my opponent and his runningmate.

So they said to him, "Why?" And he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] You know what else? They kept pressing him, and he said finally, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting the men and women in the uniform.

The President of the United States must speak clearly and mean what he says. In order for this world to be peaceful, we must mean what we say. And it's important not to send mixed signals around the world. Today my opponent continued his pattern of twisting in the wind, with new contradictions on old positions in Iraq. He woke up this morning and now decided, "No, we shouldn't have invaded Iraq." [*Laughter*] After, last month, saying he would still have voted for using force, knowing everything we know today. He believes our national security would be stronger with Saddam Hussein in power, not in prison.

Today he said, and I quote, "We have traded a dictator for a chaos that has left America less secure." Direct quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I—anyway. [*Laughter*] You cannot—it's hard to imagine a candidate running for President who prefers the stability of a dictatorship to the hope and security of democracy. If I might, I'd like to read a quote he said last December: "Those who doubted whether Iraq or the world would be better off without Saddam Hussein and those who believe we are not safer with his capture, don't have the judgment to be President or the credibility to be elected President." I couldn't have put it better.

I look forward to my meeting with Prime Minister Allawi. It's an important meeting, because I'm going to remind him, so long as I'm the President, we're going to stand with the people of Iraq. It's in our interests that we do so. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that

it's possible to take a society that was so hopeless because of the tyranny that they have been through and encourage them through democracy that they'll become strong allies in the war on terror. That's what I believe.

I believe that—I believe in the power of liberty because I have worked closely with Prime Minister Koizumi, who I also will be working with today. Think about this for a minute. When you hear the skeptics and doubters talk about our policies, think about the fact that I sit down with the Prime Minister of Japan as a friend. Now, it wasn't all that long ago that my dad and your dads and grandfathers were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And after that war was over, fortunately, Harry Truman and other American citizens believe that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally and work with Japan to develop a Japanese style democracy.

And as a result of that faith in the power of liberty, today I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi—tomorrow I'll actually sit down with him—and talk about keeping the peace, talking about the peace that we all yearn for. Liberty is powerful.

Someday, an American President is going to be sitting down with the duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. People who are desperate for hope will be looking at the Iraq model and saying, "That's possible for me." The Palestinians will realize that their failed leadership, the leadership that has failed them for decades, must change, in order for them to have a hopeful, peaceful life.

No, liberty is powerful. It will serve as the beacon. These are historic times. In the short term, we'll defend ourselves by staying on the offense. In the long term, we'll work to spread liberty. And I believe people yearn to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. That's what I believe.

This young century will be liberty century. We're going to reform the systems of Government so people will be free to be able to realize their dreams, to be able to achieve the great hope of this country. We're going to continue to lead the world for freedom and peace.

I want to tell you, I assure you that I'll never forget the day that Rudy and George and I were in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It was September the 14th, 2001. It's a day that—that day might as well have happened yesterday as far as I'm concerned. It is still so vivid in my memory, particularly the workers in the hardhats screaming at all of us, particularly me, I think, "Whatever it takes." That's what they were yelling at the top of their lungs. We did our best to console people, to hug people, to cry with people, to thank people for their work. A guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes. [*Applause*]

Finally—*un momento. Por fin, uno mas te dije.* When I campaigned in New York and around the country, I said, if you gave me the honor of serving as the President, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help and thanks to your contributions tonight, I will continue to do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:02 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel of New York. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George E. Pataki of New York, his wife, Elizabeth "Libby," and their daughter, Emily; former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City, and his wife, Judith; Howard Mills, senatorial candidate in New York; Al Hoffman, finance chairman, and Mercer Reynolds, 2004 Victory national finance chairman, Republican National Committee; Alexander F. "Sandy" Treadwell, chairman, New York Republican

State Committee; Mike Long, chair, Conservative Party of New York State; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India in New York City
September 21, 2004

President Bush. I've really been looking forward to meeting the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Singh. Thank you.

President Bush. He's the leader of a great country and the leader of a friend of the United States.

And I'm proud you're here, sir.

Prime Minister Singh. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm very, very happy to be in this land of opportunity that the United States is. And under your distinguished leadership, our two countries' relations have grown in diverse ways, but I do believe that the best is yet to come.

President Bush. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:08 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
September 21, 2004

Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen: Thank you for the honor of addressing this General Assembly. The American people respect the idealism that gave life to this organization. And we respect the men and women of the U.N., who stand for peace and human rights in every part of the world. Welcome to New York City, and welcome to the United States of America.

During the past 3 years, I've addressed this General Assembly in a time of tragedy for my country and in times of decision for all of us. Now we gather at a time of tremendous opportunity for the U.N. and for all peaceful nations. For decades, the circle of liberty and security and development has been expanding in our world. This progress has brought unity to Europe, self-government to Latin America and Asia, and new hope to Africa. Now we have the historic chance to widen the circle even further, to fight radicalism and terror with justice and dignity, to achieve a true peace founded on human freedom.

The United Nations and my country share the deepest commitments. Both the American Declaration of Independence and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaim the equal value and dignity of every human life. That dignity is honored by the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, protection of private property, free speech, equal justice, and religious tolerance. That dignity is dishonored by oppression, corruption, tyranny, bigotry, terrorism, and all violence against the innocent. And both of our founding documents affirm that this bright

line between justice and injustice—between right and wrong—is the same in every age and every culture and every nation.

Wise governments also stand for these principles for very practical and realistic reasons. We know that dictators are quick to choose aggression, while free nations strive to resolve differences in peace. We know that oppressive governments support terror, while free governments fight the terrorists in their midst. We know that free peoples embrace progress and life, instead of becoming the recruits for murderous ideologies.

Every nation that wants peace will share the benefits of a freer world, and every nation that seeks peace has an obligation to help build that world. Eventually, there is no safe isolation from terror networks or failed states that shelter them or outlaw regimes or weapons of mass destruction. Eventually, there is no safety in looking away, seeking the quiet life by ignoring the struggles and oppression of others.

In this young century, our world needs a new definition of security. Our security is not merely found in spheres of influence or some balance of power. The security of our world is found in the advancing rights of mankind.

These rights are advancing across the world, and across the world, the enemies of human rights are responding with violence. Terrorists and their allies believe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Bill of Rights and every charter of liberty ever written are lies to be burned and destroyed and forgotten. They believe that dictators should control every mind and tongue in the Middle East and beyond. They believe that suicide and torture and murder are fully justified to serve any goal they declare, and they act on their beliefs.

In the last year alone, terrorists have attacked police stations and banks and commuter trains and synagogues and a school filled with children. This month in Beslan we saw, once again, how the terrorists measure their success, in the death of the innocent and in the pain of grieving families. Svetlana Dzebisov was held hostage along with her son and her nephew. Her nephew did not survive. She recently visited the cemetery, and saw what she called the "little graves." She said, "I understand that there is evil in the world, but what have these little creatures done?"

Members of the United Nations, the Russian children did nothing to deserve such awful suffering and fright and death. The people of Madrid and Jerusalem and Istanbul and Baghdad have done nothing to deserve sudden and random murder. These acts violate the standards of justice in all cultures and the principles of all religions. All civilized nations are in this struggle together, and all must fight the murderers.

We're determined to destroy terror networks wherever they operate, and the United States is grateful to every nation that is helping to seize terrorist assets, track down their operatives, and disrupt their plans. We're determined to end the state sponsorship of terror, and my Nation is grateful to all that participated in the liberation of Afghanistan. We're determined to prevent proliferation and to enforce the demands of the world, and my Nation is grateful to the soldiers of many nations who have helped to deliver the Iraqi people from an outlaw dictator.

The dictator agreed in 1991, as a condition of a cease-fire, to fully comply with all Security Council resolutions, then ignored more than a decade of those resolutions. Finally, the Security Council promised serious consequences for his defiance. And the commitments we make must have meaning. When we say "serious consequences," for the sake of peace, there must be serious consequences. And so a coalition of nations enforced the just demands of the world.

Defending our ideals is vital, but it is not enough. Our broader mission as U.N. members is to apply these ideals to the

great issues of our time. Our wider goal is to promote hope and progress as the alternatives to hatred and violence. Our great purpose is to build a better world beyond the war on terror.

Because we believe in human dignity, America and many nations have established a Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. In 3 years, the contributing countries have funded projects in more than 90 countries and pledged a total of $5.6 billion to these efforts. America has undertaken a $15 billion effort to provide prevention and treatment and humane care in nations afflicted by AIDS, placing a special focus on 15 countries where the need is most urgent. AIDS is the greatest health crisis of our time, and our unprecedented commitment will bring new hope to those who have walked too long in the shadow of death.

Because we believe in human dignity, America and many nations have joined together to confront the evil of trafficking in human beings. We're supporting organizations that rescue the victims, passing stronger antitrafficking laws, and warning travelers that they will be held to account for supporting this modern form of slavery. Women and children should never be exploited for pleasure or greed anywhere on Earth.

Because we believe in human dignity, we should take seriously the protection of life from exploitation under any pretext. In this session, the U.N. will consider a resolution sponsored by Costa Rica calling for a comprehensive ban on human cloning. I support that resolution and urge all governments to affirm a basic ethical principle: No human life should ever be produced or destroyed for the benefit of another.

Because we believe in human dignity, America and many nations have changed the way we fight poverty, curb corruption, and provide aid. In 2002, we created the Monterrey Consensus, a bold approach that links new aid from developed nations to real reform in developing ones. And through the Millennium Challenge Account, my Nation is increasing our aid to developing nations that expand economic freedom and invest in the education and health of their own people.

Because we believe in human dignity, America and many nations have acted to lift the crushing burden of debt that limits the growth of developing economies and holds millions of people in poverty. Since these efforts began in 1996, poor countries with the heaviest debt burdens have received more than $30 billion of relief. And to prevent the buildup of future debt, my country and other nations have agreed that international financial institutions should increasingly provide new aid in the forms of grants rather than loans.

Because we believe in human dignity, the world must have more effective means to stabilize regions in turmoil and to halt religious violence and ethnic cleansing. We must create permanent capabilities to respond to future crises. The United States and Italy have proposed a Global Peace Operations Initiative. G–8 countries will train 75,000 peacekeepers, initially from Africa, so they can conduct operations on that continent and elsewhere. The countries of the G–8 will help this peacekeeping force with deployment and logistical needs.

At this hour, the world is witnessing terrible suffering and horrible crimes in the Darfur region of Sudan, crimes my Government has concluded are genocide. The United States played a key role in efforts to broker a ceasefire, and we're providing humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people. Rwanda and Nigeria have deployed forces in Sudan to help improve security so aid can be delivered. The Security Council adopted a new resolution that supports an expanded African Union force to help prevent further bloodshed and urges the Government of Sudan to stop flights by military aircraft in Darfur. We congratulate the members of the Council on this timely and necessary action. I call on the Government of Sudan to honor the cease-

fire it signed and to stop the killing in Darfur.

Because we believe in human dignity, peaceful nations must stand for the advance of democracy. No other system of government has done more to protect minorities, to secure the rights of labor, to raise the status of women, or to channel human energy to the pursuits of peace. We've witnessed the rise of democratic governments in predominantly Hindu and Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian cultures. Democratic institutions have taken root in modern societies and in traditional societies. When it comes to the desire for liberty and justice, there is no clash of civilizations. People everywhere are capable of freedom and worthy of freedom.

Finding the full promise of representative government takes time, as America has found in two centuries of debate and struggle. Nor is there any—only one form of representative government because democracies, by definition, take on the unique character of the peoples that create them. Yet this much we know with certainty: The desire for freedom resides in every human heart. And that desire cannot be contained forever by prison walls or martial laws or secret police. Over time and across the Earth, freedom will find a way.

Freedom is finding a way in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we must continue to show our commitment to democracies in those nations. The liberty that many have won at a cost must be secured. As members of the United Nations, we all have a stake in the success of the world's newest democracies.

Not long ago, outlaw regimes in Baghdad and Kabul threatened the peace and sponsored terrorists. These regimes destabilized one of the world's most vital and most volatile regions. They brutalized their peoples in defiance of all civilized norms. Today, the Iraqi and Afghan people are on the path to democracy and freedom. The Governments that are rising will pose no threat to others. Instead of harboring terrorists, they're fighting terrorist groups, and this progress is good for the long-term security of all of us.

The Afghan people are showing extraordinary courage under difficult conditions. They're fighting to defend their nation from Taliban holdouts and helping to strike against the terrorist killers. They're reviving their economy. They've adopted a constitution that protects the rights of all while honoring their nation's most cherished traditions. More than 10 million Afghan citizens, over 4 million of them women, are now registered to vote in next month's Presidential election. To any who still would question whether Muslim societies can be democratic societies, the Afghan people are giving their answer.

Since the last meeting of this General Assembly, the people of Iraq have regained sovereignty. Today, in this hall, the Prime Minister of Iraq and his delegation represent a country that has rejoined the community of nations. The Government of Prime Minister Allawi has earned the support of every nation that believes in self-determination and desires peace. And under Security Council Resolutions 1511 and 1546, the world is providing that support. The U.N. and its member nations must respond to Prime Minister Allawi's request and do more to help build an Iraq that is secure, democratic, federal, and free.

A democratic Iraq has ruthless enemies, because terrorists know the stakes in that country. They know that a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will be a decisive blow against their ambitions for that region. So a terrorist group associated with Al Qaida is now one of the main groups killing the innocent in Iraq today, conducting a campaign of bombings against civilians and the beheadings of bound men. Coalition forces now serving in Iraq are confronting the terrorists and foreign fighters, so peaceful nations around the world will never have to face them within our own borders.

Our coalition is standing beside a growing Iraqi security force. The NATO Alliance is providing vital training to that force. More than 35 nations have contributed money and expertise to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure. And as the Iraqi Interim Government moves toward national elections, officials from the United Nations are helping Iraqis build the infrastructure of democracy. These selfless people are doing heroic work and are carrying on the great legacy of Sergio de Mello.

As we have seen in other countries, one of the main terrorist goals is to undermine, disrupt, and influence election outcomes. We can expect terrorist attacks to escalate as Afghanistan and Iraq approach national elections. The work ahead is demanding, but these difficulties will not shake our conviction that the future of Afghanistan and Iraq is a future of liberty. The proper response to difficulty is not to retreat; it is to prevail.

The advance of freedom always carries a cost, paid by the bravest among us. America mourns the losses to our Nation and to many others. And today I assure every friend of Afghanistan and Iraq and every enemy of liberty: We will stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq until their hopes of freedom and security are fulfilled.

These two nations will be a model for the broader Middle East, a region where millions have been denied basic human rights and simple justice. For too long, many nations, including my own, tolerated, even excused, oppression in the Middle East in the name of stability. Oppression became common, but stability never arrived. We must take a different approach. We must help the reformers of the Middle East as they work for freedom and strive to build a community of peaceful, democratic nations.

This commitment to democratic reform is essential to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Peace will not be achieved by Palestinian rulers who intimidate opposition, tolerate corruption, and maintain ties to terrorist groups. The long-suffering Palestinian people deserve better. They deserve true leaders capable of creating and governing a free and peaceful Palestinian state.

Even after the setbacks and frustrations of recent months, good will and hard effort can achieve the promise of the roadmap to peace. Those who would lead a new Palestinian state should adopt peaceful means to achieve the rights of their people and create the reformed institutions of a stable democracy. Arab states should end incitement in their own media, cut off public and private funding for terrorism, and establish normal relations with Israel. Israel should impose a settlement freeze, dismantle unauthorized outposts, end the daily humiliation of the Palestinian people, and avoid any actions that prejudice final negotiations. And world leaders should withdraw all favor and support from any Palestinian ruler who fails his people and betrays their cause.

The democratic hopes we see growing in the Middle East are growing everywhere. In the words of the Burmese democracy advocate Aung San Suu Kyi, "We do not accept the notion that democracy is a Western value. To the contrary, democracy simply means good government rooted in responsibility, transparency, and accountability." Here at the United Nations, you know this to be true. In recent years, this organization has helped create a new democracy in East Timor, and the U.N. has aided other nations in making the transition to self-rule.

Because I believe the advance of liberty is the path to both a safer and better world, today I propose establishing a Democracy Fund within the United Nations. This is a great calling for this great organization. The fund would help countries lay the foundations of democracy by instituting the rule of law and independent courts, a free press, political parties, and trade unions. Money from the fund would also help set up voter precincts and polling places and support the work of election monitors. To

show our commitment to the new Democracy Fund, the United States will make an initial contribution. I urge other nations to contribute as well.

Today I've outlined a broad agenda to advance human dignity and enhance the security of all of us. The defeat of terror, the protection of human rights, the spread of prosperity, the advance of democracy, these causes, these ideals, call us to great work in the world. Each of us alone can only do so much. Together, we can accomplish so much more.

History will honor the high ideals of this organization. The charter states them with clarity: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights," "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

Let history also record that our generation of leaders followed through on these ideals, even in adversity. Let history show that in a decisive decade, members of the United Nations did not grow weary in our duties or waver in meeting them. I'm confident that this young century will be liberty's century. I believe we will rise to this moment, because I know the character of so many nations and leaders represented here today, and I have faith in the transforming power of freedom.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; Foreign Minister Jean Ping of Gabon, President, 59th Session of the U.N. General Assembly; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City
September 21, 2004

President Bush. A couple of opening statements. We'll answer—I'll answer a couple of questions from the U.S. media, AP and Reuters, and I'll answer a question from the Iraqi media as well.

First, Mr. Prime Minister, it's been my delight to visit with you. I appreciate your courage. I appreciate your leadership. I am—I share the same confidence you share that Iraq will be a free nation, and as a nation, our world will be safer and America will be more secure. We look forward to working with you, sir. I'm proud that you have—you and your administration have stood strong in the face of the terrorists who want to disrupt progress in Iraq.

Today—yesterday an American citizen was beheaded. We express our heartfelt condolences. We send our prayers to the Armstrong family. We also stand in solidarity with the American that is now being held captive, while we send our prayers to his wife.

These killers want to shake our will.

Prime Minister Allawi. Yes.

President Bush. They want to determine the fate of the Iraqi people. We will not allow these thugs and terrorists to decide your fate and to decide our fate. As your election draws closer, I'm confident the terrorists will try to stop the progress by acts of violence. And I appreciate your will, and I appreciate your strength. And we'll stand with you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Welcome.

Prime Minister Allawi. Thank you very much. I would like to pay my condolences really to the people who lost their lives in defending—fighters of freedom and democracy. The barbaric action of yesterday really is unbelievable. It demonstrates how much these criminals are wanting to damage our worth across Iraq as well as in the civilized world.

We in Iraq appreciate tremendously the courage President Bush took in deciding to wage war to destroy Saddam. The atrocities and tyranny and—atrocities that have been committed when Saddam was around was unbelievable. We show a lot of—hundreds of thousands of mass graves in Iraq.

The war now in Iraq is really not only an Iraqi war. It's a war for the civilized world to fight terrorists and terrorism. And there is no route but the route of winning, and we are going to prevail, and we are going to win, regardless of how much damage they are going to make and cause in Iraq and elsewhere. They want to undermine us in Iraq and to move from Iraq, to undermine the region. And once they do this, they will hit hard at the civilized world, in Washington and New York and London and Paris and Ankara and Geneva, elsewhere—everywhere in the civilized world.

So we are adamant and determined that we, together, will stand and win against the aggressors, and peace and stability will prevail in the Middle East. And we thank you very much for your support.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Criticism of Iraq Policy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You've answered some of Senator Kerry's criticisms in the last couple days about your Iraq policy. A couple of Republicans have raised some questions as well in the last couple days. Senator Hagel said that, "Sharp analysis of our policies is required. We didn't do that in Vietnam, to the point where we finally lost." Senator McCain, you're not being "as straight as we would want him to be," about the situation in Iraq. What do you say to them?

President Bush. Both Senators you quoted strongly want me elected as President. We agree that the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. And that stands in stark contrast to the statement my opponent made yesterday when he said that the world was better off with Saddam in power.

I strongly disagree. It is in our interests that we deal with Prime Minister Allawi. It's in our interests that we work toward a free society in Iraq. And I believe we'll have a free society in Iraq, and I know that a free society in Iraq makes America safer and the world better off.

My opponent has taken so many different positions on Iraq that his statements are hardly credible at all.

Who is from the Iraqi media?

Prime Minister Allawi's Visit

Q. Mr. President, how do you evaluate Mr. Allawi's visit to America? And in what way—how can we—what the result will be reflected on the situation of Iraq, as a result of this visit?

President Bush. Well, first, I'm glad to be able to look him in the eye and tell him how much I appreciate his courage. I believe that Iraq needed a strong Government to lead the people toward a free world. And this group of gentlemen here are doing just that.

This is an important visit because the Prime Minister will be able to explain clearly to the American people that not only is progress being made, that we will succeed. The American people have seen horrible scenes on our TV screens. And the Prime Minister will be able to say to them that in spite of the sacrifices being made, in spite of the fact that Iraqis are dying and U.S. troops are dying as well, that there is a will amongst the Iraqi people to succeed. And we stand with them. It's also an important visit for me to say to

the people of Iraq that America has given its word to help, and we'll keep our word.

Who is the Reuters man here?

National Intelligence Estimate/Situation in Iraq

Q. Right here, Mr. President, thank you. Why do you think the CIA's assessment of conditions in Iraq are so much at odds with the optimism that you and Prime Minister Allawi are expressing at the moment?

President Bush. The CIA laid out a—several scenarios that said: Life could be lousy; like could be okay; life could be better. And they were just guessing as to what the conditions might be like. The Iraqi citizens are defying the pessimistic predictions. The Iraqi citizens are headed toward free elections. This Government has been in place for a little over 2 months, and the Iraqi citizens are seeing a determined effort by responsible citizens to lead to a more hopeful tomorrow. And I am optimistic we'll succeed.

Listen, I understand how tough it is. The Prime Minister understands how tough it is. He has to live with the few who are trying to stop the aspirations of the many. And we are—we're standing with the Iraqi people because it's in our Nation's interests to do so. We're standing with the people of this good country because we understand that, as Prime Minister has said, that we must defeat them there. Otherwise we'll face them here at home.

And we'll prevail. We will succeed. It's an historic opportunity. And that's why I'm so honored to be with the Prime Minister. It's an historic opportunity not only to change this good country for the better and secure America, but it's an historic opportunity to set example for people in the broader Middle East that free societies can and will exist.

And I want to thank you for your leadership, sir.

Prime Minister Allawi. Thank you, Mr. President. It's very important for the people of the world really to know that we are winning. We are making progress in Iraq. We are defeating terrorists. Najaf, Samarra, Mosul, Basra are all live examples that a lot of progress have been made. Unfortunately, the media have not been covering these significant gains in Iraq. And this is all because of the determination of the Iraqi people. The light that they are seeing at the end will—democracy will prevail, the rule of law will prevail. The issues and culture of human rights will prevail. And the friendship with the United States and with the civilized nations are comfortable there.

So, really, the winning, it's unfortunate, is not being portrayed in the media. This is very unfortunate. I always say that we are welcoming any media who wants to come to Iraq and see for themselves the grounds we are covering and the winning we are doing in Iraq.

President Bush. One thing is for certain. My discussions with Prime Minister Allawi reconfirm to me that the world is much better off with Prime Minister Allawi and his Government in power. And any statement to the contrary is wrong. The idea somehow that the world would be better off with Saddam Hussein in power is an absurd notion.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria. In his remarks, he referred to Eugene Armstrong, an American citizen who was killed on September 20 by militants led by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, and Jack Hensley, also an American citizen, who was kidnaped with Mr. Armstrong on September 16. Prime Minister Allawi referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations in New York City
September 21, 2004

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished members of the United Nations community, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my country is honored to welcome you to New York. This is my fourth General Assembly, and I'm very pleased to be among you as we open the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly this year under the leadership of Foreign Minister Ping of Gabon.

We last met in the shadow of a great tragedy. In August 2003, a terrorist attack in Baghdad took the lives of 22 servants of peace, including Sergio de Mello, who gave his life for the values of liberty and peace. We pledge, once again, to carry on their essential work.

That work is moving forward. U.N. officials are helping the people of Afghanistan as that nation moves toward an historic Presidential election this October. In Iraq, you're helping to build the infrastructure of democracy and prepare the way for free and fair nationwide elections. In Sudan and Liberia, Haiti and other nations, this body has been working hard to bring security, humanitarian assistance, and stability to the people in desperate need. Much credit for these efforts is due to Kofi Annan, who has shown strong vision.

Mr. Secretary-General, with admiration for your leadership and with confidence in this organization, I offer a toast to you and your service and to the United Nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:41 p.m. at the United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister Jean Ping of Gabon, President, 59th Session of the U.N. General Assembly. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Annan.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism
September 21, 2004

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2004, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on September 22, 2003 (68 *FR* 55189).

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks in New York, in Pennsylvania, and against the Pentagon committed on September 11, 2001, and the continuing

and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
September 21, 2004.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Reception for Heads of State in New York City
September 21, 2004

Thank you all. Please be seated, for what is going to be a short speech. We're honored you're here in New York City. Laura and I are thrilled to have hosted this reception. We hope you've enjoyed it as much as we have. And it's a great opportunity for Laura and me to say hello to many of our friends who are Prime Ministers and Presidents and Foreign Ministers and perm representatives to the various countries represented here.

I do want to pay tribute to our great Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who's done such a wonderful job for our country. As well I want to say thanks to Jack and Sally Danforth. Jack is the new Ambassador to the United Nations for our country. Thank you all for your service.

I think my friend the Governor of New York is still here, George Pataki, and First Lady Libby Pataki. One thing about New York City is they know how to host big events. The U.N. General Assembly is a big event. There's a lot of us with nice automobiles driving around the city, and they make it quite convenient. One reason why is they've got a great mayor in Michael Bloomberg who is not—was here and left, but he's—but as well, I do want you to recognize the commissioner of police for this great city, Ray Kelly, and Veronica, is with us today.

I saw Kofi Annan earlier. I don't know if Kofi is still here or not, but I do respect him. He's a decent, kind man, and I'm proud of the job he does at the United Nations. And Laura and I are very fond of his wife, Nane, as well.

And most of all, I appreciate you serving your respective countries and working together to make the world a better place. It's—these have been tough times in the world. But I think if we stick true to the values that unite most of us, which are human rights, human dignity, the deep desire for people to live in freedom, the world will be a better place. And that's really how I view this time here at the United Nations, a chance to find common purpose and common ground, all aiming at achieving the peace we all desire.

I am floored by the progress that's being made in parts of the world that used to be dark, places where people had no hope, and today, they see light.

Today in my speech at the U.N., I pointed out the fact that 10 million citizens in Afghanistan have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election, 41 percent of whom are women. This is a society that

3 years ago was a place where young girls weren't allowed to go to school, and their mothers were whipped in the public squares because they didn't toe the dark line of a group of people whose vision was limited by hatred. And today, 3 years later, 10 million citizens have said, "I love freedom. I want to be free." And they're going to the polls.

And the world is going to be more peaceful for it. We believe that liberty and freedom go hand in hand. We believe every human heart desires to be free, and I believe every free nation has a responsibility to free every human heart, as best we can.

So that's how I view the 59th Session of the U.N. General Assembly. It's an honor to be here. It's great to see *mis amigos*, my friends. I want to thank you all for your hard work, and may God bless you and your countries. Thank you for coming. Good night, everybody. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria. In his remarks, he referred to Sally Danforth, wife of former Senator John C. Danforth, U.S. Representative to the United Nations; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York and his wife, Elizabeth "Libby"; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; Veronica Kelly, wife of New York City Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly; and Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations and his wife, Nane.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
September 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate so many people coming out to say hello. Thanks.

So when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine. Just so long as I don't have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] Fortunately she didn't hold me to the promise. She's a woman of great compassion and decency. She understands education well. I'm proud to call her wife. I know you're proud to call her First Lady.

I want to talk about my plans to make America and the world safer and to make this country a more hopeful place. Today we're going to emphasize education. We've got some experts up here on education. And in a little bit we're going to hear from them to help make the points that Laura and I are making around the country, that we can close an achievement gap, that every child can learn, we expect every school to teach. And we're making progress when it comes to our public schools.

I also want to thank you for what you're going to do. See, what you're going to do is put up the signs and register the voters, bring people out to vote. Today you're going to leave here, hopefully, realizing that I have a reason to run again, that I've got a vision, that Laura and I are honored to serve our country. But I'm traveling the country giving people a reason why: Four more years will make the world a safer place, America a safer place, and the country a more hopeful place.

I am not only out there campaigning with Laura, but I'm really pleased with the good work Vice President Cheney has done and is doing as well.

I also want to thank you for training our Director of Homeland Security so well. [*Laughter*] Tom Ridge is doing a great job. He's a close friend. I'm really proud of the work he's doing on behalf of our country to better protect America from these evildoers that would like to continue to strike us. Tom is doing a wonderful job.

I'm proud to be working with your U.S. Senators: Senator Specter—put him back in for 6 more years, by the way. He's a good man. Senator Santorum, he's a good fellow too.

I appreciate Melissa Brown, who's running for the United States House. Thank you for coming.

Tom Corbett, the candidate for attorney general, is with us. Jean Craige Pepper is with us. Thanks for coming, Jean. I'm proud you're here. Listen, I understand—understand Karen Stout, the president of the community college system—thank you for coming.

Let me say something about community colleges.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*] [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you. Community colleges are vital for the future of this country. You're going to hear me talk a little bit about the changing times in which we live and that institutions must change with the changing times. Our worker training programs must change with the changing times, and community colleges are a fantastic place, a wonderful opportunity for workers to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. And I appreciate you being here.

Part of our vision for a more hopeful America expands community college—access to community colleges all across our country. Think about the community colleges: They're accessible; they're affordable; and they're able to adjust to the times. And we need to use community colleges more effectively to make sure, as the economy changes, as new jobs are created, the workers can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming. You've got a great system, I understand.

Also met Shannon Hickey. Where are you, Shannon? Somewhere. Anyway, she's here, believe me. She came to the airport. Oh, there's Shannon. Thanks for being here. Hiding behind the pillar—or hiding in front of the pillar. Shannon meets me at the airport today. Shannon is a soldier in the army of compassion. She is a soul who started what's called Mychal's Message in 2002. She is a social entrepreneur. She heard a call and acted upon it. This program serves an outreach to the homeless in Philadelphia and other cities in the State of Pennsylvania. This young soul, inspired by the example of Father Mychal Judge, who is the chaplain of the New York City Fire Department who died on September the 11th, 2001, heard a call, a universal call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, and started this program to help people who need help. Listen, the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America. The strength of America is found in people like Shannon. I'm honored you're here.

I particularly want the young who are here to look at Shannon as an example of what you can do to help change America, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. Proud you're here, Shannon. Thank you for the example you set.

Later on today I'm going to travel your State and inspect the damage of the floods. I just want the people of this important State to understand that our Government is ready to help, that we'll provide whatever aid is necessary, whatever aid we're capable of providing, to the victims of these floods. Our prayers go to those families who've had their lives turned upside down, and God bless you all.

A hopeful society is one in which the economy grows. See, you can't have a hopeful society if people can't find work. And our economy is growing, and it is amazing it is growing because we've overcome a lot of obstacles. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people what we've been through in a brief period of time. We've been through a recession. When Vice President Cheney and I got sworn in, this country was heading into a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock

market had been correcting about 5 months before the inauguration. In other words, the economy was beginning to change.

And then as we began to get on our feet again, some corporate scandals affected the conscience of our country. One of the things that our society rests upon is confidence, and people—and the numbers on balance sheets, and some of our citizens weren't responsible citizens. They betrayed the trust. We got together and passed tough laws that make it clear we're not going to tolerate that kind of dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. But the corporate scandals affected us. Those scandals did affect us.

Then, of course, the enemy attacked us on September the 11th, 2001. Some estimate it costs us a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack. These are major obstacles for any economy to overcome, yet we're overcoming them.

The economy is growing. The unemployment rate in this State is 5.6 percent. That's down. People are working. I understand there are some pockets that still are lagging behind the national numbers, and we're going to keep working to make sure people can find work. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great workers. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The small-business sector of our economy is thriving. We've overcome these obstacles because the farmers are—know what they're doing, and they're good at growing crops. We've overcome these obstacles because of tax cuts.

And so the question is, how do we take this recovery and convert it into lasting prosperity? Here's how.

First, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want to find jobs here in America, if you want people being able to realize their dreams by working, America must be the best place in the entire world for people to do business. That means less regulations on our businesses. That means we've got to do something about these lawsuits that are making it awfully hard for employers to expand.

That means Congress needs to pass my energy plan. You want jobs here at home? If you want there to be jobs in Pennsylvania and in America, if you want our manufacturing companies to be able to thrive, we need reliable sources of energy. We need to modernize our electricity grid. We need to encourage conservation. We need to use renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. We need to use technology to make sure we can burn our coal as cleanly as possible. We need to use technology to explore for natural gas in our hemisphere. What I'm telling you is, in order to make sure these kids can find work and to make sure this job base continues to expand, we must be less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, we must reject economic isolationism and open up markets to U.S. products. See, we are good at a lot of things here in America, and we ought to have a level playing field so that we can sell that which we're good at producing around the world. We open up our markets from goods from other countries, and it's good for U.S. consumers. I mean, if you've got more product to choose from, you're likely to find that which you want at a better quality and better price. So what I say to countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." We're going to open up the markets around the world. We'll create a level playing field. Americans can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, if the rules are fair.

You want this economy to continue to grow, we've got to keep taxes low. And we have a difference of opinion in this campaign about taxes. My opponent thus far has proposed $2.2 trillion in new spending, and we've still got a month to go—

[*laughter*]—$2.2 trillion. That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they say, "How are you going to pay for it?" They said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. Tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you?

First of all, do you realize most small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level? Think about that: 90 percent of small businesses are organized as Subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships. Therefore, if you talk about raising the top two brackets of the individual income tax, you're talking about taxing them. That makes no sense. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. And when my opponent says he's going to tax the rich by raising the top two brackets, it means he's going to tax about a million small businesses that are creating new jobs. It makes no sense to tax the job creators when this economy is beginning to recover.

Secondly, he says he's going to tax the rich. Rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—[*laughter*]—to stick you with the bill. We're not going to let him tax you because we're going to win in November.

The work place has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. You know, it used to be, a person had one job, one career, one pension plan, one health care plan, and that person was generally a male. Today, workers—Americans change jobs and careers, and a lot of women are working both in the home and outside the home. And yet——

Audience member. "W" stands for "Women."

The President. And so it—and yet, when you think about it, the fundamental systems of Government were designed for yesterday. The labor laws were designed for yesterday. The health care plans were designed for yesterday. The pension plans were designed for yesterday. The Tax Code was designed for yesterday. I'm running again because I want to change these fundamental systems to help people realize their dreams. See, the role of Government is to provide opportunity for people to realize their dreams, not to dictate to people, not to tell people, not to run the lives of the American citizens. And that's the fundamental difference of this campaign.

A couple of points I want to make and explain to you what I'm talking about. Take Social Security: If you're a senior citizen on Social Security, you have nothing to worry about, about the Trust Fund providing the money the Government said it's going to pay you. That's just the way it is. Now, I understand how politics works, and I understand there's attempts in the political campaigns to scare seniors by saying if so-and-so gets elected, they're going to take away your check. But the reality is the Social Security Trust is solvent for those who are on Social Security today. You're going to get your check, in other words. Baby boomers, like me—I think we're in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security Trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about these kids right back here, in terms of whether or not there's going to be a Social Security trust available to meet what the Government said it's going to do. I believe in order to strengthen Social Security, younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up personal savings accounts to get a better rate of return than the current Social Security Trust does, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account they can pass on to another generation, a personal savings account that the Government cannot take away. We've got to think differently about our pension plans. They were designed for the past. Times have changed.

Labor laws, for example—it is impossible for some business because of labor laws to give a mom flex-time or comp-time at her place of work, because the laws were designed for yesterday. I believe the labor

laws ought to be designed for tomorrow and allow companies to let workers take time off so that they can juggle the needs of work and family. Listen, our labor laws ought to be family-friendly. Our labor laws ought to recognize that the work force has changed dramatically.

A couple of things about health care right quick. I'm a big backer, believer in what's called health savings accounts. These are accounts where people can save tax-free, employer and employee can contribute tax-free—that helps cover catastrophic costs for the worker. But these health savings accounts are accounts that somebody calls their own. They own them, and they can take them from job to job, no matter what career they may be in.

These accounts make sense. It helps hold down the cost of medicine, at the same time as it ensures that the health care decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government planners and bureaucrats. I believe that good health policy empowers people to make decisions, as opposed to empowering the Federal Government to make decisions on behalf of people. And that's the fundamental difference in this campaign on health care.

Now, look, I believe Government should help those who cannot help themselves. That's why I believe in community health centers, places where the poor and the indigent can get good primary care and good preventative care. And I'm going to make sure in the second term that every poor county in America has one.

I also believe we ought to continue to expand the children's health care program, to make sure that all who are eligible are covered by this health care initiative.

But I am unalterably opposed to plans which move people from private insurance to Government insurance. I'm unalterably opposed to plans which mean the Federal Government will intrude into your decision-making process.

The cost of health care is affected by frivolous lawsuits. I strongly support medical liability reform. We must make sure good doctors stay in practice. This is an issue in this campaign. See, you can't have it both ways. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. Listen, I understand what's happening to ob-gyns here in the State of Pennsylvania, because I've met them. I've met with those whose premiums are getting so high they cannot practice, and therefore, it hurts pregnant women. I understand what's taking place in your State. But you understand it better than I do. And therefore, I'm going to continue to talk about medical liability reform until the Senate and the House overcomes the obstacles of the trial lawyers and gets the job done.

All right, we're here to talk about education. A hopeful world is one in which every child learns to read, write, and add and subtract. I went to Washington to fix problems and to challenge the status quo, if the status quo was—meant mediocrity. And I was worried about a public school system that sometimes gave up on kids. I went to Washington to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, if you lower the bar, you're going to get lousy results. If you believe certain children cannot read and write and add and subtract, those children won't learn to read and write and add and subtract. We had a policy, if we're frank about it, where schools just shuffled kids through. Not every school, of course, but many children were being just shuffled through the system, and we hoped that we got it right in the end. And that's not fair. It's not fair to the child. It's not fair to the parents, and it's, frankly, not fair to the teachers and principals, either.

And so, in return for increasing Federal spending, I said to Congress, "Why don't we insist that States measure early? Why don't we insist that there be strong accountability measures so we can determine whether curriculum are working, so we can

correct a child's learning problems early before that child just moves through grade after grade? Why don't we say we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by raising the bar, allowing local folks to make the right decisions for their schools, and using an accountability system to help achieve excellence?" And the Congress joined me in passing that piece of legislation, and it's working.

It's working because there's an achievement gap in America that's closing. And I can say it's working because we measure. We used to say, "I think it's working." Now we say, "It's working." More and more African American fourth graders are achieving what—that which we wanted, is being able to read at grade level. Those are facts. More and more Latino kids are learning to read and write, and that's a fact. And that's an important part of making sure this country has got a hopeful future.

My opponent and I—he supported No Child Left Behind Act. Then, of course, he gets in a tough campaign—[*laughter*]—and starts talking about weakening the accountability standards. That makes no sense to weaken something that's working. We want to know—we want to know.

And today we're going to talk about some educators—talk with some educators that understand the power of using accountability as a way to achieve excellence for every child, excellence for every child.

Let me talk about one other thing before we talk to our guests, and that is, I'm going to ask Congress to set up a teacher incentive fund. It's a $500 million fund to allow States and school districts to access the money to pay teachers for a job well done. And if the accountability system shows progress, I think there ought to be a reward for that progress. The Federal Government is not going to decide who gets the money. I believe in local control of schools. Districts and States ought to making those decisions about how to use performance grant money.

We're also expanding the, what we call the Adjunct Teacher Corps. It's to pay professionals, particularly in math and science, to come in the classrooms, because I know we need to be emphasizing math and science if we want our high school kids to have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I believe very strongly that we ought to provide incentives for teachers to teach in a math, science, or special ed in low-income schools. It's a need that we have around the country. And therefore, I believe we ought to increase student loan forgiveness from $5,000 to $17,500 to help teachers.

Finally, I'm a big believer in teacher training programs. The Reading First program that we put in place provides a lot of money to teach teachers how to teach and use curriculum that works. See, if you measure, you can determine whether or not the curriculum you're using is working. And when you find a curriculum that does work, then we ought to make sure we provide enough teacher training money so these good souls have got the skills necessary to achieve excellence in the classroom.

And so I'm joined today by Gene Hickok. He's a fellow Pennsylvania citizen. He is a former Pennsylvania secretary of education, a person I know well. I've worked with him a long time on achieving excellence in public schools.

Gene, it's good to see you. Why don't you tell us what it's like to be involved with proposing, passing, and implementing an historic piece of legislation.

[*At this point, Gene Hickok made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, I agree. Listen, here's the thing, that when Gene talks about a school full of children who some may think can't possibly learn, and they are learning, it basically says: One, there's a dedicated principal and great teachers; it also says that they're using the system to be able to solve problems today, as opposed to kind

of ignoring the problems. And by that, it—for example, if a child falls behind in reading, there's extra Federal money, particularly for Title I students, to help that child with tutoring and after-school help. It provides money to make sure that child has an opportunity to get up to speed.

So the accountability system doesn't punish. Frankly, it exposes problems. It's a diagnostic tool. I've always said to people, "You can't solve a problem until you diagnose it." And we're diagnosing problems, and we're providing extra money to solve the problem.

And what Gene is saying is, people are using this system to be able to achieve excellence in the classrooms, and it's happening. How do you know? Because we're measuring, is how we know. We're able to measure progress. We're able to watch. It's called annual yearly progress. That's kind of the key word. Progress toward what? Progress toward excellence. Thank you, Gene, for being here.

Lou Ramos is with us. So why are you here, Lou? [*Laughter*] You're a member of the——

Luis A. Ramos. I'm a member of the State board of education, Mr. President.

The President. That's why you're here.

Mr. Ramos. That's why I'm here. [*Laughter*]

The President. Plus, you're a good man. That's why you're here.

Mr. Ramos. I do want to thank you for the opportunity to let you know that Pennsylvanians do not fear the "A" word, accountability. We're here for that, and we recognize that. We're up to the challenge.

But what's happening in Pennsylvania is that, in fact, we're making decisions based on data. We are, in a difficult times as far as funding education, and I do know that—I've studied the data, and you've increased funding for education by 37 percent. It could be a little more. We look for that. That has helped.

The President. You mean to Pennsylvania.

Mr. Ramos. In Pennsylvania.

The President. It's 49 percent nationwide.

Mr. Ramos. Forty-nine percent nationwide.

The President. This looks like a funding gap—we've got to do something about it. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Ramos made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mr. Ramos. So there's a lot I can share, and I want to do that, because I had my own story to share with you.

The President. Let's hear it.

Mr. Ramos. Well, actually, I'm always asked, "Why are you so passionate about education, considering that you worked for a large energy company, and you take time to do that?" And the answer is, as a young child, I came to the mainland from Puerto Rico, didn't speak a stitch of English. English was not my first language. It is today.

The President. Some people say it's not my first language, either. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Ramos made further remarks.*]

The President. What a great story. Let me tell you something about our country. Think about that, there's old Lou sitting next to the President of the United States, you know, talking about his dreams and aspirations.

Mr. Ramos. Only in America.

The President. It is only in America. And listen, and you know what—we want this story to be repeated neighborhood after neighborhood, school after school, by making sure no child is left behind. See, if you give the people the tools necessary, they can realize great dreams here in America. And the most important tool of all is to make sure every child has an education.

One of the things I learned as Governor of Texas and know as President of the United States, that every school—successful schools have got strong leaders, and that strong leader is the principal. And today

we've got Sharen Finzimer with us today. She is the principal of F.S. Edmonds School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Thanks for coming. What kind of school have you got there?

[*Sharen Finzimer made brief remarks.*]

The President. AYP means annual yearly progress. In other words, it is Government-speak for we're measuring to determine whether or not the children are heading toward excellence. Why—besides your brilliance, why?

[*Ms. Finzimer made further remarks.*]

The President. Let me stop you right there. Notice she said "research-based." In other words, what that means is, people have actually looked at what works and have incorporated what works into the textbooks. That's what we want. We want curriculum that actually achieves our objectives. Remember the old reading debates—there was—sometimes people had this notion about what might work, and we never knew whether it was or not until we started to measure. That's how you can say "research-based" textbooks.

Keep going.

[*Ms. Finzimer made further remarks.*]

The President. Interventions means, when they find the child beginning to slip behind what is expected, there's extra money to help. That's what this program is all about. When we say no child left behind, that's exactly what we mean, no child left behind. In other words, she's able to use technologies and to follow the progress of a child on a regular basis, which is a change from the past. The past used to be, they'd kind of just move them through. Now they're analyzing each child's progress and working to correct, if the child has a problem, working to correct his or her problem. I think that's what you're saying. And that's what you're doing, and it's working. It's making a difference.

Tell me about your Saturday school.

[*Ms. Finzimer made further remarks.*]

The President. You can understand why her school is doing well, right? She has a passion. And when she talks about Title I students, that's where our Federal Government has increased funding quite substantially, since I've been the President of the United States, nearly 50-percent increase in the funds for Title I, all aimed at making sure no child is left behind. You can't be a great principal unless you've got great teachers. We don't have one of your teachers here, but I know they're great teachers.

But we do have Megan Schmidt with us, a teacher. What subject?

Megan Schmidt. Mr. President, I teach English and creative writing at North Penn High School.

The President. Thanks for teaching. Tell us what you've learned.

[*Ms. Schmidt made further remarks.*]

The President. Let me pick up on one thing that Megan said. It makes the parents aware. It's a amazing—when Laura and I were honored to serve our State, we were traveling around, and people would say, "Gosh, my school is doing great. At least I think my school is doing great." And all of a sudden, when we started to put out the accountability measures, people would say, "Well, maybe it's not doing quite as great," when the test scores didn't measure up to the school in the community next door or another school in the same community. Accountability, allowing people to see results, really does encourage parental involvement. Sometimes educators don't particularly care the way the parent has been involved, like, "How come you didn't tell us earlier? What are you doing about it?" But nevertheless, it does encourage parents to get involved, doesn't it?

Ms. Schmidt. Absolutely.

The President. Keep going.

Ms. Schmidt. Thank you.

[*Ms. Schmidt made further remarks.*]

The President. Let me say something. I hope people, particularly young, consider becoming teachers. It is such a noble profession, and it's such an important profession. I want to thank you for being here, Megan.

The temptation is to weaken No Child Left Behind. There's great temptation in Washington to say, "Gosh, well, let's kind of ease up. Maybe we shouldn't measure. Maybe we ought to use different criterion to determine whether or not people are meeting AYP—annual yearly progress." The guy I'm running against for President actual suggested maybe school attendance ought to be considered as to whether or not we're making annual yearly progress. That doesn't make any sense. What we want to do is to continue to focus on each child's ability to learn and correct problems now so we don't just shuffle them through the system. We're making great progress. We're closing the achievement gap. We're going to continue to fund education. We'll continue to help teachers train. We'll continue to insist upon strong accountability, and we're not turning back.

I want to talk a little bit about how to make America and the world safer. We have a solemn duty to protect the American people. I'd like to share with you a couple of the lessons I've learned from September the 11th, 2001. First of all, we face an enemy that is coldblooded. They have no conscience whatsoever. And therefore—and they're smart, and they're capable, and they're patient, and they're tough. And therefore, our Government must never yield, must never try to negotiate with them, must never hope that—for the best, that they change their ways. We must stay on the offensive and bring them to justice before they hurt us again here at home.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. Please. Thank you all. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Oh no, no, no, not yet. Not yet. Got a little more work to do here. [*Laughter*] Thank you, though.

Secondly, when the President speaks, he must mean what he says. He's got to be clear and understandable. And when you say something, you've got to follow through. I said I recognize this is a different kind of struggle than we've ever been used to. And it's a struggle that we will win, so long as we're resolute and determined.

I said that, if you provide safe haven for a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists. I meant that, because I understood that in order to find the kind of shadowy group of people, we had to rout them out of their safe havens. Remember, Al Qaida was training in Afghanistan. They had training bases. They literally trained thousands of people. They—the Al Qaida strategy in Afghanistan is clear. They were the parasite on a lenient host, and maybe at some point in time, had they been there long enough, they would have become the host. But their supporters were the Taliban, and these people were some kind of backwards. Here we are talking about—here we are—listen to this. Listen to this for a second. Here we are talking about education, and yet, they believed young girls shouldn't be educated. Think about growing up in a society like that, a society without hope, a society that said, "You're condemned for failure because you're a female." That's the way the Taliban was. It's hard for any American to envision somebody whose vision is that dim and dark.

I made it clear to the Taliban that they had to stop harboring Al Qaida. They didn't believe us. And so a great United States military went in and removed the Taliban from power. [*Applause*] Hold on a second. We're safer as a result of the actions that the U.S. military took, and the people of Afghanistan are better off.

Yesterday I met with President Karzai. He's running for election. Could you ever imagine somebody from the Taliban saying, "I'm running for election"? [*Laughter*] This

guy is out running for election. Think about what's happened in Afghanistan in a brief period of time. Young girls are now going to school, and we're helping to rebuild schools. Their moms are no longer subjected to being whipped in the public square because they don't happen to agree with the ideology of hatred that was being professed by the Taliban. Ten million Afghan citizens have registered to vote, 41 percent of whom are women. An election is going to take place in October. It's an unbelievable statistic.

People say, "Well, there are certain people who really don't want to be free in the world." I strongly disagree with that concept. I believe everybody wants to be free, and the Afghan people are showing that they want to be free. There's a lot of intimidation there. A lot of people—remember, they pulled the poor women off the bus—"they" being the Taliban—and killed them because they had, I think, voter registration cards. The Afghan people are not going to be stopped when it comes to freedom. They will defy these terrorists because freedom exists in their heart and soul. It's something they're willing to work for, and we have an obligation to help them. A free Afghanistan is in our Nation's interest. We're more secure because of the decision that we took in Afghanistan.

Let me talk about Iraq. One of the lessons that changed—one of the lessons we learned or must have learned or must never forget about September the 11th, is that we've got to take threats seriously, before they come to hurt us. When I was your age, if we saw a threat overseas, we could deal with it if we felt like it or not, because we never really dreamt that an attack would occur on America again. And that's the fundamental shift of our life here in America. September the 11th makes us realize that an enemy can strike us. And if we see threats overseas, we must take them seriously, before they hurt us.

Our hope, of course, is diplomacy works. That's why we're working with other nations to send a message to Iran and North Korea. There's more than one voice in saying to the North Koreans, "Disarm, and join the world as a peaceful nation." China is involved. Japan is involved. South Korea is involved. Russia is involved, and the United States of America. We're all saying the same thing. We want there to be a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula.

We always must try to deal with threats diplomatically. Now, in Iraq, we saw a threat. The threat was, was that Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of America. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He had terrorist connections, Abu Abbas, Abu Nidal, Zarqawi. He paid the families of suicide bombers. And the greatest threat facing us was whether or not he would be able to share his capability of producing weapons, or weapons that we thought were there, with an enemy that would like to inflict more harm. It's why I went to the United Nations, to try to solve this problem diplomatically.

I said, "Listen, we've got a problem. We see a threat." The Congress spoke, by the way. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at and remembered the same history I did and voted overwhelmingly to authorize the use of force. My opponent made that same decision. He voted to authorize the use of force. He remembered—he said Saddam Hussein was a threat then. [*Laughter*]

The United Nations passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." As I said yesterday at the United Nations, when you say something, you better mean it. In order to keep the world more peaceful, when an international body says "face serious consequences," they better mean what they say. Saddam Hussein had no intention of disclosing or disarming, because he didn't believe there would be serious consequences. He had ignored the demands of the world in 2003 just like he had done for the last decade. They wanted to send

inspectors into his country. He systematically deceived them.

So I've got a choice. The choice is: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th; do I hope for the best when it comes to Saddam Hussein; or do I take action to defend the country? If given that choice, I'll defend America every time. The world is safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell, and so is America.

A couple other points I want to make right quick. Anytime we put our troops in harm's way, they must have the full support of the Federal Government. This is an obligation of our Government to say to the troops and their loved ones, "We'll give you the tools you need to complete your mission."

That's why a year ago I went to the Congress and asked for a supplemental funding of $87 billion. It was money to support our troops in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We're talking about spare parts, ammunition, fuel, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits. It was really important legislation. It received overwhelming support in the Senate and in the House. Only 12 Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. [*Laughter*] As a matter of fact, those two, my opponent and his runningmate voted—were two of four people who voted for the authorization of force and against funding the troops in harm's way.

Of course, you've heard the famous statement he made. They said, "Why did you do it?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." The President of the United States must speak clearly and mean what he says.

We're doing hard work in Iraq right now. It's hard to help a country go from tyranny to elections to peace when there are a handful of people who are willing to kill in order to stop the process. And that's what you're seeing on the TV screens. These people cannot beat us militarily, and so they use the only tool at their disposal, which is beheadings and death, to try to shake our will. They understand the nature of America. American people value every human life. We believe in the dignity and worth of every human being. We have a conscience. We weep when we think about the families affected by those who have been brutalized by these terrorists. And they are hoping, these terrorists are hoping, to shake the will of the Iraqi people and of the American people. They know what's on our TV screens.

I met yesterday with Prime Minister Allawi. He's the Prime Minister of Iraq. He said as clearly as he could to me that not only are we making progress, but the Iraqi people want to be free. They are not going to allow these thugs to intimidate them as they head toward elections and a free society. Everybody wants to be free, and we must not allow these thugs and killers to stop the advance of freedom in Iraq.

These are critical times, and I'm glad the Prime Minister is here to reinforce the strategy we have in place. Listen, our military is working with the Iraqi Interim Government. They're flexible. They're changing their tactics on the ground to meet the tactics of the enemy. We're building—rebuilding Iraq. And it's tough, at times, because once you build something, they blow it up. But there is steady progress, in terms of reconstruction. For example, electricity is higher today than it was during—before our arrival to remove Saddam Hussein from power. More and more children are going to school. More and more children are being immunized. Hospitals are opening up. There is progress being made, and they're going to have elections in January.

The way to prevail, the way toward the successful conclusion we all want, the way to secure Iraq and bring our troops home as quickly as possible is not to wilt or waver or send mixed signals to the enemy.

My opponent is sending mixed signals. He has had many different positions on Iraq. Incredibly, this week he said he would

prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You cannot lead the war against terror if you wilt or waver when times get tough. You cannot expect the Iraqi people to stand up and do the hard work of democracy if you're pessimistic about their ability to govern themselves. You cannot expect our troops to continue doing the hard work if they hear mixed messages from Washington, DC. Mixed signals are wrong signals. I'll continue to speak clearly. I'll continue to lead. And I'm confident we'll achieve our objectives, and the world will be better off and more secure.

One more point I want to make. Please sit down for a second. [*Laughter*] It's not going to be a long point. [*Laughter*] So I was with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi yesterday in New York City. I said, "You know I've been talking about you on the campaign trail." He said, "Keep talking about me." I said, "Good. I will." [*Laughter*]

And here's why I'm talking about him. He and I are friends, and Laura and the Prime Minister are friends as well. He's been to our ranch. We sat down at the—talking about different issues facing the world. Think about that for a minute, in the context of World War II. Really, 60 years ago, Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. A lot of people lost their life in fighting against the Japanese in World War II. They had attacked our country, of course, the last major attack on our country since September—prior to September the 11th.

And after the end of World War II, Harry Truman, my predecessor, and other Americans believed that Japan could self-govern; it could be a democracy. That's what they believed. And they believed that because they believe every person desires to be free. And they believed that because—and they hoped that because they knew free societies would be peaceful societies. And there were skeptics, of course, just like there are in any society. People said, "Well, gosh, you can't do that. How can you possibly believe that our enemy could become a friend? How could you possibly believe Japan could become a democracy?" But they believed, and they worked hard, and Japan did become a democracy.

And today, as a result of Japan becoming a democracy—today, as a result of liberty being spread to parts of the world where there was hatred—I sit down with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about keeping the peace we all want. And that's going to happen, so long as we're resolute and steadfast in our belief in liberty. It's going to happen in our day. It's going to make the lives of these folks a lot more peaceful, because someday an American President is going to be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about peace in the greater Middle East, talking about how to make this world a peaceful place.

These are historic times. I'm driven by my desire to protect the American people. I'll be steadfast in my resolve to do everything I can to make you secure. But I'm also driven by my deep belief that every soul yearns for liberty. Listen, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I want to thank you all for coming out. Thank you for your vote. Thank you for your support. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:50 a.m. at the Valley Forge Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Melissa Brown, candidate for Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District; Jean Craige Pepper, candidate for Pennsylvania State Treasurer; Karen A. Stout, president, Montgomery County Community College; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister

Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on Recovery Efforts in Millvale, Pennsylvania
September 22, 2004

Listen, thank you all for coming. I have just flown over Allegheny County. I have seen the devastation that took place. The storm and the floods were lethal, and they cause a lot of heartache and damage. I know there are people in this part of our country who are grieving for lost ones, and we send our prayers to all who grieve.

I know there are people here who are concerned as to whether or not they'll ever get their life back together. I hope my visit here with the Senators and Congressmen say as clearly as we can that we care about the devastation that took place, that we understand the Federal Government has an obligation to help, and we will.

Most of all, I'm here to thank the people of this community who have risen up to deal with the hardship. My message not only is to the people of the Millvale but is to Etna and Carnegie as well, communities in this part of the world that were hard hit. You know, the volunteer firefighters here, I was honored to be able to shake hands with some. I looked in the guy's eyes and said, "You got flood eyes"—obviously, he had no sleep. He's doing all he could do to help save lives and help begin to heal the hurt.

The first thing I want to do is thank all the first-responders, firefighters and the police and the EMS teams. I want to thank Dave Sanko, of the State of Pennsylvania for—he's the FEMA—he's the emergency management director who has been on top of the situation ever since the flood started to come. I'm absolutely convinced that as a result of the coordination between the Federal Government, the State government, and local governments, loss of life had been minimized. Dave has done a terrific job, and I appreciate your service to your State.

Mike Brown is with me. He's the head of the FEMA. I'm down here to let people know that FEMA is going to move quickly. The best way to make sure people understand FEMA is going to move quickly is bring the main guy with me and let the mayor, Mayor Burn, talk to him and county executive of Allegheny Country. I wanted him to hear firsthand what the people in these communities and this county have been through. And I want Brown to know that he's going to respond as quickly as he can, and that's what I want the people to know.

I want to thank the local officials who are working hard to help the people in this community. You know, what happens when these disasters hit: The real character of a community comes out; people show up; neighbors love neighbors; firefighters help save lives. You met the storm—this storm with compassion and courage. You showed the true spirit of the American people by how you've responded and are responding to this—these floods.

I want to thank the National Guard and Coast Guardsmen who worked hard all across the State of Pennsylvania to save lives and do their duty. I want to thank the power workers, people that—and the telephone crews—for getting electricity back up and running for the people of this part of the world. I know there are some homes that still don't have their electricity hooked up, but I've been assured that the power company is working as hard as they can to get electricity up. I know there's

some people without natural gas. I know they're working hard to get the natural gas lines fixed so people can have power in their homes.

I appreciate the men and women of the Red Cross. The Red Cross has been tested during the last months. I've seen Red Cross workers all across our country. They're out there providing compassion and care. The Red Cross is a great organization, mainly because it's got great workers, people who care a lot.

I want to thank the faith-based communities who have been responding to this disaster. You know, the concept of neighbor loving neighbor is a powerful concept. It helps lift people's spirits. I met the lady who runs the food bank here. She's working overtime to make sure people have got something to eat. I want to appreciate all those who are working at the food banks. I asked her, I said, "Do you have enough food to make sure the good people of this part of the world got something on the table to eat?" She said, "Absolutely." People are responding to the crisis, and out of the harm is coming some good.

I want to let you know that we're dedicated to responding as quickly as we possibly can. I've been told that those who have registered with FEMA have started to receive checks. I urge people to find out the facts, to get 800 numbers that are available, and to sign up for help. We can't help you unless you sign up for the help.

Again, I want to reassure the people of western Pennsylvania that a lot of people are praying for you. You know, I saw the look in the people's eyes when I was driving through the town here—small-business owners and entrepreneurs whose businesses were destroyed, their stuff piled up in front of their business, wondering whether or not there's a future. There is a future. I predict to you, Mr. Mayor, that within a reasonable period of time this town is going to be back on its feet, better than ever, more hopeful than ever.

We ask God's blessings on everybody who lives here. And may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to David M. Sanko, director, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency; Mayor James Burn of Millvale, PA; and Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato.

Remarks in Latrobe, Pennsylvania
September 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much for coming. I'm proud you all are here. Thanks for coming out to say hello.

How good does it get to be introduced by Arnold Palmer? What a fantastic citizen of our country. I'm proud to be here in his hometown. He said, "Have you ever heard of Rolling Rock?" I said, "I quit drinking." [*Laughter*]

But thank you all for coming out today. I'm asking for the vote, is what I'm doing here today in Pennsylvania. I like getting out amongst the people and letting them know I've got a reason for running—to serve you for 4 more years.

I'm here to tell you what my plans are for the future of our country. I'm also here to ask for your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. Call upon your friends and neighbors to exercise their responsibility. And when you're out registering people to vote, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell

Miller. And when you get them headed toward the polls, tell them that if they want this to be a safer, stronger, better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. I don't blame you. When I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." I said, "Okay, fine, you'll never have to give a speech." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to my word. [*Laughter*] The people of this country got to see her in New York City giving a speech. They saw how compassionate, strong, and decent she is. She's a great mom, a great wife, a wonderful First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He's a good man. Now look, I admit it. I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, sound experience, and he can get the job done on behalf of the American people.

Listen, you did a good job of training Tom Ridge. And I did a smart thing by picking him to run the new Department of Homeland Security.

I want to thank the United States Senators who are with me today. I'm here to ask you to put Arlen Specter back in the United States Senate for 6 more years. I'm proud to be traveling with the other Senator, Rick Santorum. I want to thank Congressman Tim Murphy, the Congressman from this district. I call him Murph. I want to thank Congresswoman Melissa Hart from the great State of Pennsylvania for joining us.

I want to thank all the candidates who are here and local and State officials. Thanks for serving Pennsylvania and your communities.

I want to thank my friend Lynn Swann. He and I worked together to try to promote physical fitness. You need to walk. [*Laughter*] You want to stay healthy, get some exercise. And I appreciate my friend Lynn Swann for supporting my candidacy.

I want to thank John Michael Montgomery for singing here today.

I just came from Millvale, where I saw the devastation caused by the floods of Ivan. I assure you that we're helping as much as we possibly can to help people restore their lives, and that the prayers of the people of this country are with those who suffer.

I'm looking forward to this campaign. I like to campaign, because I like to be with people. I'm looking forward to telling people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I saw a problem with Medicare. See, Medicare was—is a very important program, but it wasn't changing with medicine. There was a problem. For example, Medicare would pay $100,000 to—for heart surgery for a senior but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That's a problem. It's a problem for our seniors, who deserve modern medicine in Medicare. It's a problem for the taxpayers. So I brought Republicans and the Democrats together to strengthen Medicare. In 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage. We're not turning back to the old days.

When we came into office, the economy was turning south. The stock market had been in decline prior to our arrival. The first three quarters of my Presidency were a recession. We started to recover a little bit, and then we found out some of our citizens didn't tell the truth. Some CEOs forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen in this country. By the way, we

passed tough laws that now make it abundantly clear, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of our country. Then we got hit with an attack, and that hurt us. It cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

There was a problem. We're overcoming those problems. We're overcoming those obstacles because our workers are great, our farmers know what they're doing, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We're overcoming those problems because of well-timed tax cuts.

Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Inflation is low. Mortgage rates are low. You're adding jobs here in the State of Pennsylvania. This economy is growing, and we're not going to go backwards. We're not turning back to the old days.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, principled leadership. And that's why, with your help, we're going to carry Pennsylvania and win a great victory in November.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. We passed a new law called the No Child Left Behind Act. It raises standards. It uses accountability to solve problems early, before a child simply gets shuffled through the schools. It trusts the local people to make the right decision for the schools and the community in which you live. This law is making a difference. Here in the State of Pennsylvania, 81 percent of the Pennsylvania schools are meeting higher standards. That's up from 62 percent in just one year.

Across this Nation, test scores are rising. African American and Hispanic students are closing the achievement gap here in America. We're making progress in this country, and we're not turning back to the old days of low expectations.

We'll do more to improve education and prepare our children for the future. Listen, we've got a changing job force. Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why, at our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We'll emphasize math and science so our kids can fill the jobs of the 21st century. We'll reward teachers who gets results for their students. We'll give our best teachers incentives to teach in the neediest schools. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low and middle-income Americans, we will help more of our citizens start their career with a college diploma.

Listen, I understand the world in which we live is changing. Think about what happened over the course of the last couple of decades. It used to be a person would work for one company, have one career. They'd have one pension plan, one health care plan. That person was a man. Today, our workers change jobs and careers, and women are working not only inside the house but outside the house. This workforce has changed, yet the systems of Government have not changed with the times. The pension plans, health coverage, the Tax Code, and worker training were created in a world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for President to transform these

systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to make your own choices and to realize the great promise of our country.

Listen, I understand a hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. If we want to keep jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If we want people to find work here, we've got to do something about these regulations and lawsuits that are making it hard on the employers in the State of Pennsylvania.

If we want to keep jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. Listen, in order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to encourage conservation, the use of renewables such as ethanol and biodiesel. We've got to use—modernize the electricity grid. We've got to use technologies to make sure we can use our coal. I'm for clean coal technology. We've got to use our technology so we can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism. See, we open up our markets for a—for goods from overseas, and that's good for you. If you've got more—more to choose from, you're likely going to get the good you want at a better price and higher quality. What I'm saying to places like China is, "You treat us the way we're treating you." And I'm saying that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we've got jobs here, to make sure this recovery we have is a sustained—is sustained economic growth, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has promised $2.2 trillion of new Federal spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That $2.2 trillion is a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it? How are you going to pay for this new spending?" He said, "We're going to tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you? Here's the problem with that. You can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion. There's a tax gap. And guess who always gets stuck with the bill? I'll tell you something else about that language, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, so you get stuck with the bill. We're not going to let John Kerry tax you, because we're going to carry Pennsylvania and win in November.

Say something else about the Tax Code. That Tax Code needs to be changed. It's a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Tax Code and make it more fair for the American people.

In a changing world, the economy changes, the nature of the jobs change, and oftentimes, there's a skills gap. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system. We're going to expand access to our community colleges so our workers are going to be able to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

In a changing world, we've got to think about how to provide stability in people's lives. One way to provide stability in a person's life is to encourage ownership. We want more people owning their own home. Do you realize, under my administration, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high? Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand ownership so more and more people are able to open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

In changing times, we need to reform our health care system. The costs are rising rapidly. I've got a commonsense, practical

plan to make sure health care is available and affordable. When it comes to health care, my opponent wants the Government to dictate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He wants the Government to decide. When it comes to health care, I want you to decide. More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured are small-business employees and their families. We've got to change law to allow small firms to pool together so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big businesses get.

My opponent opposes association health plans. Those are the plans that will give small businesses the opportunity to afford insurance so their workers can have insurance. I believe that we need to continue to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small businesses credits that encourage them to put money in health savings accounts. We want more workers to have their own health savings accounts so they can base medical decision on advice from their doctor, not because of people at HMOs.

I believe we have an obligation to help the poor in this country. That's why I want to expand community health centers, places where the poor and the indigent can get good preventative care and good primary care. I want a community health center in every poor county in America.

I'm going to tell you what else you've got a problem with in this State, and many others do as well in other States. One reason your costs of health care are going up, and one reason it's harder to find a doc these days, like ob-gyns, is because of the frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice: I'm standing with the docs and the patients and the hospitals. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to make sure health care works in America, we'll make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in our Nation's Capital.

I see we've got some young workers here. I want to talk about Social Security right quick. I told you systems have changed—or systems haven't changed, and they're stuck in the past. Listen, if you're a senior, you will get your Social Security check. You should not listen to the political nonsense that happens in the course of a campaign. The Social Security trust has got enough money to fulfill its promise to those who are receiving Social Security today.

If you're a baby boomer, like me—[*laughter*]—leading edge of the baby boomers, I might add—[*laughter*]—we're going to be in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account that earns better interest than the Social Security trust, a personal savings account they can call their own and a personal savings account Government cannot take away.

Listen, in a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the second amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election also determines how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought

the terrorists around the world, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear: We're defending the homeland; we're transforming our military; we're strengthening our intelligence services; we're staying on the offensive; we're striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world. And by being steadfast and resolved, we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was the transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

We've led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer. And this progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some hard decisions.

Our hardest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We know he had harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks in Europe and Asia. We knew Saddam harbored Abu Abbas, who found refuge in Baghdad after he killed American Leon Klinghoffer. We knew he paid the families of suicide bombers. We knew Saddam Hussein harbored Zarqawi, the terrorist we have seen who has beheaded some of our citizens. We knew they were there. We knew that Saddam Hussein was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. We knew that he had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. We knew we had been at war with him once before. We knew he was a threat. And after September the 11th, this Nation must think differently about threats. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

I went to the United States Congress. Members of both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the same intelligence I was looking at, remembered the same history I remembered, and voted to authorize the use of force.

Before the United States President ever commits people into harm's way, he must try all options to deal with the threat. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I was hoping we could deal with the threat in Iraq by the use of diplomacy. That's why I went to the United Nations. At the United Nations, I made my case. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the history of Saddam Hussein and passed yet another resolution, 15 to nothing, that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when international bodies speak, they better mean what they say.

Saddam Hussein once again did not listen to the demands of the free world. He ignored this resolution, just like he ignored resolution after resolution after resolution for nearly a decade. He just didn't believe "serious consequences." He was hoping we'd look the other way. He was hoping that we would continue with the failed policy. As a matter of fact, when we sent inspectors in—or the U.N. sent inspectors into Iraq, he systematically deceived the inspectors. That's what he did. So I had a choice to make at this time. Diplomacy has failed. Do I trust Saddam Hussein? Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted in our self-interest, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq now live in freedom. Do you realize, a little more than 3 years ago, young girls couldn't go to school in Afghanistan because that

country was run by some barbarians whose dim vision of the world is the exact opposite of ours. Their moms could be pulled out in the public square and whipped or sports stadium and killed because they wouldn't toe the line of this ideology of hate. Today, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October Presidential election. Amazing, isn't it?

How powerful a statistic is that? Three years to go from darkness to light because of a free society. It's in our interests that Afghanistan no longer is a safe haven for Al Qaida. It's in our interests that Afghanistan has now joined us in fighting the terrorists. It's in our interests to spread freedom, because free societies are peaceful societies.

Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq has a strong Prime Minister, with whom I met yesterday and will meet tomorrow and hold a press conference with him. I can't wait for the American people to hear this man. He's strong. He's tough. He was lying in a bed one night in London, and he wakes up—late at night, he was asleep—wakes up late at night; two henchmen from Saddam Hussein are by his bed with an ax trying to ax this man to death. He, fortunately, was able to get out of the situation. Today, he's the Prime Minister of Iraq. You talk about a guy who understands the stakes, somebody who understands what it means to live under the thumb of a thug. Prime Minister Allawi believes in the future of the people. They're going to have elections in January in Iraq. When America gives its word, America will keep its word. We'll stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help the new leaders train their armies so the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defeating the few who want to stop the ambitions of the many. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great United States military, and I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. I've had the privilege of meeting with the service men and women who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I know their courage and their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform today.

Our Government must support the men and women of our uniform. We owe it to them, and we owe it to their loved ones. That's why I went to the United States Congress a year ago and asked for $87 billion in supplemental funding that was crucial money needed for our troops who were in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. That money was for ammunition and fuel and spare parts and body armor and hazard pay and health benefits. It was vital request. We received great support, bipartisan support. Republicans and Democrats said, "This is vital funding." As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against funding the troops——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——only 12 Members, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only 4 Members of the Senate, only 4 out of 100, voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops. Two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him—they said, "How could you have made that vote?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, right before I voted against it." Not a lot of people talk like that in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. And they pressed him further. He finally just said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter."

There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Prime Minister Allawi said yesterday that we're making progress in Iraq. Yet as we're seeing on our TV screens, it's tough; it's hard work. It's incredibly hard work, because the terrorists are desperate. They're trying to affect the elections in Iraq. They can't stand the thought of the people of that country voting to decide who their leaders are. They want to impose their dim vision on the people of that country. That's what they're trying to do, and that's why you're seeing on your TV screens awful brutality. Those terrorists will not defeat our military. They cannot defeat our military. The only thing they can do is behead people and try to shake our will.

They're trying to shake the will of the Iraqis. They're trying to convince the Iraqis freedom is not worth it. They're trying to convince the American people that we will not succeed. That's the only weapon they have. They don't understand our country. We abhor the violence. We can't stand the beheadings, but we're not going to let thugs keep us from doing our duty.

We have a strategy to help this country get to elections. We have a strategy to bring security to that country. Our military commanders have got flexibility to do their job. They're adjusting to conditions on the ground. We're helping the Iraqis rebuild their country. But one thing we will do—we will show our troops, the Iraqi people, the world, and our enemies that America will stand firm, and we will prevail.

And the way to prevail, the way toward the successful conclusion we all want, the way to secure Iraq and bring our troops home is not to wilt or waver or send mixed signals. Incredibly, this week, my opponent said he would prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's not the first time he's changed positions. You cannot lead the war on terror if you wilt or waver when the times are tough. You cannot expect the Iraqi people to stand up and do the hard work for democracy if you are pessimistic about their ability to govern themselves. You can't expect the Iraqi people to have faith when you believe they were better off with Saddam Hussein in power. You can't expect these people to trust America if we think mass graves are the wave of the future of these people and the torture rooms of Saddam Hussein.

What kind of message does this send our troops, who are risking their lives and see firsthand the mission is hard, when they hear people who grow—when they wilt in the face of pressure? No, this mission is crucial to our success, and it's crucial to our future, and it's crucial to freedom. Mixed signals are the wrong signals. I will continue to lead with clarity, and when I say something, I mean it. I appreciate——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I had a chance to visit with some of our friends and allies who are making contributions to our coalition in Afghanistan and Iraq. I had a chance to thank them on behalf of the American people for the sacrifices they're making, for the sacrifices their moms and dads of those troops—their troops, and the husbands and wives of their troops are making. I'm proud of the coalition we've put together. We've got some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. And I'm going to continue to lead, to build these alliances over the next 4 years. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. You know, I sat down with Prime Minister Koizumi yesterday. I said, "I'm using your name quite a bit when I'm traveling around the country." I said, "I hope it's all right." [*Laughter*] "Sometimes, I'm telling the people you like Elvis too." [*Laughter*] I like to tell my—about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi because it wasn't all that long ago in the

march of history that we were at war with the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. As a matter of fact, I bet you a lot of your relatives fought against the Japanese. I know my dad did, and many others did as well.

And after we won in World War II, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, wanted to work for democracy in Japan because he believed liberty could transform nations. And you can bet there were some skeptics. There were skeptics then, just like there are some skeptics today. A lot of people in America said, "Why do we want to work with an enemy? This enemy can't change its ways. We just fought them." But a lot of citizens didn't agree with that. Japan did become a democracy. And today, I sit down at the table with a former enemy, talking about achieving the peace we all want.

Liberty is powerful. One day, an American President is going to be sitting down with a duly elected official from Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

It's hard work to spread liberty, particularly in societies that have only known tyranny. But I believe the women of the greater Middle East desire to be free. I believe they want to be able to realize their dreams. I believe if they're the mother of a young girl, they want that young girl to be able to grow up and be anything she can be in life. I believe if given a chance, the people in that part of the world will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I said in my convention speech, we've done the hard work. We've climbed the mountain, and now we can see the valley below. And that valley is a peaceful valley. That valley is a hopeful valley. That valley is a better day for every single citizen who lives in this country. This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We'll continue to work to spread freedom and peace.

You know, for all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the ropeline, doing my best to console those folks who had just been doing everything they could to find a buddy out of the rubble, save people from harm's way. A guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Don't let me down." Those were impressions I'll never forget. I wake up every morning trying to figure out how best to defend our country. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

When I campaigned—4 years ago, when I campaigned in your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

May God bless you. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to professional golfer Arnold Palmer; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Lynn C. Swann, chairman, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; entertainer John Michael Montgomery; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Porter J. Goss as Director of Central Intelligence
September 22, 2004

I am very pleased that a strong bipartisan majority in the U.S. Senate today voted to confirm Porter Goss as the next Director of Central Intelligence. Porter Goss is a leader with strong experience in intelligence and in the fight against terrorism. He is the right man to take on the essential mission of leading the CIA at this critical moment in our Nation's history as we face the challenges and the dangerous threats of this century. I look forward to his counsel as we implement intelligence reform, including the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
September 22, 2004

President George W. Bush and President Pervez Musharraf met in New York on September 22, and reaffirmed their commitment to broaden and strengthen the U.S.-Pakistan relationship in keeping with the vision agreed to in their meeting at Camp David in June last year.

The two Presidents reviewed progress in the global war on terror, and pledged to continue working together, ensuring that the appropriate resources are available. President Bush expressed appreciation for Pakistan's efforts in this area. They also welcomed the progress of the Joint Working Group on Terrorism and Law Enforcement and agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in this regard.

President Musharraf highlighted the need for addressing the underlying causes that have given rise to disaffection and frustration in the Islamic world. In this connection, he recalled his concept of Enlightened Moderation which envisages cooperation of the United States and other leading world powers in finding solutions to long standing issues that affect the Muslim world.

The two leaders also noted their cooperation to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and committed to sustain full efforts towards this end.

The two leaders discussed the importance of building security and prosperity in the region. They noted the urgency of maintaining a safe environment for fair elections in Afghanistan and President Bush thanked President Musharraf for his efforts in support of out-of-country voting in Pakistan.

President Bush noted the significant economic progress that Pakistan has made in recent years, and reaffirmed U.S. support for Pakistan's efforts to sustain reform and growth. He reiterated the U.S. Administration pledge of $3 billion over five years to help in important areas such as security and the social sector. President Musharraf expressed appreciation for US support to Pakistan's social sector, economic development and poverty reduction programs.

They reiterated their commitment to further expand bilateral trade and investment.

President Musharraf reiterated his commitment to democracy and his intent to strengthen the country's democratic institutions and bring sustainable democracy to Pakistan.

Taking note of the rich agenda for cooperation, President Bush once again emphasized the long-term U.S. commitment to Pakistan and to the region. President Musharraf expressed appreciation for the close collaboration between the two countries. Both Presidents agreed to further expand and deepen bilateral relations to the mutual benefit of the two countries.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks on the Opening of the National Museum of the American Indian
September 23, 2004

Thank you all for coming. Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are so honored that you're here, and we're honored to be with you.

This week, during one of the largest gatherings of American Indians in our Nation's history, we celebrate the legacy of the first people to call this land home. And we celebrate the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian, a unique and beautiful place that will introduce generations of visitors to a strong and living tradition. That museum is a long time in coming, but it now stands in a place of honor, exactly where it belongs, on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

I'm honored to call Ben Nighthorse Campbell a friend. He is a strong, strong leader. He is a proud Indian and a proud American. He represents the best of public service. And I appreciate his wife, Linda, being here as well. Thank you, friend. Plus, he's a pretty fine athlete. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Secretary Gale Norton, Secretary of the Interior, for being here, and other members of my administration involved with Indian affairs who are here. And they should be here. After all, they're with the leaders of sovereign tribes: Dave Anderson, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Department of Interior; Vickie Vasques, Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of Indian Education; Dr. Charles Grim, Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you all for coming.

I'm proud to be here with Senator Ted Stevens—Senator Stevens, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, strong backer of the American Indian, as is Senator Domenici and all the other Senators who are here. I appreciate you all coming.

I'm honored the Members of the House are here: Richard Pombo, chairman of the House Resources Committee; J.D. Hayworth, cochairman of the Native American Caucus; along with Dale Kildee of Michigan, cochairman of the Native American Caucus; Congressman Tom Cole from

Oklahoma; and other Members of the Congress. Proud you're here, and thank you for coming.

I'm honored to have distinguished tribal leaders here today. Thank you all for coming to Washington, DC. We're proud you're here. I appreciate Sheila Burke, the Deputy Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute. I thank Rick West, the Director of the National Museum of the American Indian, for being here as well.

I want to thank the Indian members of our United States military for joining us today. Thank you for your service. Finally, I want to thank the Cherokee Choir for filling the East Room with such beautiful music. Thank you all, and welcome to the White House.

The museum's location on the Mall is fitting, because the American Indian experience is central to the American story. That story has involved great injustice against native peoples and great contribution by native peoples.

We remember Sacagawea's presence with Lewis and Clark. What a heroic woman she was. We remember the patriotism and bravery of the Code Talkers in World War II. We're still looking for Clarence Wolf Guts. [*Laughter*] We also remember all the Native Americans who fought to defend America, including the 17 American service personnel we just recognized here.

Native Americans have supported this country during its times of need, and their contributions have made America stronger and better. Decades ago, there were some who viewed American Indians as the vanishing Americans, people on the margins of our national life. Yet, the exhibits in the new museum and the museum itself carry a different message. Many of its staff and curators are Native Americans, and the exhibits are created in close consultation with the tribes.

The National Museum of the American Indian shows how your ancestors once lived, and it does much more than that. It affirms that you and your tribal governments are strong and vital today and provides a place to celebrate your present achievements and your deepest hopes for the future. It allows all Americans to experience the rich culture of the American Indian.

Native American cultures survive and flourish when tribes retain control over their own affairs and their own future. That is why, earlier this morning, I signed an Executive memorandum to all Federal agencies reaffirming the Federal Government's longstanding commitment to respect tribal sovereignty and self-determination. My Government will continue to honor this government-to-government relationship.

Long before others came to the land called America, the story of this land was yours alone. Indians on this continent had their own languages and customs, just as you have today. They had jurisdiction over their lands and territories, just as you have today. And these sovereign tribal nations had their own systems of self-governance, just as you have today.

The National Museum of Indian Affairs affirms that this young country is home to an ancient, noble, and enduring native culture. And all Americans are proud of that culture. Like many Indian dwellings, the new museum building faces east, toward the rising sun. And as we celebrate this new museum and we look to the future, we can say that the sun is rising on Indian country.

Welcome to the White House. May God bless you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado and his wife, Linda; and Clarence Wolf Guts, World War II veteran and Lakota Sioux code talker.

Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relationship With Tribal Governments

September 23, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Government-to-Government Relationship with Tribal Governments

The United States has a unique legal and political relationship with Indian tribes and a special relationship with Alaska Native entities as provided in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, and Federal statutes. Presidents for decades have recognized this relationship. President Nixon announced a national policy of self-determination for Indian tribes in 1970. More recently, Executive Order 13175, entitled Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, was issued in 2000. I reiterated my Administration's adherence to a government-to-government relationship and support for tribal sovereignty and self-determination earlier this year in Executive Order 13336, entitled American Indian and Alaska Native Education.

My Administration is committed to continuing to work with federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis and strongly supports and respects tribal sovereignty and self-determination for tribal governments in the United States. I take pride in acknowledging and reaffirming the existence and durability of our unique government-to-government relationship and these abiding principles.

This commitment begins at the White House, where my Director of Intergovernmental Affairs serves as my White House liaison with all Indian nations and works with federally recognized tribal governments on an intergovernmental basis. Moreover, it is critical that all departments and agencies adhere to these principles and work with tribal governments in a manner that cultivates mutual respect and fosters greater understanding to reinforce these principles.

Accordingly, the head of each executive department and agency (agency) shall continue to ensure to the greatest extent practicable and as permitted by United States law that the agency's working relationship with federally recognized tribal governments fully respects the rights of self-government and self-determination due tribal governments. Department or agency inquiries regarding this memorandum, specifically those related to regulatory, legislative, or budgetary issues, should be directed to the Office of Management and Budget.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, by a party against the United States, its agencies, entities, or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of Iraq
September 23, 2004

President Bush. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to stand with the Prime Minister of a free and sovereign Iraq. Welcome, Mr. Prime Minister. I applaud your leadership and your courage. It's my honor to welcome a friend to the White House.

Prime Minister Allawi. Thank you.

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, you've accomplished a great deal in less—in the 3 months since the transition to a free Iraq that is governed by Iraqis. These have been months of steady progress, despite persistent violence in some parts of your country. Iraqis and their leaders are engaged in a great and historic enterprise to establish a new democracy at the heart of a vital region.

As friends of liberty, the new leaders of Iraq are friends of America and all civilized nations. As enemies of tyranny and terror, the people of Iraq and the American troops and civilians supporting their dreams of freedom have been the target of acts of violence. The enemies of freedom are using suicide bombing, beheadings, and other horrific acts to try to block progress. We're sickened by the atrocities, but we'll never be intimidated. And freedom is winning.

Mr. Prime Minister, America will stand with you until freedom and justice have prevailed. America's security and Iraq's future depend on it.

The Iraqi people are showing great courage and great determination. As terrorists have attacked Iraqi security forces, still more brave Iraqis have come forward to volunteer to serve their country. As killers have attempted to assassinate Government officials, Iraq's leaders have refused to be intimidated, and the vast majority of Iraqis remain committed to democracy.

The path to our safety and to Iraq's future as a democratic nation lies in the resolute defense of freedom. If we stop fighting the terrorists in Iraq, they would be free to plot and plan attacks elsewhere, in America and other free nations. To retreat now would betray our mission, our word, and our friends. Mr. Prime Minister, America will keep its commitments.

The path ahead is difficult because a free Iraq has deadly enemies. Remnants of the old regime and terrorist groups want to prevent Iraq's elections and demoralize Iraq's allies. Because of that, Prime Minister Allawi and I believe terrorist violence may well escalate as the January elections draw near. The terrorists know that events in Iraq are reaching a decisive moment. If elections go forward, democracy in Iraq will put down permanent roots, and terrorists will suffer a dramatic defeat. And because Iraq and America and our coalition are standing firm, the Iraqi people and not the terrorists will determine Iraq's future.

There's much at stake. Mr. Prime Minister, you recently said, "The war in Iraq now is not only an Iraqi war. It is a war for the civilized world to fight terrorists and terrorism, and there is no route but the route of winning." Prime Minister Tony Blair recently called the struggle in Iraq the crucible in which the future of global terrorism will be determined. I share the view of these strong leaders that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror, and our only option is victory.

We're making steady progress in implementing our five-step plan toward the goal we all want, completing the mission so that Iraq is stable and self-governing and American troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The first step was achieved on June 28th, not only on time but ahead of schedule, when the coalition transferred full sovereignty to a Government of Iraqi citizens.

The second step is to help Iraq's new Government establish stability and security. Iraq must be able to defend itself, and

Iraqi security forces are taking increasing responsibility for their country's security. Nearly 100,000 fully trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel are working today, and that total will rise to 125,000 by the end of this year. The Iraqi Government is on track to build a force of over 200,000 security personnel by the end of next year.

With the help of the American military, the training of the Iraqi army is almost halfway complete. And in Najaf and other important areas, Iraqi military forces have performed with skill and success. In Najaf, Iraqi and coalition forces effectively surrounded, isolated, and engaged enemy militias. Prime Minister Allawi and his Government reached out to the local population to persuade citizens the path to a better future would be found in political participation and economic progress. The Interim Government then negotiated from a position of strength to end the standoff.

Serious problems remain in several cities. Prime Minister Allawi believes this combination of decisive action and outreach to peaceful citizens is the most effective way to defeat terrorists and insurgents and secure the peace of Iraq. And America stands with him.

The third step in our plan is to continue improving Iraq's infrastructure. On television sets around the world, we see acts of violence; yet in most of Iraq, children are about to go back to school, parents are going back to work, and new businesses are being opened. Over 100 companies are now listed on the Iraqi stock exchange, and an average of 5 new companies are joining each week. Electricity has been restored above prewar levels. Telephone service has increased dramatically. More than 2,000 schools have been renovated, and millions of new textbooks have been distributed.

There is much more work to be done. We've already spent more than a billion dollars on urgent reconstruction projects in areas threatened by the insurgency. In the next several months, over $9 billion will be spent on contracts that will help Iraqis rebuild schools, refurbish hospitals and health clinics, repair bridges, upgrade the electricity grid, and modernize the communications system. Prime Minister Allawi and I both agree that the pace of reconstruction should be accelerated. We're working toward that goal.

The fourth step in our plan is to enlist additional international support for Iraq's transition to democracy. The multinational force of some 30 nations continues to help secure a free Iraq. We honor the service men and women of Great Britain, Bulgaria, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Thailand, and Ukraine who've died, besides Iraqis and Americans, for the cause of freedom and security of the world.

Our coalition is grateful that the United Nations has reestablished its mission in Baghdad. We're grateful to the G–8 countries and the European Union for pledging support to the new Iraqi Government. We're grateful to the NATO Alliance for helping to train Iraqi forces. We're grateful to many of Iraq's creditors, which have agreed to a further reduction of Iraq's debt. Because all nations have an interest in the success of a free Iraq, I urge all nations to join in this vital cause.

The fifth and most important step in our plan is to help Iraq conduct free national elections no later than next January. An Iraqi electoral commission is now up and running and has already hired personnel and is making key decisions about election procedures. Just this week, the commission began a public education campaign to inform Iraqis about the process and encourage them to become voters. United Nations electoral advisers are on the ground in Iraq, though more are needed. Prime Minister Allawi and I have urged the U.N. to send sufficient personnel to help ensure the success of Iraqi elections.

At every stage in this process of establishing self-government, the Iraqi people and their leaders have met the schedules

they set, and have overcome their challenges with confidence. And under this good man's leadership, they will continue to do so.

The war for Iraq's freedom is a fight against some of the most ruthless and brutal men on Earth. In such a struggle, there will be good days and there will be difficult days, but every day our resolve must remain firm.

Prime Minister, today I want to leave you and the nation you serve with a clear message: You have not faltered in a time of challenge, and neither will America. Thank you for your leadership. You honor us with your visit.

Prime Minister Allawi. Thank you.

Mr. President, thank you for those kind words. It is an honor to be here today in your Nation's Capital. It is a great honor to share this platform with you, a leader who worked tirelessly for the liberation of my country.

These last few days have been difficult for us Iraqis, for you Americans, and for all our allies. Let me start by saying that my thoughts and prayers are with the families of those fighting today in Iraq and, in particularly, with the families of those who have lost loved ones at the hands of the terrorists or the insurgents.

Like this nation, which is—which in the face of such brutality is standing strong against terrorism, so we Iraqis will not be cowed by the terrorists. Your Government and my Government understand what is at stake today in Iraq. Today, we face a concentrated campaign by terrorists and by the enemies of all the values which we hold dear, a campaign to shake our resolve and to prevent Iraq and Iraqis from attaining the freedom and democracy which we have dreamed of for more than the last 30 years. These terrorists understand all too well that success in Iraq will be an enormous blow for terrorism worldwide and an enormous step forward for peace and stability in the Middle East and in the wider world.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your determination to stand firm with us in Iraq and for the unflinching message which you are delivering to our enemies.

Mr. President, I stand here today as a Prime Minister of a country emerging finally from dark ages of tyranny, aggression, and corruption. Like you, I knew how evil Saddam Hussein and his regime truly were. Like you, I knew the damage he had brought on his country. Like you, I knew of the wars he had started and the dangers he posed to my region and the world, or at least I thought I knew. For I, like millions of other Iraqis, were forced into exile, realizing that we could only fight Saddam from outside Iraq. Even then we were not safe, as I myself can testify.

But when I returned to Iraq, following the liberation of my country, I was truly shocked by just how much damage Saddam had done to—in his 30 years of rule. Iraq is a deeply scarred society in a very troubled region. Today, we are witnessing all too vividly the true extent of the damage which Saddam inflicted on our society.

Mr. President, Iraqis thank God, thank America, and thank our allies that Saddam is gone. We are safer; the region is safer; the world is safer without him. But the scars will take time to—determination to—time and determination to heal.

Again, Mr. President, I thank you for your leadership. We had an excellent meeting today, building on the talks we had on Tuesday in New York. We discussed the challenges ahead of us and how to confront them. We discussed the plan to take Iraq through these difficulties and to ensure that democratic elections take place on time next year. And we discussed the importance of maintaining the strength of the coalition and the support of the international community in helping us to succeed. As we discussed, the plan focuses on building democracy, defeating the insurgency, and improving the quality of life for the ordinary Iraqis.

Our political plan is to isolate the terrorists from the communities in which they operate. We are working hard to involve as many people as we can in the political process, to cut the ground from under the terrorists' feet. Of course, we know that terrorism cannot be defeated with political tools alone, but we can weaken it. Ending local support helps us to tackle the enemy head on, to identify, isolate, and eradicate this cancer.

Our military plan will enable us to build and maintain security across Iraq. Ordinary Iraqis are anxious to take over entirely this role and to shoulder all the security burdens of our country as quickly as possible. We do not want the multinational force to stay in Iraq any more than you want to remain there. But for now, we need you. We need the help of our American and multinational partners while we continue to accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces.

The Iraqi Government now commands almost 100,000 trained and combat-ready Iraqis, including police, national guard, and army. The Government have accelerated the development of Iraqi special forces and established a counterterrorist strike force to address the specific problems caused by the insurgency. Our intelligence is getting better every day. You have seen that in the successful resolution of the Najaf crisis and in the targeted attacks against insurgents in Fallujah.

Finally, our economic plan is to improve the everyday lives of Iraqis as we deliver both political and security progress. Here, thanks to a large extent to the generous security and reconstruction funding approved by the United States Congress, work is underway. Oil pipelines are being repaired, basic services improved, streets and homes rebuilt, schools, hospitals, and clinics reopened. Thousands of Iraqis have new jobs. Salaries have been increased dramatically, in many cases five or four times over. Iraq's economy, freed from the stranglehold of a failed Ba'athist ideology, has finally started to flourish.

Mr. President, we also discussed the importance of holding free and fair national and local elections this coming January as planned. I know that some have speculated, even doubted whether this date can be met, so let me be absolutely clear that elections will occur in Iraq on time in January, because Iraqis want election on time. In 15 out of 18 Iraqi provinces, the security situation is good for elections to be held tomorrow. Here, Iraqis are getting on with their daily lives, hungry for the new political and economic freedoms they are enjoying. Although this is not what you see in your media, it is a fact.

The Iraqi elections may not be perfect. They may not be the best elections that Iraq will ever hold. They will no-doubtedly be an excuse for violence from those who despair and despise liberty, as we—as were the first elections in Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Indonesia. But they will take place, and they will be free and fair.

Finally, Mr. President, a word about international resolve. Iraq cannot accomplish this alone. The international forces of tyranny and oppression are lined up against us. Iraq is now the main battleground between the forces of hope and the forces of fear. This is a struggle which will shape the future of our world.

Already, Iraq has many partners. More than two dozen countries are represented in Iraq with troops on the ground. We Iraqis are grateful for each and every one of these courageous men and women. The United Nations, the European Union, the G–8 have lent their strong support. NATO, just yesterday, increased its commitment to Iraq. Many more nations have committed to Iraq future in the form of economic aid. I am grateful for the support. I look to my Arab brothers to join us fully.

I know it is difficult, but the coalition must stand firm. When governments negotiate with terrorists, everyone in the free world suffers. When political leaders sound

the sirens of defeatism in the face of terrorism, it only encourages more violence. Working together, we will defeat the killers, and we'll do this by refusing to bargain about our most fundamental principles.

I understand why, faced with the daily headlines, there are those doubts. I know too that there are—there will be many more setbacks and obstacles to overcome. But these doubters underestimate our country, and they risk fueling the hopes of terrorism.

Mr. President, there are those who want to divide our world. I appeal to you, who have done so much already to help us, to ensure they don't succeed.

Thank you.

President Bush. We'll take a couple of questions now. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Support for the U.S. Military/Terrorists in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, two more Americans have been beheaded. More than 300 Iraqis have been killed in the last week. Fallujah is out of Government control. And U.S. and Iraqi forces have been unable to bring security to diplomatic and commercial centers of Baghdad. Why haven't U.S. forces been able to capture or kill Al Zarqawi, who's blamed for much of the violence? And what's your answer to General John Abizaid's statement that, "I think we will need more troops than we currently have"?

President Bush. If that's what he says—he was in my office this morning. He didn't say that to me, but if he were to say that, I'd listen to him, just like I've said all along, that when our commanders say that they need support, they'll get support, because we're going to succeed in this mission.

The first part of the question was, how come we haven't found Zarqawi? We're looking for him. He hides. He is—he's got a effective weapon, and that is terror. I said yesterday that our military cannot be defeated by these thugs, that—but what they do is behead Americans so they can get on the TV screens. And they're trying to shake our will and trying to shake the Iraqis' will. That's what they're trying to do.

And like all Americans, I'm disgusted by that kind of behavior, but I'm not going to yield. We're not going to abandon the Iraqi people. It's in our interests that we win this battle in the war on terror. See, I think that the Iraq theater is a part of the war on terror. That's what the Prime Minister said as well. He believes the same thing. He understands what's going on there. After all, he lives there.

And I believe that if we wilt or leave, America's security will be much worse off. I believe that if Iraq—if we fail in Iraq, it's the beginning of a long struggle. We will not have done our duty to our children and our grandchildren. And so that's why I'm consistently telling the Iraqi citizens that we will not be intimidated. That's why my message to Mr. Zarqawi is: You cannot drive us out of Iraq by your brutality.

It's tough work. Everybody knows that. It's hard work. But we must not allow the actions of a few—and I emphasize that, I say that because there are 25 million Iraqis, by far the vast majority of whom want to live in a free society—and we cannot allow the actions of a few to determine the fate of these good people as well as the fate of the security of the United States.

Prime Minister Allawi. May I, Mr. President?

President Bush. Sure.

Prime Minister Allawi. I just have a few words to say to this question.

We cannot really substitute Iraq for Fallujah. Fallujah is a small part of Iraq. There are insurgents and terrorists who are active there for geographical reasons. The people of Fallujah are adamant that they should—whenever they are capable—to get rid of the insurgents. We have been talking to them. I have been talking to them, engaged in dialog. My deputy met with the

Fallujah tribes 2 days ago. Things are moving in the right direction, and we are hitting insurgents and terrorists in this part of the world.

To have more troops, we don't need. What we need really is to train more Iraqis, because this is ultimately for Iraqis, for Iraqi security forces to take responsibility for their own security and to defend the rest of the civilized world. What is happening, sir, in Iraq is, really, Iraq is becoming a frontline for a global fight against terrorists. So that's why Zarqawi is not alone. There are other groups similar to Zarqawi. There are groups who are insurgents who have stained their hands with the murders of the Iraqi people, who are Saddam's loyalists. They are working together. We assure you that we are going to defeat these evil forces, in Iraq and throughout the world.

President Bush. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

U.S. Strategy in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, John Kerry is accusing you of colossal failures of judgment in Iraq and having failed to level with the American people about how tough it is there. How do you respond to him?

President Bush. It's hard work in Iraq. Everybody knows that. We see it on our TV. My message is that we will stay the course and stand with these people so that they become free. It's in our national interest we do so. I believe this is a central part in the war on terror. I believe that when we succeed in Iraq, that America will be more secure. I also know that a free Iraq will send a clear message to the part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

It's hard work. The American people know that. But I believe it's necessary work, and I believe a leader must be consistent and clear and not change positions when times get tough. And the times have been hard. These are hard times. But I understand that—what mixed messages do. You can embolden an enemy by sending a mixed message. You can dispirit the Iraqi people by sending mixed messages. You send the wrong message to our troops by sending mixed messages. That's why I will continue to lead with clarity and in a resolute way, because I understand the stakes. These are high stakes, and we'll succeed.

Is anybody here from the Iraqi media? Why don't we—yes, please, sir. Standing next to a fine man in Deans [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers].

Reconstruction of Iraq

[*At this point, a question was asked in Arabic.*]

President Bush. I'm not so sure I agree with that. [*Laughter*]

[*The interpreter then translated the question as follows.*]

Q. The question to the U.S. President: What are the plans to accelerate the arrival of the fund donated by various countries around the world, the countries that are contributing to the rebuilding of Iraq, in order to encourage investments in Iraq, particularly with a very high unemployment rate?

President Bush. Right. There are at least three aspects to the reconstruction projects. One is our own money. And as I mentioned in my remarks, there's $7 billion committed. We've got more money to spend, and we will spend it when contracts are let and when there's enough security in certain neighborhoods to be able to spend the money wisely.

Secondly, part of making sure that the Iraq balance sheet is in good shape is to continue to work on debt reductions. I named former Secretary Jim Baker to go around to the creditor nations. He received some commitments. And I believe that the world will make its decision later on this year as to how much debt reduction there will be in Iraq.

And thirdly, as you mentioned, other nations have pledged help to the Iraqi people. And there will be a donors conference in

Japan, kind of an accountability conference for people to come and explain where they are in meeting their different promises.

Yes, NBC man, there—your name?

Q. Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News], sir.

President Bush. Gregory.

Saddam Hussein

Q. Mr. President, you say today that the work in Iraq is tough and will remain tough. And yet, you travel this country, and a central theme of your campaign is that America is safer because of the invasion of Iraq. Can you understand why Americans may not believe you?

President Bush. No. Anybody who says that we are safer with Saddam Hussein in power is wrong. We went into Iraq because Saddam Hussein defied the demands of the free world. We went into Iraq after diplomacy had failed. And we went into Iraq because I understand after September the 11th we must take threats seriously, before they come to hurt us.

And I think it's a preposterous claim to say that America would be better off with Saddam Hussein in power. I certainly know that that's the case for America, and I certainly know it's the case for the Iraqi people. These are the people who were tortured. This good man was abed in a London flat, and he wakes up with two Saddam henchmen there with axes, trying to cut him to pieces with an ax. And fortunately, he's alive today. Fortunately, we call him friend and ally. But he knows what it means to have lived under a society in which a thug like Saddam Hussein would send people with axes to try to kill him in bed in a London flat. No, this world is better off with Saddam Hussein in prison.

Q. Sir, may I just follow, because I don't think you're really answering the question. I mean, I think you're responding to Senator Kerry, but there are beheadings regularly, the insurgent violence continues, and there are no weapons of mass destruction. My question is, can you understand that Americans may not believe you when you say that America is actually safer today?

President Bush. Imagine a world in which Saddam Hussein were still in power. This is a man who harbored terrorists, Abu Abbas, Abu Nidal, Zarqawi. This is a man who was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. This is a man who used weapons of mass destruction. Going from tyranny to democracy is hard work, but I think the argument that says that Saddam Hussein—if Saddam Hussein were still in power, we'd be better off is wrong.

King [John King, Cable News Network].

Decisionmaking on Troop Levels/National Intelligence Estimate

Q. Sir, I'd like you to answer Senator Kerry and other critics who accuse you of hypocrisy or opportunism when on the one hand you put so much stock in the CIA when it said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and now say it is just guessing when it paints a pessimistic picture of the political transition.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. And I like to, if you don't mind, follow on something the Prime Minister just said. If General Abizaid says he needs more troops and the Prime Minister says he does not want more troops, who wins?

President Bush. Let me talk to General Abizaid. As I said, he just came in to see me, and I want to make sure—I'm not suggesting any of the reporters here might be taking something out of context. That would never happen in America. But nevertheless, I do want to sit down and talk to him about it. Obviously, we can work this out. It's in the—if our commanders on the ground feel it's in the interest of the Iraq citizens to provide more troops, we'll talk about it. That's—that's why—they're friends—that's what we do about friends.

First part of the question—oh, yes, yes——

Q. They say you've been opportunistic——

President Bush. Yes, got it. Listen, the other day I was asked about the NIE, which is a National Intelligence Estimate. This is a report that talks about possibilities about what can happen in Iraq, not probabilities. I used an unfortunate word, "guess." I should have used "estimate." And the CIA came and said, "This is a possibility, this is a possibility, and this is a possibility." But what's important for the American people to hear is reality. And the reality is right here in the form of the Prime Minister, and he is explaining what is happening on the ground. That's the best report. And this report was written in July, and now we are here in September. And as I said, "estimate" would have been a better word.

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Hold on for a minute. Hold on for a minute, please, please. We've got other people from—hold on for a second.

Prime Minister Allawi. From the other——

President Bush. From Iraq. Are you from Iraq?

Q. No.

President Bush. Okay. No, hold on for a second. We need people from Iraq first, please. One journalist from Iraq. You're not from Iraq, Allen [Mike Allen, Washington Post], and neither are you, Elisabeth [Elisabeth Bumiller, New York Times].

Prime Minister Allawi. Give Al Arabiya——

President Bush. Is anybody here from CBS? Roberts [John Roberts, CBS News], there you are. Please.

Q. ——happy to be here.

President Bush. Happy to be here, thank you. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sir, you——

President Bush. Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News], you're next.

Iraqi Elections/Security Situation in Iraq

Q. You have been accused on the campaign trail in this election year of painting an overly optimistic portrait of the situation on the ground in Iraq. Yesterday, in Valley Forge, you said that there was a "handful" of people who were willing to kill to try to disrupt the process. Isn't that really understating the case, particularly when there are intelligence reports that hundreds if not thousands of foreign fighters are streaming across the border from Syria to take up the fight of the insurgency? And do you believe, given the situation on the ground in Fallujah and other northern cities in the Sunni Triangle, that elections are possible in 4 months?

President Bush. I do, because the Prime Minister told me they are. He is—he's interested in moving this country forward. And you heard his statement, and I believe him.

The first part of the question?

Q. The first question was, aren't you being——

President Bush. Yes, got it, got it. Yes. Yesterday——

Q. ——disingenuous——

President Bush. Right. I said—look, what we're seeing on our TV screens are the acts of suicide bombers. They're the people that are affecting the daily—the nightly news. And they know its effect. I said that the enemy cannot defeat us militarily. What they can do is take acts of violence that try to discourage us and try to discourage the Prime Minister and the people of Iraq.

Look, I'm fully aware we're fighting former Ba'athists and Zarqawi network people. But by far, the vast majority of people, John, and—of 25 million people—want to live in freedom. My point is, is that a few people, relative to the whole, are trying to stop the march of freedom.

It is tough work. Everybody in America knows that, and the fundamental question is, are we going to allow the tough work to cause us to retreat, to waver? And my

answer to the American people and the Iraqi people and to the enemy is that we will complete our mission. We will do our duty. We will adjust strategies on the ground, depending upon the tactics of the enemy, but we're not going to allow the suiciders to drive us out of Iraq.

Terry.

Prime Minister Allawi. May I——

President Bush. Yes, please.

Prime Minister Allawi. Let me explain something which is very important. I have noticed—and the media have been neglected and omitted several times—in the Western media—Iraq is made out of 18 provinces, 18, 1-8. Out of these 18 provinces, 14 to 15 are completely safe; there are no problems. And I can count them for you, starting from Basra moving into Iraq Kurdistan. There are three areas, three provinces where there are pockets of insurgents, pockets of terrorists who are acting there and are moving from there to inflict damage elsewhere in the country.

So really, if you care to look at Iraq properly and go from Basra to Nasiriyah to Kut to Diyala to Najaf to Karbala to Diwaniya to Samarra to Kirkuk to Sulaymaniyah to Dahuk to Arbil, there are no problems. It's safe. It's good. There are problems in Fallujah. Fallujah is part of a province; the province is called Al Anbar. It's vast, very big. It has many other important towns such as Ana, such as Rawa, such as Ramadi. There is nothing there. In Ana and Rawa, indeed, there is nothing, no problem, except on a small pocket in Fallujah.

So really, I call upon the responsible media throughout the world, not only here, to look at the facts as they are in Iraq and to propagate these facts to the international community.

I am not trying to undermine that there are dangers. There are dangers in Iraq. There are problems, and we are facing international terrorist onslaught on Iraq. I, personally, receive every day a threat. In the last 4 weeks, they found four conspiracies to kill me. And likewise, they are killing people—they are killing officials; they are killing innocent people. But the Iraqis are not deterred, and we are not going to be deterred. I went the next day and saw our recruitment center for the police, after they killed, massacred 40, 45 people. I found hundreds of people coming to be volunteer—to volunteer to the police and to the army. I spoke to them. They are all upbeat. They are resolved to beat terrorism and to defeat the insurgents.

These are facts that one really needs to explain to you, and you need to explain it to the people.

President Bush. Terry.

Iraqi Support for Coalition Efforts

Q. Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, I'd like to ask about the Iraqi people. Both of you have spoken for them today, and yet, over the past several months, there have been polls conducted by the Coalition Provisional Authority, by the Oxford Institute, and other reputable organizations that have found very strong majorities do not see the United States as a liberator but as an occupier, are unhappy with American policy, and want us out. Don't the real voices of the Iraqi people, themselves, contradict the rosy scenarios you're painting here today?

President Bush. Let me start by that. You said the poll was taken when the CPA was there?

Q. One poll——

President Bush. Yes, okay, let me stop you. First of all, the Iraqi people now have got Iraqi leadership. Prime Minister Allawi and his Cabinet are making decisions on behalf of the Iraqi people. Secondly, I saw a poll that said the right track/wrong track in Iraq was better than here in America. [*Laughter*] It's pretty darn strong. I mean, the people see a better future.

Talk to the leader. I agree; I'm not the expert on how the Iraqi people think, because I live in America, where it's nice and safe and secure. But I talk to this man.

One reason I'm optimistic about our ability to get the job done is because I talk to the Iraqi Prime Minister. I'm also optimistic that people will choose freedom over tyranny every time. That's what I believe.

But Mr. Prime Minister, you might answer the question on the polls. There's a lot of polls. Sometimes they show you up and sometimes they show you down, as you might remember.

Prime Minister Allawi. Let me take a minute to explain to you something, a factual event. I meet, personally, every now and then with the fringes of the so-called resistance to try and talk them into respecting law and order and withdraw their arms. And I ask them in a very honest, very open way, I say to them, "What do you want to achieve? Could you know exactly what you want to achieve? Do you want to bring Saddam back from the hole in the ground, living like a rat? Do you want to bring him back to rule Iraq? Or do you want to bring bin Laden or similar persons to bin Laden to rule Iraq? If you want to do this, we will fight you room to room, house to house. If you want to be part of the political process, you have to be part of the political process, you are welcome."

"If you do not want the multinational force in Iraq"—I was talking to Fallujah people recently, to tribes, ex-army officers, ex-Saddam loyalists—"if you want the multinational force out, win the elections. Go to the United Nations, talk to the Security Council, and tell them we don't need the multinational forces. But I tell you what is going to happen. If you ask the multinational force to leave prematurely"—this is me talking to the Fallujah people—"your country will be in ruins, and we cannot now, on our feet, stand and fight terrorism and global terrorism."

These are realities. And once you are in Iraq, I will be your* host. I can put you together with these people in my home, and you can talk to them. And you can find out yourselves that the Iraqis tremendously, by and large, respect the United States and respect the other partners in the coalition for helping Iraq, not only in liberation but now in helping Iraq to rebuild itself and to rebuild its institutions.

President Bush. Let me say one other thing about why I'm optimistic we'll succeed. By the way, you can understand it's tough and still be optimistic. You can understand how hard it is and believe we'll succeed.

I remember when some were talking about the possibility of success in Afghanistan in pretty stark terms. I don't know if you remember that period or not, but there was a period where some were saying that it wasn't possible for democracy to come forward in Afghanistan. Today, 10 million citizens have registered to vote, 41 percent of whom are women. It's a phenomenal statistic, I think. I think it shows what's possible if you believe—if you have certain beliefs from which you won't waver. And I believe people yearn to be free.

Again, I think if you look at polls—which sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't, admittedly, Moran—that by far the vast majority of Iraqis want to vote. They want to live in freedom. And the fundamental question is, do we—is this: Do we have the will to stay? Do we have the will to put smart strategy in place? I've laid out the strategy. We're implementing the strategy. But really, do we have the will to complete the mission? And my message to the Iraqi people and to the enemy and to our troops in harm's way and to our allies is: We'll complete the mission.

Listen, last question—Wendell [Wendell Goler, Fox News Channel]. And then we—I think it's probably time to head into the air-conditioning——

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Excuse me, ma'am. Wendell.

* White House correction.

Impact of Mixed Signals on Coalition Efforts

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, in the past couple of days you have been talking about the consequences of the mixed messages you say John Kerry sends. I want to ask you, sir, do you mean immediate consequences, not just if the Senator is elected? Do you mean that the messages being sent now have a negative effect on the effort in Iraq? And does making the war in Iraq a part of a campaign also have consequences on the situation there, sir?

President Bush. Well, I think—look, in a campaign, it's—the war of Iraq is going to be part of a campaign. It's—this is a major moment in American history. These are historic times, and I view it as a great opportunity to help secure our country. As I said before, Iraq is a central part of the war on terror, and I believe it's important for us to succeed there because of that.

See, 9/11 changed everything. September the 11th meant that we had to deal with a person like Saddam Hussein. Of course, I was hoping it could be done diplomatically. But diplomacy failed, and so the last resort of a President is to use force. And we did, and now we're helping the Iraqis.

The Prime Minister said something very interesting a while ago, and it's important for the American people to understand. Our strategy is to help the Iraqis help themselves. It's important that we train Iraqi troops. There are nearly 100,000 troops trained. The Iraqi * national army is a part of the army. By the way, it was the Iraqi * national army that went into Najaf and did the work there. There's a regular army being trained. There are border guards being trained. There are police being trained. That's a key part of our mission.

But Wendell, I think the world watches America. We're an influential nation, and everybody watches what we say. And I think it's very important for the American President to mean what he says. That's why I understand that the enemy could misread what I say. That's why I try to be as clearly as I can. I don't want them to be emboldened by any confusion or doubt. I don't want them to think that, well, maybe all they've got to do is attack, and we'll shirk our duties. See, they've been emboldened before. They have caused certain nations to withdraw from coalitions as a result of their action, such action reinforcing the ability for suiciders, for example, to affect free societies. I know that. I've seen firsthand the tactics of these killers. And so therefore, I think it's very important for all of us involved in the process not to send mixed signals. I don't know what the enemy thinks today. But I do know they're watching America very carefully. I do know they want to affect other nations by their acts of murder. I do know they were emboldened when Spain withdrew from Iraq as a result of attacks and election.

And therefore, I have a duty to our troops, for starters—most importantly—not to send a mixed signal. I want our troops to know that the sacrifices they are making are worthwhile and necessary for the security of this country.

And I want—don't want the Iraqis to fear that, oh, all of a sudden there will be a change of heart, that there'll be tough times politically or that a poll might say something and, therefore, cause me to change my opinion. I don't want them to think that, because they have to make the hard choices for freedom. They have to go from a society that has been tortured by a brutal thug to a society in which they take responsibility for their daily lives.

I don't want the coalition forces to feel like we're wavering. And so I understand that people watch our words, and that's an explanation of why I say what I say.

Listen, thank you all very much.

Mr. Prime Minister, appreciate you. Good job.

* White House correction.

Prime Minister Allawi. Okay. Thank you.
President Bush. Proud you're here.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:06 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, American citizens who were killed in Iraq on September 20 and 21, respectively, by militants led by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; James A. Baker III, former Presidential envoy on the issue of Iraqi debt; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Allawi referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks in Bangor, Maine
September 23, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I'm honored to be back in this beautiful State. I wasn't sure I'd be invited back after the last time I came; I didn't make my bed. [*Laughter*] What a beautiful day in such a glorious part of the world. I'm so honored you all came. I'm here to ask for the vote. That's what I'm doing.

I believe you got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote and tell them why you're running. That's what I'm here to do today. I'm also here to ask for your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors. I'd like for you to remind people in the community in which you live, we have a responsibility in a free society to go to the polls.

When you're out there registering, make sure you register all Republicans. Make sure you register independents. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And then once you get them registered, get them headed to the polls. And when you get them headed to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

My only regret is that Laura is not here with me. She was a public school librarian in Texas when I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. The other night in New York City, the American people got to see Laura at her best, her—decent, strong, compassionate woman. She's a great mom, a great wife. She needs to be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Now, listen, I admit he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] Some of you out there don't either. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him for his judgment. I picked him because he's a man of a lot of experience. I picked him because he can get the job done on behalf of the American people.

I want to thank Peter Cianchette, my chairman here in the State. I want to thank all of the grassroots activists, people like Pete who are putting up the signs and making the phone calls. It takes a lot of work to get this many people to show up here in Bangor, Maine. I want to thank all of those who helped turn out such a great crowd. I appreciate your effort. It means a lot.

I'm sorry the two United States Senators are—they're working for you. I appreciate their friendship. I'm proud to call Olympia

Snowe and Susan Collins friends. I know you're proud to call them Senator.

I want to thank all the statehouse people who are here. I appreciate you serving your community. I appreciate your serving your State. I also appreciate Brian Hamel. I flew down from Washington, DC, with Brian Hamel. I had a chance to visit with him. There's no doubt in my mind he should be the next Congressman from the Second Congressional District. And I want to thank his wife, Gail, and his daughters, Natalie, Abbie, and Molly, for supporting their dad when he's out running for the Congress.

I want to thank Charlie Summers. He's running the First Congressional District. When he wins, he's going to have old 41 and Barbara as constituents. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Jim Tobin, my regional chairman.

I want to thank Mark Wills for being here. Mark, thank you. Proud you're here. I want to thank the high school band that's joined us today, John Bapst Band. Thank you for coming. I will try to keep my speech short so you can get home and do your homework. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Steve Hanington. He's the president of the American's Logger Council. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank all the loggers who are here today. Thank you for helping us put together the Healthy Forests Initiative, good piece of legislation. I appreciate you working on it with us. I want to thank the lobstermen who are here with us today. [*Applause*] Oh, yes.

I want to thank the Bangor Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America for being here. Thank you for coming. The Freeport Flag Ladies are with us. WAVES International is with us. Veterans of the Military Order of the Purple Heart are with us.

I'm really looking forward to this campaign. I like to get out and talk about what I believe, where I stand, and where I'm going to lead this Nation for the next 4 years. I believe every child can learn and every school should teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectation. We had a practice in this country where, in some public schools, kids were just shuffled through grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. And that wasn't right. We need to raise the standards. We need to trust the local people to design a curriculum that works best in the local community. We need to support our teachers and principals. We need to measure early and solve problems, before they're too late.

The reforms we passed are working. And the minority gap is closing. The achievement gap amongst minority students is closing in America. We're making progress, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. See, I went up to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I saw a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing, and Medicare wasn't. Take this fact: Medicare would pay $100,000 for heart surgery but wouldn't pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair for our seniors. It meant the system needed to be changed for the better. I called the Republicans and Democrats together. I signed a law that strengthened Medicare. Our seniors will be getting prescription drugs in 2006, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy, innovation, and spirit of our workers, our loggers, our lobstermen, our small-business owners, our farmers and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

We've been through a lot. This economy has been through a lot. When you're out there rounding up the vote, remind people what we have been through. That stock market started to go down about 5 months before we showed up in Washington. Then we had a recession we had to live with. Started to come out of that recession, and

some citizens in this country forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen. They fudged the books. They didn't tell the truth. It created a crisis of confidence. Those corporate scandals hurt our economy. We've passed tough laws in Washington. It's abundantly clear now that we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us. Some estimate that it cost us a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

I mean, we've been through some tough times when it comes to this economy. Yet, we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in the State of Maine is 4.5 percent. This economy is strong. It is getting stronger, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I am running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that's why, with your help, we'll carry Maine and win a great victory in November.

I understand the world we live in is changing. Think about what happened over the past 30 years. You know, the workplace used to be a place where a man would only show up, and they'd have one job, one career, one pension plan, one health care plan. Today, the world is different. People change jobs and careers quite often. And today, the workplace is diversified. Women work in the house and, now, out of the house. And yet, when you think about it, the most fundamental institutions, our Tax Code, our health coverage, our pension plans, our worker training programs, our labor laws, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running to transform these systems so all our citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices and realize the great dreams of our country.

Listen, any hopeful society has got to have a growing economy. And I have a plan to make sure this prosperity lasts. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs here, if you want people to be able to find a job, it's got to be the best place in the world. And that means less regulations on our small-business owners. That means we got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are making it hard for employers to expand the job base.

Listen, if you want to keep jobs here, we got to have us an energy plan. I proposed a plan to the United States Congress 2 years ago. They need to get it to my desk. If we want jobs to be created here, we got to do a better job on conservation. We got to do a better job on promoting renewables such as ethanol and biodiesel. We got to modernize our electricity grid. We got to use our clean coal technology to make sure we can use the energy here at home. We got to explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. If we want jobs here in America, this country must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Part of my plan to make sure jobs are here in America so people can find work is to open up markets overseas. See, we open our markets. And that's good for you as a consumer. If you have more products

to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the market works. So I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You open up your markets just like we have ours." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure this economy grows, we got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. The fellow I'm running against has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And we still got October to go. [*Laughter*] Two trillion dollars is a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they asked him, they said, "Well, how are you going to pay for this?" He said, "I'll just tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you? First of all, you can't raise enough money to pay for 2.2 trillion by taxing the rich. There's a tax gap. Guess who gets to fill the tax gap in American history. You do. Secondly, when they say "tax the rich," be careful. It's rich—rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, to stick you with the bill. We're not going to let him raise your taxes. We're going to carry Maine, and we're going to win in November.

Let me also say something about the Tax Code. The Tax Code is a complicated mess. You realize, it's a million pages long. Americans spend 6 billion hours a year on taxes. I think we need to simplify the Tax Code. I think we need to make the Tax Code more fair. I'm going to call Republicans and Democrats together in a new term to make sure this Tax Code works for the people, not against the people.

Listen, in a changing world, the job base changes, and there's a skills gap in America in some places. You know, I remember going down to North Carolina where the textile industry had been hit hard and yet, the health care industry was growing. And there's a skills gap, because a lot of people in the textile industry who wanted to work didn't have the skills necessary to be in the health care industry. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system here in America. We need to make our community colleges accessible so workers can gain the skills they need to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's what the changing world demands. And yet, only about one in four of our students gets there. That's why, in our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation from high school. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, more Americans will start their careers with a college degree.

We've got to do something about our health care system. We have a fundamental difference in this campaign about health care. When it comes to health care, my opponent wants Government to dictate. I want you to decide. Half the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. One way to help small businesses, one way to help those who work for small businesses is to allow small businesses to pool together to be able to buy insurance at the same discounts big companies are able to do. My opponent opposes such a plan. See, ours is commonsense plan. Ours is a practical plan. Ours is a plan that doesn't let the Federal Government decide everything for you.

I believe that we ought to expand tax-free health savings accounts. I believe we ought to give small businesses tax credits, to encourage them to put money in small—in health savings accounts, so small-business employees can get coverage. I know we need to expand community health centers all across America, places where the poor

and the indigent can get good primary and preventative care.

I know—I'll tell you what else I know. In order to make sure we do something about the rising cost of health care and the availability of health care, we got to stop these junk lawsuits that are running good docs out of practice. Ask your doctor what it's like to get sued all the time. A lot of them are quitting practice. I met ob-gyns across the country, all across the country who are quitting their practice. That means a lot of women are hurting, all of it because these junk lawsuits are running up the cost of staying in business. It doesn't make any sense. You can't be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent has made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I stand for medical liability reform—now.

Now, there's a lot of—a big difference in this campaign. But anything we do in this administration to make sure health care is available and affordable will mean that the decisions will be made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats and insurance companies and the Government.

New term, let me tell you what else we're going to do. In a changing times, ownership helps bring stability to people's life. During my administration, more people own a home than ever before. More and more people are owning their own home. What a hopeful sign that is. What a stabilizing influence that is. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand homeownership. I like the thought of more and more people opening up the door where they live and saying, "Welcome to my piece of property. Welcome to my home. Come on in to my place."

I tell you what else we need to think about, and that is the retirement systems. Let me talk about Social Security here for a minute. If you're on Social Security, you'll be paid. Don't care what they say in the course of the campaigns. The Government will honor its commitment to you. The Social Security trust has got enough money to take care of you. Baby boomers like me, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security. But we need to think about the younger kids. We need to think about our children and our grandchildren. I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set aside a personal savings account to make sure that Social Security works, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account that Government cannot take away.

In a world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every being matters. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for supporting faith-based organizations. Men and women of faith are performing works of hope and compassion all across our country. They're renewing communities. They're helping lift up lives, and they deserve fair treatment by our Government.

That's a position I share with Republicans and Democrats from many callings in life, including a fine citizen in Maine named John Kerry. Now, Kerry runs Catholic Charities Maine in Falmouth, which helps people all over this State. A few years ago, the city of Portland denied Federal funding to Catholic Charities because John Kerry refused to compromise his organization's beliefs. Here's what he said: "Just because you're religious doesn't mean you

should be stopped from providing services." That's one John Kerry I agree with.

For those of you involved in your communities, for those of you who've heard the call to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself, thank you for your works of compassion. Thank you for making a difference in America.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We are staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty and freedom in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world some 4 years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a gathering threat. Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its nuclear weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's leaders and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions.

Audience member. That's what you have! Thank you!

The President. And the toughest decision came on Iraq. See, we knew Saddam's record. We knew he harbored terrorists like Abu Nidal. That's the leader of the terrorist organization that carried out attacks in Europe and Asia. We knew he—Saddam harbored Abu Abbas. He took—found refuge in Baghdad after he killed an American, Leon Klinghoffer. Saddam paid the families of suicide bombers. Saddam was a sworn enemy of America. Saddam not only desired weapons of mass destruction; he used weapons of mass destruction. Saddam was a threat. He was a threat. And after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

So I went to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered, and they concluded Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence, and he voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Listen, before the Commander in Chief ever puts any troops into harm's way, we must try all options—all options—to solve a problem. That's why I went to the United Nations. I was hoping diplomacy would work. I was hoping we could solve this problem peacefully. The toughest decision a President ever has to make is to put our kids into harm's way.

So I gave a speech to the United Nations. They looked at the same intelligence I had looked at. They remembered the same history we remembered. And they voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." The other day in the United Nations I said, "When an international body say something, they better mean what they say. If you don't mean it, don't say it."

Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world—again. This wasn't the first resolution he ignored. He had been ignoring resolutions for nearly a decade. He

wasn't about to disarm. He wasn't about to listen to the world. As a matter of fact, when the U.N. sent inspectors into that country, he systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I have a choice at this point. Diplomacy has failed. We had given Saddam Hussein his last chance, his decision to make. Do I take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend ourself, because we mean—we meant what we said, today, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq live in freedom. I want you to think about Afghanistan here for a minute. It wasn't all that long ago that these poor people were subjected to the brutal ways of the Taliban. These barbarians have a dark vision of the world. As a matter of fact, they think exactly opposite of Americans. They're against—they don't believe in freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of anything. They believe you either toe their line or there will be reprisals.

Think about a society in which many young girls were not allowed to go to school because of the Taliban or a society in which their mothers were pulled out in the public square and whipped and in some cases executed in the sports stadium because they wouldn't toe the line. Today, because America acted, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October Presidential elections. It's an amazing thought, isn't it? It's an amazing statistic, when you think about it.

There were some skeptics who thought, well, maybe people don't want to be free. Everybody longs to be free. People yearn to be free in this world. And those 10 million citizens are showing it as this election comes closer. Of course, there's going to be violence, because these dark-visioned people, these evil folks cannot stand the thought of a free society emerging in that part of the world.

Today I met with Prime Minister Allawi, a strong man. He does deserve our praise. He's a courageous fellow. In the press conference I had with him today, I reminded the people that were listening that Prime Minister Allawi woke up in an apartment one day in London, England—see, he had been exiled out of Iraq; Saddam Hussein wanted to get him—and he woke up in a bed—this is a true story I'm telling you; he told me personally—he woke up in the middle of the night. Two people were standing by his bed with axes. They had been sent by Saddam Hussein. Fortunately, by the grace of God, he woke up in time, rolled—got hurt pretty bad, recovered, went back to his country because he believes in freedom. He's ready to do the hard work. He is a strong man. There will be elections in January of 2005 in Iraq. And we're going to stand with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also making our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them and supporting them. Listen, our strategy is clear. We'll help the new leaders train armies so that Iraq citizens and Afghan citizens can do the hard work of defending their country against those who would stop the advance of freedom. There are over 25 million people in that country who desire to be free. There's only a few, relative to the 25 million, who are trying to start—stop the march of freedom. We'll help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

I am proud of the United States military. I'm proud of the men and women who serve. I've seen their unselfish courage and

their great decency. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. You know, the airport here is often the first stop in the United States for our troops returning home. No matter what hour they arrive or what the weather is like, citizens of Maine come here to thank our troops for their service. It's got to make them feel great. I thank you for doing that.

I met Bill Knight. He organizes the Maine Troop Greeters to welcome military personnel here. I appreciate Bill, and I appreciate all those who work with Bill.

I want to thank the military families who are here today. I made a commitment to our troops and to their loved ones: They'll have all the resources they need to do their jobs. So I went to the Congress last year and requested $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This was really important money. This was money for fuel, spare parts, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits, that which is necessary to support people in harm's way. And it was important. Fortunately, most Members of the Congress understood how important it was. We got great bipartisan support, so strong that only 12 Members—12 Members—of the United States Senate voted against this important funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, when you're out convincing people to go to the polls and vote, remind them of this fact: Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Of course, they asked him, you know, they said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." I don't think a lot of people speak that way in Bangor, Maine. They kept pressing him, and he said he was proud of his vote. Finally, he said the whole thing was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

There's hard work to do in Iraq. The Prime Minister told me they're making progress. Yet, as we're seeing on our TV screens, the terrorists are desperately trying to block that progress, is what they're trying to do. Our military cannot be beat in Iraq. They can't beat us. They do have a weapon, though, and that is, they're coldblooded killers. They'll behead somebody, and our prayers go to the families here in America. Our hearts break when we see that on our TV screens. These killers know that. See, they know we have a conscience, and they don't. They're trying to shake our will.

We're going to help this Government in Iraq. We'll help them——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. ——help them build their troops. We'll help them build their infrastructure. We have a strategy that says to our commanders, "Adapt to the ways on the ground. You've got the support your need to do what you need to do." The way to prevail, the way toward the successful conclusion we all want, the way to secure Iraq and bring our troops home is not to wilt or waver or send mixed signals to the enemy. We can grieve, but we will not waver.

Incredibly, this week my opponent said he would prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You cannot lead the war on terror if you wilt when times are tough. You cannot expect the Iraqi people to stand up and do the hard work of democracy if you are pessimistic about their abilities. You cannot expect the Iraqi people to do the hard work if you say that they'd be better off with Saddam Hussein in power.

What kind of message does it send our troops, who are risking their lives and who see firsthand the mission is hard but know the mission is critical to our success? Mixed signals are the wrong signals. I will continue to lead with clarity, and when I say something, I'll mean what I say.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I appreciate the contributions of our friends and allies. I appreciate what they've been doing, side by side with our troops and the Iraqi troops. Listen, we got a—put together a broad coalition of about 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 nations in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to strengthen our alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of America's strength is to advance freedom. A couple of days ago in New York, I was having a Diet Coke with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. I said, "You know, I've been talking about you on the campaign trail." He said, "Fine." [*Laughter*] I said, "Do you mind if I tell people your favorite singer was Elvis?" [*Laughter*] He said, "Okay."

It's amazing that I am having that discussion with Prime Minister Koizumi, if you really think about it, because it wasn't all that long ago in the march of history, some 60 years ago, Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad fought them. Your dads and granddads probably did as well. And it was a tough war. A lot of people lost their life. But after we won World War II, Harry Truman, one of my predecessors, believed in the power of liberty to transform societies and said, "We'll work with Japan to build a democracy."

There were a lot of skeptics then, and you can imagine why. A lot of families had been turned upside down because of loss of life in that horrible war. A lot of people were still angry that the Japanese had attacked us in Pearl Harbor. A lot of people didn't believe an enemy could become a friend. But there were people like Harry Truman in this country who believed in the power of liberty. And today, as a result of their belief—think about this now—I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, and we talk about the peace we all want. We're talking about the peace. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

These are historic times—historic times—and the work is hard. But we've done hard work before in this country. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that women in the Middle East long to be free. I know that women in the Middle East want their little girls and boys to be able to grow up and realize their dreams. I believe that the people there, if given a chance, will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of America. We will pass the enduring values of our country on to a young generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began.

I certainly won't. I was there in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. The workers there—I can still hear them—were chanting at me, "Whatever it takes." I was doing my best to console folks who had just come out of the rubble. A guy grabbed me by the arm. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "You do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge. I said that if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. at the Bangor International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Peter Cianchette, Maine State chairman, and Jim Tobin, New England regional chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Brian Hamel, candidate for Maine's Second Congressional District; Charlie Summers, candidate for Maine's First Congressional District; entertainer Mark Wills; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks to Army Reservists and National Guard Troops Departing for Iraq From Bangor

September 23, 2004

The President. I want to thank you all very much.

Troops. Hooah!

The President. I appreciate your service to the country. I appreciate being in the presence of such fine men and women. May God bless you all. May God keep you safe. May God bless America as well. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:47 p.m. aboard a World Airlines plane at the Air National Guard Base at Bangor International Airport. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Extend Tax Relief

September 23, 2004

The tax relief I worked with Congress to pass is putting more money into the hands of the American people and helping to grow our economy. As the economy strengthens, the last thing hard-working American families need is a tax increase. I commend the Members of Congress for acting to extend marriage penalty relief, the $1,000 child tax credit, and the broader 10-percent individual tax rate—which would otherwise expire this year and raise taxes on nearly 94 million Americans. This

legislation will give families and small businesses added certainty and keep us on the path to greater prosperity, and it brings us one step closer to making the tax relief permanent.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 5765
September 23, 2004

"The Lord, the Lord God is gracious and compassionate, patient, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, assuring love for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and granting pardon."

EXODUS: 34:6–7

On Yom Kippur, Jews around the world gather to mark the holiest day of the year, the Sabbath of Sabbaths. Jewish tradition teaches that on this day, we receive God's mercy through acts of atonement, prayer, and charity. During this season of prayer and intense reflection, may you find comfort in God's promise, which has never been broken and which is renewed in our time.

Our trust in God gives all Americans great purpose. As we are called to acts of compassion and mercy, we come closer to God and serve a cause greater than ourselves. May you trust God's faithfulness to all people, and may you be blessed with a good and happy New Year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks on Relief Efforts for Beslan, Russia
September 24, 2004

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. The barbaric terrorist attack on a Russian school 3 weeks ago sickened the world. America grieves with the people of Russia, and we pray for the innocent victims and their families in Beslan.

In America, we've witnessed an outpouring of compassion for the Russian people. Today I'm joined by Sue Huddle and her students from John Quincy Adams Elementary School in Washington, DC. Thank you all for coming. They helped organize a toy and school supply drive for the children of Beslan.

Kelsey O'Marra is here too. She is a seventh grader at Connelly School of the Holy Child in Potomac, Maryland. She helped lead a school fundraiser to help the victims of Beslan. Kelsey, thank you for your leadership and your compassion.

These children show the sympathy and compassion and generosity of our whole Nation. I'm also joined by Marty Evans, the President of the American Red Cross. Thanks for coming, Marty.

Marty Evans. Yes, sir.

The President. The Red Cross is working hard to make sure the people in Beslan get the help they need. Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world have already received $680,000 in donations for aid to Russia, enough to provide emergency medical care and counseling for 2,000 people. I want to thank Marty for her leadership and her tireless efforts. I thank all Americans who have contributed

to this important cause. I hope many more will donate in the days ahead.

I'm also honored to be with the Ambassador from Russia, Yuriy Ushakov. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for coming. He's here with the children from the Russian Embassy School. Earlier this month, I went to the Russian Embassy to express my condolences on behalf of the American people. The atrocities in Beslan reinforce the need for free nations to work together for peace and security. All Americans stand with the people of Russia in this wake of tragedy. We will stand with them as they rebuild, just like we stand with the people of Florida.

Another storm is headed in that direction. It will be another test of will and compassion. I know the Red Cross is ready, and I want to thank the Red Cross for being ready the help the citizens of that beleaguered State one more time. We extend our prayers to the people down there. We hope for the very best. The Federal Government, the armies of compassion stand ready to help.

Thank you all for coming. Thank you for your compassion. May God bless the people of Russia and the United States. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. on the South Portico at the White House.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education in Janesville, Wisconsin
September 24, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you coming. Please be seated. Please be seated. We've got a little work to do. I'm here to tell you why I'm running for President again. First, I'm here to tell you I'm asking for your vote and your support.

I'm really pleased to be back in the State of Wisconsin. It's a fabulous place you got here. What a wonderful State. The people are kind and generous and hardworking. It's—Laura and I love coming. Speaking about Laura, I wish she were here with me. No, I know, she's out campaigning. A lot of times they say, "Well, I'd rather you stay home, President, and let Mrs. Bush come." [*Laughter*] But I can understand the logic.

It's a true story—when I said, "Laura, will you marry me," she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. People in the country got to see her speak in New York a while ago. They saw a compassionate, strong, decent woman in Laura Bush. I love her dearly, and I'm really proud of her. I like to tell people, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in for 4 more years, but perhaps the most important one of all, so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's working hard. I tell people he doesn't have the curliest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience and judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of Paul Ryan. I'm proud of working with your Congressman. He's a good, solid man, I'm telling you. He's smart, capable. He's a good thinker. He married well in Janna. [*Laughter*] He keeps bugging me to come to his congressional district as often as possible, and now I know why. It's a beautiful part of the world.

I know Dave Magnum is with us. I wish him best in his run for the United States Congress in the Second Congressional District. Good luck. Tim Michels was with us. I think he spoke and left to go campaign.

Listen, I want to thank all the local officials who are here and all the grassroots activists. I want to thank you face to face for what you're going to do, which is put up the signs and make the phone calls and head the people to the polls and register people to vote. And let me tell you something, when you're registering people to vote, don't forget discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. There's a lot of Democrats out there, a lot of independents out there who want this country to be safer and stronger and better, and they know that Dick Cheney and I can get the job done.

Today when we landed, I met Tami Doetch. Where are you, Tami? Somewhere—oh, there she is. Good. Thanks for coming. She was at the base of Air Force One, right there at the steps. I'll tell you why she was out there. She is a teacher at Wilson Elementary School, right here in Janesville, Wisconsin. She won the Department of Education's American Stars of Teaching award. Let me tell you, that's a long—those are long—that's a long phrase for saying, she's a really good teacher. She's an excellent teacher. She embodies the spirit of the education reform we passed. She's willing to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. She understands, if you have low expectations for the children, you'll achieve lousy results. If you raise the standard, if you raise the sights, if you have excellence as your goal and you believe in using curriculum that works and you're willing to measure to determine that which you're using is working, you can achieve excellence in the classroom. And that's why Tami Doetch is here. I want to thank you for your compassion. I want to thank you for teaching.

We're closing an achievement gap here in America. See, we measured and determined that some kids weren't learning, and it just wasn't right, when you think about it. Think about a system that just shuffled kids through. That's a system that's not hopeful, as far as I was concerned. And so we're measuring early; we're solving problems before they're too late. And an achievement gap is closing in America, and we're not going to turn back to the old days. We're not going to turn back to the old days of not expecting the best for every single child in America. We're making great progress toward excellence.

As you can see, I've been joined by some of the citizens from this fine community. We're going to talk about education. But before we do that, I want to talk about a couple of other things. First, I want you to understand, I know that we live in a changing world. And it's important for Government systems to change with that changing world. When I say "changing world," listen, there are a lot of women who now work inside the home and outside the home. But the labor laws were designed for yesterday. See, I believe we ought to change labor laws so that women and moms can have flex-time and comp-time, so they can balance family time with work time and do their job—be able to do both jobs.

In the old days, a person would have one job and one career for their entire lifetime. Today, people change jobs often and careers often. And yet, the worker training programs don't reflect the changing times. We're going to talk about worker training here in a minute. The pension plans, for example, were designed for yesterday. Now, look, if you're on Social Security, nothing is going to change. I don't care what they tell you in the course of this campaign. You're going to get your check. You know how it goes every time campaign season comes around. You might remember what happened in this State 4 years ago during that campaign time. People were—said, "If Bush gets elected, you're not going to get your Social Security check." It didn't happen, did it?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Yes, you're getting your check, and you're going to continue to get your check. Now, baby boomers, we're probably going to get our checks too. It's the younger kids we've got to worry about. It's the children and the grandchildren. We need to be thinking about tomorrow, not yesterday. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account to make sure the Social Security system fulfills its promise to a younger generation of Americans.

The health care system needs to change. People are changing jobs. If they're changing jobs, the system ought to help them design insurance programs they can take job to job and call their own. That's why I'm for health savings accounts. Health savings accounts is a tax-free way for workers to set aside money, or workers' employee—employers to set aside money that they can count—they call their own. So they're the decisionmaker.

There's catastrophic care in there for the worker, as well as a savings account. And if they don't spend that money on routine health costs, it's theirs. They can carry it from year to year, and generation to generation. It makes sense. It's a commonsensical plan, particularly if you think the Federal Government should not be running health care.

And that's where we have a difference in this campaign. It's a big difference in this campaign. The fellow I'm running against believes that the Federal Government ought to be making your decisions. That's what he believes. We just have an honest difference of opinion. Everything we're going to do is to make sure the decisionmaking is between patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Several other points I want to make on health care right quick. One, we're going to take care of the poor in this country. I believe we have an obligation to do so. That's why I'm for community health centers. Community health centers are where the poor and indigent can get preventative care and primary care, as opposed to emergency rooms in local hospitals. We need to have community health centers in every poor county in America.

We're going to make sure our States access the children's health care programs for low-income families. We're going to make sure technology helps wring out some of the costs in health care. But do you realize 50 percent of the working uninsured work for small businesses? Now, think about that—50 percent of the working uninsured are employed by a small business, which means small businesses are obviously having a problem affording health care.

What I think ought to happen is small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy health care at the same discounts that big companies can buy health care. That means the decisionmakers are the health care—the decisionmakers are the small-business owners and the employees. My opponent has a different view. He thinks we ought to be expanding Government programs. I just fundamentally disagree. We've got a practical, commonsense way to deal with health care cost and availability. And one practical, commonsense way is to get rid of these frivolous lawsuits that are running good docs out of business.

You can't be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [*Laughter*] I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

At the heart of many of my programs is the concept of owning something. I think you can get a—you know, younger workers can own their own part of the Social Security system, an account they call their own; people can own their own health care plan they can take from job to job. One of the most hopeful statistics in a changing world is the fact that more and more people own

their own home. Think about that. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high under my administration. I love the idea that more and more people are opening up their front door where they live, saying, "Welcome to my home. Come in to my piece of property." A part of a hopeful society is to encourage ownership, and we will continue to do so over the next 4 years.

Part of a hopeful society is also—is to making sure the economy grows. Now, when you're out rounding up the vote, remind people what we have been through, and we've been through a lot. First of all, the stock market started to go down prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. It was the beginning of signs to come, because right after Dick Cheney and I got sworn in, we headed into a recession, three quarters of negative growth. And those were tough times for people. I know they were tough times. I know it's a tough time for small-business owners and workers. It's tough times when people are wondering whether or not there's stability in their lives.

We started to get—we really started to get our feet back on the ground, and then we ran into another problem. Some of the CEOs in America forgot what it meant to be a responsible American. See, a responsibility society says, you'll tell the truth. They didn't tell the truth. We passed tough laws. It's now abundantly clear, we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then we got hit. Then we got attacked. And those attacks cost us jobs. It hurt. It hurt in a lot of ways. I'm going to talk about what the attacks meant a little later on in terms of keeping the peace, too, and defending ourselves. But they hurt, and we're overcoming those obstacles. Our economy is strong. It's getting stronger. It's strong and getting stronger because we've got great workers in America. We've got fantastic entrepreneurs and small-business owners. We've got great farmers, many of whom live right here in the great State of Wisconsin. We created 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. Things are getting better. We're overcoming the obstacles. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 4.8 percent. People are working, and that's a good sign.

So the fundamental question is, how do we keep this prosperity going? We've recovered. We've recovered not only because we're good workers, good, hard people—good hard-working people, and we've got great entrepreneurial spirit, we've recovered, as well, because of tax cuts. Those tax cuts helped.

And so here's how we keep the prosperity going: One, we reduce the regulations and the cost of lawsuits on the people of this country that are employing people. The more lawsuits there are, the harder it is for people to be able to find a job. That's just the way it is. The more regulations there are, meaningless regulations, the harder it is for people to find work in America.

In order to make sure jobs stay right here in this country and people can find work, we need an energy policy that encourages conservation; that renews—uses renewable sources of energy like corn through ethanol, and biodiesel as a result of soybeans; that uses technology to use coal in an environmentally friendly way; that allows us to explore for environmentally friendly ways for natural gas by use of technology. What I'm telling you is this: I've submitted a plan to the United States Congress—it is stuck—that will make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy and, in return, means people will be able to find work here at home.

There's another way to keep jobs here, is to encourage trade, is to reject economic isolationism. I know it sounds easy to say, well, jobs will stay here if we just wall ourself off from the rest of the world. I disagree. I strongly disagree. See, I think what we ought to be doing is opening up

markets for U.S. products. We open up our markets for other people, and that's good for you as a consumer. See, if you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. That's why Presidents of both political parties said, we're going to open up our markets for the sake of consumers. What I'm saying to places like China is that you treat us the way we treat you. You open up your markets so that we have a chance to compete. Because the American farmer, worker, entrepreneur can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, if the rules are fair.

Finally, one other point I want to make is that if you expect jobs to stay here at home, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington, DC. We got to be fiscally sound about using your money, and we've got to keep your taxes low. Running up your taxes right now will hurt this economic recovery, make no mistake about it.

We have a difference of opinion on taxes in this campaign, and I want you to remind your friends and neighbors about the difference. It starts with this: My opponent has promised over $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far. [*Laughter*] And that's a lot of money for a fellow from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, how are you going to pay for it? And his answer is this: He said, "We're going to tax the rich." Now, you've heard that before, haven't you?

We're about to talk to the so-called rich here in a minute, because about a million small businesses will have their taxes raised because they're Subchapter S and limited partnership. See, many small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax levels. As a matter of fact, 90 percent of all small businesses pay tax at the individual income-tax level. So when you talk about running up the taxes on individuals, you're running up the tax on job creators, because 70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses. That's bad economic policy to tax the job creators, real bad.

Secondly, you can't raise the top two brackets and raise enough to pay for $2.2 trillion worth of new spending. Now, maybe this is the first campaign in the history where a campaign promise is broken before the election. [*Laughter*] Or there's a tax gap. There's a tax gap. Given my opponent's record, I suspect he wants to spend the money. And there's a tax gap. And guess who always gets to fill the tax gap? You do.

Finally, you've heard the rhetoric before, as well, and you know that the so-called rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—that's to stick you with the bill. That's what happens every single time, isn't it? We're not going to let him tax you. We're going to carry Wisconsin, and we're going to carry this country next November. [*Applause*]

Okay, no, no, we got work to do here. Hold on. I'm still telling you why I'm running. [*Laughter*] See, I think you've got to tell the people what you're going to do. I think you've got to come to the people and say, here's my vision, here's what I intend to do for the country. You can't decide to run for the sake of holding the office. You've got to tell the people what you intend to do. That's what I did the last time I ran. I did what I said I was going to do, and now I'm telling you what I'm going to do the next 4 years. [*Applause*]

Hold on for a minute, please, please, please. Thanks. Everybody likes to be cheered, but wait a minute; I got something to tell you. [*Laughter*] A changing world means that the nature of the job—the jobs change. That's what we're talking about here. Think about that. Jobs change in a changing world, and therefore, one of the fundamental challenges we have is to make sure that people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

One idea of what I'm talking about is this: In North Carolina there was a healthy

textile industry for years. The textile industry became uneconomic. There was better competition. They got beat, and jobs started to get lost. At the same time, however, the health care industry started to grow; that was strong and viable. And there was a lot of health care jobs available, really good-paying health care jobs. As a matter of fact, better paying jobs in the health care field than there were in the—in some of the earlier North Carolina industries. And yet, there was a skills gap. And what we're here to talk about today is how to make sure people have access to good education and good worker training programs so people can match their desire to work with the skills necessary to hold the jobs of the 21st century.

So here are some ideas. Here are some ideas. First, we're going to double the number of workers who are trained through the Worker Investment Act. We've got a great—a wonderful concept coming out of Washington, but we're not training enough workers with the money we spend. Therefore, we need to consolidate programs, strip away bureaucratic rules, get more money to States and community colleges.

Secondly, we're going to utilize our community colleges to make sure people have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. I've laid out a quarter-billion-dollar initiative for my '05 budget to help good community colleges develop the curriculum and recruit the students necessary so people can find work.

Third, we're going to talk about dual-enrollment programs here today. I think we ought to spend money at Washington, DC, to encourage high school students to go to both community college and high school at the same time. It's good for the student. It's good for the workforce. Third, I think we need to expand Pell grants. We've done so, so long as I've been the President. We've expanded Pell grants by a million students, since I've been the President of the United States, from 4.3 million to 5.3 million students. We upped the grant level of Pell grants.

But here's two new ideas. One is to reward students who take vigorous high school courses, with an extra $1,000 on their Pell grant. We ought to say, look, if you qualify for Pell grants, go ahead and take tougher courses in high school, math and sciences, which will be needed to fill the jobs of the 21st century, and we'll pay you extra money. It seems to make sense to me. I don't know if you know this, but Pell grants aren't for year-round schooling. That doesn't make any sense. If a student wants to go year round to school, the Pell grant ought to stay with the student. We ought to fund year-round schooling for Pell grant students. So there's some ideas to help people be able to go to college.

New loans—we ought to provide loans for workers for short-term training. You can't get loans, student loans today unless you meet certain criteria, and the criteria prevents short-term worker training. I think we ought to provide loans for people who want to go back to school to get retrained. And I know we need to increase access to higher education in rural and urban areas by eliminating financial aid rules that discourage distance learning.

What I'm telling you is this: Listen, the world we live in is changing. Jobs are changing. People are learning more over the Internet. We've got to be wise about how we spend your money, to reflect the changing times. The workforce rules ought to reflect tomorrow, not yesterday. Our community college systems ought to be supportive because they're good for helping the students get the skills for the jobs of today, not yesterday. What I'm telling you is that I've got a vision that recognizes we're living in a changing world and we're going to use our assets in wise ways to make sure America is a hopeful place for everybody.

So here's who—our first guest, Dr. Eric Larson. Welcome.

Eric A. Larson. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes. So, what do you do?

Dr. Larson. I'm the president of Blackhawk Technical College here in Rock County and also in Green County.

The President. Good. Everybody heard about it? [*Applause*] It's a good sign, everybody's heard about it. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Larson. They have. We know that one in nine people in our counties has had a contact from our college.

The President. Oh, good. That's good. So, tell us—listen, you've got some great programs. Tell them what the programs are.

[*At this point, Dr. Larson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, listen. Let me—just listen real quick. This is why I'm such a big believer in community colleges. Some places of higher education have a little trouble changing their curriculum. [*Laughter*] Not to say their curriculum is bad, it's just they don't change. Eric just said that, our curriculum changes with demand. If a business needs help training workers for a job expansion program, they design the curriculum along with the business, as I understand it.

Dr. Larson. That's correct. We work with the business. They will sit at the table with us as we develop that curriculum.

The President. It's pretty good for the community, by the way, to be able to say, we've got a community college. If you've got a—if you're bringing jobs here and you're worried about your workers being trained, bring them here, because our community college is a great place to have your workers trained. We're adjustable. We're flexible. We're affordable, and we are available when it comes to community college education.

What else? Give me some other—give us some other things. You've got dual enrollment?

Dr. Larson. We do. We have a dual-enrollment program where we have high school students coming to us from the Janesville public schools, and Blackhawk Technical College is offering the instruction. And one of our major health care operators here in town offers a facility for them. Obviously, this isn't a health care area. We train certified nurse assistants while they're in high school. When they graduate from high school, they have their college certificate to take a job as a CNA.

The President. Right, they've got an opportunity to find a job immediately or an opportunity to move on to a more advanced degree. But it happens while they're in high school. It seems to make a lot of sense to me, doesn't it? I mean, you ought to be giving everybody ample opportunity to be able to take advantage of education as it exists. And that's what's happening here at Blackhawk.

Jessica Palmer is with us.

Jessica Palmer. Hi. [*Laughter*]

The President. You ready to go?

Ms. Palmer. Yes.

The President. Okay, so you are how old?

Ms. Palmer. I am 19 years old.

The President. Good. Went to high school where?

Ms. Palmer. Craig High School in Janesville.

The President. You also went to——

Ms. Palmer. Blackhawk Technical College.

The President. When? [*Laughter*]

Ms. Palmer. In my senior year of high school.

The President. How about it? Amazing, isn't it? First, you've got to understand, you can't pass a law in Washington that says, Jessica, you will be an ambitious person—[*laughter*]—or you will take advantage of opportunities available to you. The role of Government is to make opportunity available, not to dictate to people, not to tell them how to live their lives, but to say, here's your chance so you can realize your dream. That's the fundamental difference of philosophy we have, by the way.

Okay, so you went to Blackhawk at the same time you're going to high school. Now, what was that like?

Ms. Palmer. It was pretty hard, but the school district let me get out of school early in order to do my schedule. I went to school at Blackhawk three nights a week.

The President. Three nights a week. Good. Less TV, more study. That's good. [*Laughter*] So you were studying to be what?

Ms. Palmer. Ultimately, a registered nurse.

The President. Ultimately, a registered nurse. Listen, there's great opportunities in the health care field, I'm telling you. Remember I told you about the North Carolina story? You know, we wept for the textile workers down there, and then we were joyous when we saw them get jobs in the health care field. The health care field is expanding, and it requires a certain skill set. And Jessica is learning the skill set early.

So what were you—so what did you get? What did you get? What kind of degree did you get out of the community college here?

Ms. Palmer. I have a certified nursing assistant certificate.

The President. And that means you can show up at the hospital and get after it.

Ms. Palmer. Yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. Take my pulse? No. [*Laughter*] Never mind, okay. So you are—so what are you doing now? You're working, going back to school? Tell us.

Ms. Palmer. Yes, I'm a full-time student at Blackhawk, and I work in a local health facility here in Janesville.

The President. So you're headed to be a registered nurse.

Ms. Palmer. Yes.

The President. And how much longer will that take, do you know?

Ms. Palmer. My clinical starts in the year 2006, and it's 2 years after that.

The President. Right. And the local hospital is helping you, as I understand, with the training.

Ms. Palmer. Yes, while I was in high school, they helped me out.

The President. With the curriculum, right. Explain it, will you. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Larson. Let me try to help her.

The President. Help me and her, will you? [*Laughter*]

[*Dr. Larson made further remarks.*]

The President. It is. We ought to expand these around the country. That's what I'm here to talk about, is to how to make sure job training opportunities are available for older workers and younger workers.

Steve Scaccia is with us, president of Freedom Plastics. Let me, first, before we get into job training and how compassionate this guy is and how wonderful their company is, is to tell you something about taxes. He runs a Subchapter S corporation. That means they pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. When you hear the talk about taxing the rich or raising the top two brackets, he gets taxed. That's what we're talking about in terms of taxing the rich. It doesn't make any sense the tax job creators like Steve. You listen to what he is doing for his workers, and you ask yourself, does it make sense to leave money inside his coffers or to send it up to Washington, DC. After hearing his story, I'd rather he'd spend the money, not the Government.

And so you tell us what you're doing with those workers in there.

[*Stephen D. Scaccia, president, Freedom Plastics, Inc., made brief remarks.*]

The President. It's an amazing story, isn't it? See, I hear stories like this—I hear entrepreneurial stories like this all over the country. It's why I believe that the role of Government is to create an environment for the entrepreneur to flourish, not to try to create wealth, not to tell people how to run their lives, it's to provide opportunity

so people can not only realize dreams, but people can help others realize their dreams.

I love the small-business sector of this country. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong, thanks to people like Steve. And here's an interesting way to make sure the community college system is useful. Employers can use the community college system to make themselves more productive and, therefore, increase the wages of their employees. And young people coming up can use the community college system to realize their dreams.

So I want to thank you three for coming. You did a great job.

A couple of other things I want to talk about. First of all, in changing times, things don't change—the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; institutions we hold dear, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. I stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. And I stand for encouraging a responsibility society in America, where each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

I also know that—I also know my most important duty is to protect the American people. We show uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

Let me tell you some of the lessons I learned as your President, some of the lessons I learned about September the 11th. Lesson one is that we face an enemy that's coldblooded, and they are haters. They believe in an ideology of hate. They stand for the exact opposite we stand for in America. We believe in freedom of religion. We believe you should worship any way you want. If you choose to worship, or not worship, you're equally an American. If you choose to worship and you're a Muslim, Jew, or Christian, you're equally an American. That's what we believe. These people believe the exact opposite of that.

We believe you can speak your mind in America. We believe the press should be allowed to flourish. We believe in a lot of freedoms, and they don't. And they're willing to use terror as a tool. Therefore, lesson one is, you can never negotiate with these people; you can never hope for the best; you can't hope that somehow showing weakness will end up currying favor with them. The best way to protect the homeland is to stay on the offense, is to find these people and bring them to justice before they hurt America again.

Second lesson—this is a different kind of war. First of all, you've got to understand, one, I never dreamt I'd be talking about war as your President when I ran for President. And, two, I wish I wasn't talking about it. I wish this hadn't happened to our country, but it did. And therefore, we must deal with it in a way that leads to a more peaceful America, in a way in which we can look back over time and say our children and grandchildren have a better chance to grow up in a peaceful world—which means we've got to be realistic.

And in a different kind of war, we've got to send signals—say things and mean them, let me put it to you that way. If you say something as the President, you better mean what you say. In order to make this world a more—[*applause*]. In recognizing this is a different kind of war, I said to the Taliban, "Get rid of Al Qaida in Afghanistan." I meant what I said. And they didn't, and so the United States military did get rid of Al Qaida as well as Taliban in Afghanistan.

In other words, the Taliban was providing safe haven for these people, and we got rid of the Taliban as a government in Afghanistan and, therefore, denied Al Qaida the chance to train. Al Qaida still exists. About 75 percent of their known leaders

have been brought to justice. They're still there, but they no longer have safe haven. And we're safer for it. See, the way these people think is—they're parasitical. They want to be a parasite, and they kind of burrow into weak societies in hopes that they can have—be able to plot and plan. It's the nature of the world we live in. It's different from the past, but nevertheless, it's one that requires clear sight and strong will. And so by removing the Taliban, we're safer. By putting Al Qaida on the run out of Afghanistan, we're safer. We're also safer because Afghanistan is becoming free.

Let me remind you about what life was like there about 3½ short years ago. Young girls couldn't go to school in Afghanistan. Think about that. It's hard for anybody in this country to imagine a group of barbarians that wouldn't let young girls go to school. But that's the way it was. When I'm telling you the ideology of hate, that's what I mean. That's a hateful society, isn't it, where young girls aren't allowed to realize their dreams. Their moms would be pulled out in the public square and whipped if they didn't toe the line. That's the way the Taliban felt.

Today—today, as a result of these people being free, as a result of America acting in its self-interest and freeing the people from the Taliban, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential elections. Powerful statistic, isn't it? It's such an uplifting statistic. The society is going from darkness to light because of freedom. And we're better off for it. We now have an ally in the war on terror. We now have a free society in a part of the world where there needs to be free societies.

These are historic times, and the world is changing. The third lesson is that when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. You know, prior to September the 11th, we could see a threat overseas and say, well, we could deal with it if we felt like it, or maybe we're not going to deal with it because it can't possibly come to hurt us. Sure enough, there was a large-scale attack on the United States of America on September the 11th, 2001, that has caused me and many in our country to change our attitude about threats overseas.

Audience member. We're praying for you, George!

The President. Thank you, sir. And it's really important—it's important we never forget the lesson. In Iraq, I saw a threat. Saddam Hussein was a threat. He was a threat because he was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He was a threat because there was terrorist organizations in his country. Abu Nidal, Abu Abbas, Zarqawi—they were in his country. He was a threat because he had used weapons of mass destruction; is a threat because he had created instability in a volatile part of the world; is a threat because he was firing at our pilots who were enforcing sanctions. He was a threat.

And so I went to the Congress and I said, "I see a threat. My administration sees a threat." And they looked at the same intelligence I did and came to the same conclusion. I know some of them are trying to rewrite history, but they looked at the same intelligence, and they voted the authorization of force to get rid of Saddam Hussein.

The last option of the President is to use force. It's the last option. So I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. I was hoping that the free world would convince Saddam Hussein to give up his weapons programs or weapons. And whatever the intelligence said, we wanted him to get rid of it. And so they passed a resolution 15 to nothing, after some deliberation, that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." If you're an international organization and you want to be effective, you better mean what you say. So they said "serious consequences."

Now, Saddam Hussein, as he had done for over a decade, ignored the demands of the free world. That's just the way it was. He was hoping we would look the other way again. He had no intention of disclosing or disarming because he didn't believe the free world would impose serious consequences. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors in, he deceived the inspectors. I have a choice to make at this point. Do I take his word as a madman, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th, or take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*]

Thank you all. Thank you all. A couple of other things—thanks. Thank you all.

Audience member. We love you, George!

The President. Thanks. [*Laughter*] Thank you—hold on for a minute. [*Laughter*] I've got something else to tell you. A couple of other points before people start dropping out because of the heat. [*Laughter*]

The lesson is, is that when you put our troops in harm's way, you give them all the support they need. That's why I went to Congress last September, a year ago, and said, we need $87 billion to support our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's important funding, really important funding. It provided for fuel and ammunition, spare parts, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits. That's important. Fortunately, most Members of the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives knew how important it was. As a matter of fact, so—the funding was so important, only 12 Senators voted against it—that's 12 out of 100—2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

When you're out rounding the vote—when you're out asking for the vote, remind people of this fact, this fact, that only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then didn't fund—did not vote yes to fund our troops. Four voted to authorize force and then voted no when it came to the supplemental funding. Two of those four were my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him. They said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Then they went on and pressed him. He said, he's proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "It was just a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've got hard work to do in Iraq. The enemy in Iraq cannot beat our military, cannot defeat our military. The main tool they've got is the ability to shake our conscience, to affect our will. You know, we weep when we see a person be beheaded on our TV screens, and we weep for his families. That's what we do, because we've got a conscience in America. We care deeply about every human life. We value human dignity in our society, and the enemy knows that. They know that they can shake our will and break our confidence in the mission. That's why it's very important for us to not send mixed signals to the world, not embolden these people, but remind them that when America gives its word, America will keep its word, that we will stand with the people of Iraq.

I met with the Prime Minister of Iraq yesterday. He's willing to do the hard work too. He came to our country to thank the American people. He came to our country to thank the moms and dads and husbands and wives of those who have sacrificed for his freedom and America's security. That's what he came to do. He gave a strong speech. He's a strong man. The fellow—he woke up one night in London, England—he'd been in exile. And there was two people by his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein—seriously—to chop him up. And he survived. And now he's the Prime Minister of that country. He is going to lead this country—no matter how hard it gets—he will lead this country to a better day. He believes in the people of Iraq.

He spoke to the Congress. He gave a great speech to the Congress. He talked about his strategy of defeating the insurgents, of holding the elections in January. This country is going to have elections in January. Afghanistan is going to have them in October, and they'll be held in January. And my opponent chose to criticize the Prime Minister of Iraq. This great man came to our country to talk about how he's risking his life for a free Iraq, which helps America, and Senator Kerry held a press conference and questioned Prime Minister Allawi's credibility. You can't lead this country if your ally in Iraq feels like you question his credibility. The message ought to be to the Iraqi people, we support you. The message ought to be loud and clear: We'll stand with you if you do the hard work.

Earlier this week, my opponent said he would prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today. You know, I just strongly disagree. It's tough work, no question about it. We've done tough work before. But if Saddam Hussein were in power, our security would be threatened. If Saddam Hussein—in power, there'd still would be mass graves and torture chambers in Iraq. If Saddam Hussein were in power, the world would be better off, not—the world would be worse off, not better off. And so I strongly disagree with the assessment of my opponent. I believe in liberty, and I believe in freedom, and I believe liberty can change lives.

Two other points I want to make now that you got me going. [*Laughter*] We've got great alliances. I talked to Prime Minister Tony Blair this morning, had a great talk with him. He's a good, strong leader. He sees what's happening around the world. He knows, like I know, that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. We must whip the terrorists in Iraq so we don't have to face them here at home. That's exactly what we're seeing.

Prime Minister Allawi says that; Tony Blair says that; I say that because I understand the stakes for America. And Tony understands the stakes for Great Britain and the free world. We're challenged—being challenged now, and we will rise to the challenge. I will continue to work with allies and friends. You know, I, again, disagree with my opponent who called our alliance the alliance of the coerced and the bribed. You can't build alliances if you criticize the efforts of those who are working side by side with you. So we'll build alliances. But I assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decision to leaders of other countries. [*Applause*]

Okay, one more—a couple more points. First, I want to thank all the veterans who are here. I see we've got some great vets. I want to thank the VFW. Thank you all for your service. Thanks for setting a great example.

So here's one of the things I tell the people that I firmly believe: I believe in the transformational power of liberty. See, I believe liberty can change societies. I believe everybody wants to be free too—10 million people showed up to register to vote after having been brutalized by the Taliban. It's a strong statement. This, by the way, in the face of violence. Those voters are saying, "You're not going to stop me from exercising my right as a free individual."

I visit with Prime Minister Koizumi a lot. I did recently in New York, as a matter of fact, at the U.N. General Assembly. I said, "Do you mind if I talk about you?" He said, "Fine, tell people about me." I said, "Okay." His favorite singer is Elvis. [*Laughter*] Not exactly what I want to tell you about. [*Laughter*] He was—he's the head of Japan, and we were at war with Japan 60 years ago. They were our sworn enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. I guarantee you, your dads and granddads, husbands, fathers fought against the Japanese as well. And it was a tough war. It was a brutal war.

And after we won, a lot of people were wondering whether or not we should even

care about what Japan looked like. Harry S. Truman—the last guy to visit Janesville, Wisconsin—said yes, we should care. Let's work for a democracy in Japan. You can imagine the skepticism that abounded as a result of trying to work with an enemy. Families' lives have been turned upside down as a result of the brutal war, the tough war. And here was the President of the United States enforcing—a lot of fellow Americans saying no—we're going to help them become a democracy. And as a result of believing that liberty can transform societies, that liberty can take an enemy to a friend, I now sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace that we all want. Think about that. Think about the power of liberty.

And that's what's going to happen when we get it right in Iraq. We're going to help the Iraqis have their elections. We'll help them self-govern. We'll help them as much as we can to become a stable nation by training their folks so they can do the hard work of defending themselves against the few—and I say, the few; there are 25 million people in that country, the vast majority of whom want to be free—to defend themselves against those who would stop the march of freedom. And we'll succeed if we do not lose our will, if we do not wilt in the face of hard times. And when we succeed, a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down with the American President, talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I've come to Janesville to tell you I want your vote, I want your help. I know exactly where I want to lead this country. I have the energy and drive to do so. And with your help, we'll carry this great State of Wisconsin and win a great victory in November.

Thank you for coming. May God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. at the Janesville Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Janna Ryan, wife of Representative Ryan; Dave Magnum, candidate for Wisconsin's Second Congressional District; Tim Michels, senatorial candidate in Wisconsin; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Racine, Wisconsin
September 24, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out. As you can tell, I've been traveling your good State by bus. Nothing better than taking a bus trip throughout southern Wisconsin. What a fantastic, beautiful part of the world, full of great people. And a great place to end is right here in Racine. Thanks for coming out today.

Listen, the reason I'm traveling around by bus is because I'm asking for the vote. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. I think it's really important for you to convince your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. We live in a free society, and we have an obligation to vote in a free society. So the first thing I'm doing—I'm going to ask you to do is to register your friends and neighbors. And make sure that as you register your friends and neighbors, to register discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And then, after you register them to vote, head them to the polls. And when you get them to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer, stronger, and better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm sorry that Laura is not here. I wish she were here. She is a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a great First Lady. And I appreciate my runningmate, Dick Cheney. Look, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his experience, his judgment, and the fact that he can get the job done for the American people.

Listen, I'm proud of my Secretary of Health and Human Services. You've trained him well. You taught Tommy Thompson a lot. He is a great friend, and he's doing a terrific job on behalf of our country.

I'm proud to be traveling with Congressman Paul Ryan. He is a breath of fresh air. He's a good, honest man who, like me, married well. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Congressman Mark Green being here today too. Both of them represent your State well.

The State treasurer is with us; Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. I call him Scott W. [*Laughter*] A lot of State and local officials here. Tim Michels, running for the United States Senate is here. I look forward to working with him in the United States Senate.

I appreciate my friend Rick Graber, who is the party chairman of Wisconsin. I appreciate him being here. Mary Buestrin is the national committeewoman.

Listen, what I'm doing is I'm telling you thanks for the grassroots activists. All of the people who have put the signs and get on the telephones and encourage people to register and vote, thank you for what you're doing, and thank you for what you're going to do as you're coming down the stretch. We're going to carry the State of Wisconsin.

I appreciate Charlie Sykes, who emceed this program.

Listen, today on the bus, I had the honor of meeting with Casey Perry and some other State—members of the National Troopers Coalition. These are law enforcement officers who are out there every single day to protect the people of Wisconsin and around the country. I always found, when you're riding down the highway, it's good to have some troopers with you. [*Laughter*] These men were here to inform me that the National Troopers Coalition endorsed my candidacy for President. I am honored to have their endorsement. I'm honored to have it because of the risks they take. I'm honored to have it because of the values they stand for. I'm honored to have it because of the kind of people they are. I'm proud to have you by my side. God bless you all. Thank you.

You know, I'm looking forward to this campaign. I've been coming to Wisconsin a lot. I suspect I'll be coming some more. I enjoy coming here. I'm looking forward to coming back. I want to tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I intend to lead this Nation for 4 more years.

I believe every child can learn and that every school must teach. That's what I believe. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, like you, I was tired of that practice of just shuffling kids through the schools, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching them the basics. I believe every child can learn, and I expect every school to teach. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we're measuring early, before it's too late to solve problems. That's why we believe in local control of schools. And that's why we're closing an achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't. I went to Washington to solve problems. We had a problem in Medicare. See, Medicare would pay nearly $100,000 for the heart surgery but would not pay one dime for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense.

Medicare needs to be modernized. I worked with Republicans and Democrats. We've strengthened Medicare. Seniors will get prescription drugs in 2006, and we're not going to turn back to the old days.

I believe in the energy, innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people what this economy has been through. It's been through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to head down about 5 months before we showed up in Washington. Then there was a recession. And then we found out some of our citizens didn't tell the truth. There were some corporate scandals. We passed new laws, and we made it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

And then we got attacked, and that hurt our economy. But our economy is strong and growing stronger. We've overcome these obstacles. We've got great workers, great farmers. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and the tax cuts made a difference.

We've added about 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. We've added 107,000 manufacturing jobs since January. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the seventies, the eighties, and the 1990s. And right here in Wisconsin, your unemployment rate is 4.8 percent. This economy is strong. It's getting stronger, and we're not turning back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why with your help, we'll carry Wisconsin and win a great victory in November.

The world in which we live is changing. The generation of our dads and granddads—in that generation, a man generally had one job, one career, and moms stayed at home. But times have changed a lot since then. Many workers have more than one job and more than one career, and many women work inside the house and outside the house. And yet the systems of our Government, the most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, labor law, was all designed for yesterday, not tomorrow. In the next 4 years, we'll work to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared, and thus truly free to be able to make your own choices and to realize the great promise of America.

I fully understand a hopeful society is one that has a growing economy. I have a plan to make sure this recovery is lasting prosperity. If you want to keep jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. It's as simple as that. That means less regulations on the employers and job creators. That means less frivolous lawsuits on the employers and job creators.

If we want to keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I sent up a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, that says we've got to modernize our electricity grid, that says we'll use clean coal technology, that we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. In order to keep jobs here in America, this country must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure this economy grows and people in Racine, Wisconsin, can find work, we've got to open up markets. See, we open up our markets for goods from other countries. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to

get the product you want at a better price and better quality. That's why Republicans and Democrat administrations have opened up our markets. So what I'm saying to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money in Washington. And we've got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. Make no mistake about it. The fellow I'm running against has promised $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I say "so far" because we still got October to go. [*Laughter*] Two-point-two trillion is a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "That's easy. We'll just tax the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we? First of all, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for $2.2 trillion in new spending, so there's a tax gap. Guess who usually gets stuck with filling the tax gap? Secondly, when you hear that language "tax the rich," hold on to your wallets, because the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason. So you get stuck. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you, because we're going to win in November.

Let me say something else about the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess; it's a million pages long. The American people spend 6 billion hours a year filling out the tax forms. In a new term, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the Tax Code so you're treated more fairly.

Today, down the road, I talked about making sure workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Our workforce is changing. Sometimes workers don't have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That's why I'm such a big believer in the community college system here in Wisconsin and around the world. We're going to spend more Federal money to make sure community colleges are more accessible.

Do you realize most jobs—or new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only about one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe, in our high schools, we should fund early intervention programs to help at-risk students. We need to place special emphasis on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income American families, we'll make sure more families—more workers start their career with a college diploma.

We're going to do something about our health care system too. But I promise you this: When we reform health care, we're going to let you make the decisions. There's a fundamental difference in this campaign; there is a philosophical divide. My opponent wants Government to dictate to you.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think that's the wrong approach to health care. See, we're going to make sure the poor and the indigent get good health care by expanding community health centers in every poor county in America. That makes sense. We'll make sure the children's health programs for low-income Americans are fully subscribed to by those who qualify. That makes sense. We have a practical, commonsense plan.

I understand half the working uninsured work for small businesses. There's a reason why they're uninsured. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. And one of the reasons they're having trouble affording health care is because they can't pool risk. So I think we ought to allow small businesses to pool together across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy health care at the same discounts big companies get to. We'll expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small-business

tax credits to encourage them to put money into health savings accounts for their employees.

In order to make sure that health care is available and affordable in Wisconsin and around the country, we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are driving good doctors out of practice and running up your costs. There's a difference of opinion in this campaign. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now.

Listen, we have a commonsense, practical plan to make sure health care is available and affordable. In all we do to make sure medicine works in America, we will make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In times of change, in a changing world, it helps if somebody owns something to bring stability in their lives. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high under my administration. More and more people from all walks of life are able to open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." And over the next 4 years, we'll continue to expand homeownership to every corner of our country.

In terms of our retirement systems, they were designed for yesterday. They need to be designed for tomorrow. If you're on Social Security today, you have nothing to worry about. You will get your check. I don't care what the political rhetoric is in a campaign, you're going to get paid. You remember, 4 years ago in Wisconsin, they were saying, "If George W. gets in, the seniors aren't going to get their checks." You might remember that. Yes, well—[*laughter*]—that's what happens. Seniors got paid. You will get paid again. If you're a baby boomer, you're fine. We're fine. There's enough money in the trust to take care of us.

But we need to worry about our younger workers. We need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. I think in order to make sure Social Security is around for a new generation, younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account that they can call their own.

In a world of change, some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the globe, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence gathering services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to work to advance liberty in the broader Middle East and around the world, and we'll prevail. Our strategy is succeeding. Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world only 4 short years ago: Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point of terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he had harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks in Asia and Europe. We knew Abu Abbas had been in Iraq—he's the fellow that killed Leon Klinghoffer. We knew Zarqawi had been in Baghdad. He's the person now beheading our citizens in order to shake our will. We knew that—we knew his long history, Saddam's history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. He was firing at our pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. Saddam Hussein was a threat. It is important this country never forget the lessons of September the 11th. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. We cannot forget that lesson.

So I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence, the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I did, concluded that Saddam was a threat, and voted yes when it came to the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, he must try all options to solve a problem. And so I was hopeful that diplomacy would work. I was hopeful that we wouldn't have to commit our troops. And so I went to the United Nations, and I gave a speech there, and I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence. They remembered the same history, and they concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. As a matter of fact, by a U.N. Security Council resolution they voted 15 to nothing to say, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to the demands of the free world. He had ignored the demands of the free world for over a decade. I think this was maybe the 17th resolution that had been passed. He doubted whether or not the international body would keep its word. He defied the inspectors the U.N. sent in. So I have a choice to make at this point in time. Diplomacy has failed. Saddam Hussein was given a last chance. Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——or do I take action to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Listen, we didn't find the stockpiles we all thought would be there, but Saddam Hussein had the capability of manufacturing weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to an enemy. And after September the 11th, that is a risk we could not afford to take. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted in our self-interests, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free. Think about Afghanistan, what life was like there less than 4 years ago. Think about it. Young girls were not allowed to go to school. The Taliban was so dark in their vision that they'd haul their mothers out in the public square and whip them if they didn't toe their line. They

didn't believe in freedom at all. Their mindset was the exact opposite of what America stands for. Today, because we acted, 10 million citizens in Afghanistan, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. Fantastic. This society is going from darkness to light because the people are free, and we're better off for it. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror.

In Iraq, despite ongoing acts of horrible violence, that country has got a strong Prime Minister, and it's going to have elections in January. It's in our interests that Iraq be free. Free societies will be hopeful societies. Free societies will not breed resentments and export for terror. Free societies will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. Our strategy is clear. We'll help the Iraqis and the Afghans defend themselves by training citizens—their own citizens so they can do the hard work. We'll help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We got a great military. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. We appreciate your service. I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear the uniform at bases here at home and across the world. I know their courage and their unselfish decency. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we owe our troops and their loved ones the full support of the Federal Government. That's why I went to the Congress last September, a year ago, to ask for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. This was really important legislation. This was vital money, money for spare parts and ammunition, for body armor, for hazard pay, for health benefits. It's the kind of thing that you'd want your troops to have—and the troops not only in Iraq but Afghanistan as well. We received great bipartisan support for that funding request, so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out there campaigning, tell people about this statistic: Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding for our troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate. They asked him. Of course, you know this. He said his answer to why he voted the way he did, he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] You've heard that. They then said, well—they kept pressing him. He said he was proud of his vote. And finally, he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've got hard work to do in Iraq. And it's tough, and it's hard. I know it's hard. The terrorists over there cannot defeat our military. The only tool they've got is the ability to shake our will. We care for human rights and human dignity. Every life matters to the American people. And therefore, when we see people beheaded on our screens, we cry and we weep, and the terrorists know that. They know we've got a conscience. And we know they don't have a conscience. We must not allow them to shake our will. It's important that we succeed in Iraq. It's important for our security and for the peace of the world that we defeat the terrorists there. This is a central front in the war on terror.

Fortunately, we've got a partner, a strong partner in Iraq named Prime Minister Allawi. I was with him yesterday in the Oval Office, had a great visit with him. When I was in New York and saw him, I asked him, "Is it true that—about the story I had heard?" He said, "It's true." He told me the story about the night he woke up in a bed in a flat in London. See, he had been—he had left the country

because Saddam Hussein wanted to kill him. And he woke up one night—this is a true story—his wife in his bed next to him, and there's two people next to his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein. They were trying to ax him to death. He survived. He's now the Prime Minister of that country. He's a tough guy who understands. He understands we must not yield. We'll stand with him. When America gives its word, America must keep its word.

If we expect to win this war on terror and secure the homeland, we must be clear about what we say. And the President must mean what he says. That's why you can't keep changing positions based upon polls. My opponent has had seven or eight different positions on Iraq. He can't decide if we should be there or not be there. You cannot lead if you don't know where you want to lead. You cannot lead if you don't know what you believe. You cannot lead if you get blown around by the political winds. Yesterday he criticized the Prime Minister of Iraq.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Right after the Prime Minister spoke to the United States Congress, right after he gave an important speech, Senator Kerry went out and stood in front of the cameras and questioned Prime Minister Allawi's credibility.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Earlier this week, he said he would prefer the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to the situation in Iraq today.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In order for us to succeed in Iraq, the Iraqi people must believe the American people will stand with them. In order to have credibility with those people who are fighting for freedom, the leaders of this country must not send mixed signals. They must earn the credibility of the Iraqi people. Twenty-five million people want to be free in that country, and when they're free, we're better off for it. I'll continue to lead this country with clarity. When I say something, I'll mean what I say.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Part of our strategy is to continue working with our friends and allies. I was on the phone this morning with Prime Minister Tony Blair. He understands that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. He understands the stakes. He understands the need for leaders to stand up and lead, and he is a leader. And I appreciate him. I thank him every time I have a chance to for joining this coalition. Do you realize we've got over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work to strengthen alliances, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. Recently in New York, I had a visit with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I said, "I'll tell you, I'm traveling the country talking about you." He said, "Fine, make sure you tell them I like Elvis." [*Laughter*] And so I do talk about him because I find it really interesting, really interesting. And I want the youngsters to understand—to listen to this because I think it will give you some clarity about why I decide what I decide—is that I sit down and talk with the leader of a country that we were at war with some 60 years ago. That's a lot of time if you're 58 like me. [*Laughter*] It seems like forever. [*Laughter*] It's not a lot of time, though, in the march of history. It wasn't all that long ago, in other words, that we were at war with Japan. My dad fought against the Japanese. I promise you, a lot of folks out here relatives fought against the Japanese too in what was one tough war. A lot of people lost their lives.

After World War II, my predecessor Harry S. Truman believed that we should

work with the Japanese to build a democracy. A lot of people in this country questioned the wisdom. You can understand why; there was a lot of bitterness toward the Japanese. They were our enemy. We had just fought them. But there were folks in this country that believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. And so they did the hard work after World War II, developing that country, and to build that country into a democracy. And because of that work, today, I talk to Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace we all want, talking about how to make the world more peaceful.

So when you hear me say, "I believe in the transformational power of liberty," think about the fact that the American President and the leader of Japan are working together for peace. Some day, an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq will sit down at the table to talk about peace, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women in the Middle East long to be free. I believe they want their young daughters to be able to grow up in a hopeful society. I believe that if given a chance, the people in the broader Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. And I believe these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a new generation. We'll continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On the bus, we were talking to the troopers about that day, September the 14th, 2001, when we stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I know I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember talking to a guy who came out of the rubble, had bloodshot eyes, and he's exhausted for trying to find his buddies and people that were hurt. And he looked me right in the eye and said, "You don't let me down." I wake up every morning since that day trying to better figure out how to protect our country. I will never relent in defending the security of America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State and our country, I made a pledge that if you gave me the chance to serve I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I have been elected. With your hard help—with your hard work and your help, I will continue to do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. On to victory. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at General John J. Pershing Park. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Wisconsin State Treasurer Jack C. Voight; Richard W. Graber, State chairman, and Mary F. Buestrin, national committeewoman, Republican Party of Wisconsin; radio show host Charlie Sykes; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi;

Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Amendment for the Department of Energy
September 24, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2005 budget amendment for the Department of Energy. This amendment replaces a previous amendment transmitted September 7, 2004, and would not increase the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2005 Budget.

The details of this proposal are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address
September 25, 2004

Good morning. This week, I was honored to welcome the Prime Minister of a free and sovereign Iraq to the White House. In less than 3 months, Prime Minister Allawi and his Government have accomplished a great deal, despite persistent violence in parts of Iraq. The enemies of freedom are using suicide bombings, beheadings, and other horrific acts to try to block progress. We are sickened by their atrocities, but we will never be intimidated, and freedom is winning.

We're making steady progress in implementing our five-step plan toward the goal we all want, completing the mission so that Iraq is stable and self-governing and American troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The first step was achieved on June 28th, not only on time but ahead of schedule, when the coalition transferred full sovereignty to a government of Iraqi citizens.

The second step is to help Iraq's new Government establish stability and security. Nearly 100,000 fully trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel are working today, and the Iraqi Government is on track to build a force of over 200,000 security personnel by the end of 2005.

In Najaf and other important areas, Iraqi military forces have performed with skill and success. The Government's strategy is to surround and isolate enemy militias, reach out to the local population, and negotiate from a position of strength. Serious problems remain in several cities. Yet, Prime Minister Allawi believes this combination of decisive action and outreach to peaceful citizens is the most effective way to defeat the killers and secure the peace. And America stands with him.

The third step in our plan is to continue improving Iraq's infrastructure. Today, in most of Iraq, children are about to go back to school, parents are going back to work, and new businesses are being opened. Electricity has been restored above prewar

levels. Telephone service has increased dramatically. In the next several months, more than $9 billion will be spent on contracts that will help Iraqis rebuild schools, refurbish hospitals and health clinics, repair bridges, upgrade the electrical grid, and modernize the communications system. Prime Minister Allawi and I agree that the pace of reconstruction can and should be accelerated, and we're working toward that goal.

The fourth step in our plan is to enlist additional international support for Iraq's transition to democracy. The multinational force of some 30 nations continues to help secure a free Iraq, and we are grateful for the service and sacrifice of all. Our coalition is also grateful that the United Nations has reestablished its mission in Baghdad. We are grateful to the G–8 countries and the European Union for pledging support to the new Iraqi Government. We are grateful to the NATO Alliance for help in training Iraqi forces. And we are grateful to many of Iraq's creditors, which have agreed to a further reduction of Iraq's debt.

The fifth and most important step in our plan is to help Iraq conduct free national elections no later than January. An Iraqi electoral commission has already hired personnel and is making key decisions about election procedures. Just this week, the commission began a public education campaign to inform Iraqis about the process and encourage them to become voters. United Nations electoral advisers are on the ground in Iraq, and Prime Minister Allawi and I have urged the U.N. to send more personnel to help ensure the success of the Iraqi elections.

The war for Iraq's freedom is a fight against some of the most ruthless and brutal men on Earth. In such a struggle, there will be good days, and there will be difficult days. But every day, our resolve must remain the same: Iraq, America, and our coalition will stand firm; and Iraq will be free; the world will be more peaceful; and America will be more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on September 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education in Springfield, Ohio
September 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Appreciate you being here. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Okay, thanks. We got to get started here. Thank you. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. I'm honored so many came out. Thanks for the warm welcome here in Springfield. It's such a pleasure to be here. I'm excited to be here.

I've come to let you know that I've got a reason for seeking the vote again, that I'm not only here to ask for your vote, I'm here to explain to you why I want to be President for 4 more years. See, I don't think you can just hold the office of President. I think you have to have a reason to hold the office. And so we're going to talk about some key issues about

how to make sure America is a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

I'm also here to ask for your help. See, I understand you can't win a race for the Presidency alone. It requires the grassroots, those people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and register the voters. We have a—thank you all for doing that. First of all, I understand a crowd this big just doesn't happen. Somebody had to work to make it happen, so thanks for organizing this event. Thank you for coming.

You notice I've been joined by some of your fellow citizens here. We're here to talk about education, but before we do so, I've got some other things on my mind.

First thing on my mind is for you to get out and register friends and neighbors. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. I know a lot of Democrats who want America to be a safer place. I know a lot of Democrats who want our schools to fulfill their promise. I know a lot of Democrats who are interested in having a health care system that works. I know a lot of Democrats who are going to vote for us. So when you get people going to the polls, make sure you remind your Republican friends, your independent friends, and your discerning Democrat friends to vote for Bush-Cheney.

So I woke up on the ranch this morning, and Laura said, "Tell everybody hello in Ohio." So, Laura says hello. She was a public school librarian when I met her—again. We went to seventh grade at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And so, years later, my friend O'Neill brought me over to his backyard for a barbecue, and there was Laura. I fell in love—love at first sight. So I said—eventually, I said—eventually, I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. People of this country got to see Laura in New York City give a speech. They saw a compassionate, decent, fine woman. Really proud of her. I hope you leave here realizing that I'm going to give you some—well, I know I'm going to give you some reasons why you should put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine man. You know, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] Of course, I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank my friend Mike DeWine, and Fran for joining us today. He's a great United States Senator. Proud you're here, Mike. He's on the bus. He said as we pulled in here, he said, make sure you remind everybody that he, Mike DeWine, was born right here in Springfield. He's what we call a home boy. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Dave Hobson, the Congressman from this district. I appreciate you, Dave. Proud you're here. Chairman John Boehner is with us today. Mr. Chairman, the Congressman from the district next door, thanks for coming. We're going to talk a little bit about education. I want you to understand he is the father of this fantastic reform we put in place. He carried the legislation in the House of Representatives. It would not have happened without his leadership—a great Congressman. Thanks for coming.

Congressman Mike Turner from Dayton, Ohio—appreciate you coming, Mike. Real proud of you. [*Applause*] Sounds like they've heard of you.

I want to thank Joe Deters, who is with us today, the treasurer of the State of Ohio. Thanks for coming, Joe. I want to thank all the State and local officials. I know the party chairman is here. I want to thank Bob Bennett for his leadership for the Ohio party. But most of all, I want to thank you all. I really do appreciate you coming.

I want to thank you for giving me a chance to share some thoughts with you.

I like getting out amongst the people. I like sharing my philosophy with people. I like to tell people what I believe. First of all, I want you to know I understand that we're living in changing times. Now, think about this. When our dads were coming up or our grandfathers were growing up, a person generally had one career and one job, with one pension plan and one health care system. And that person was usually a man.

Today, we live in a different world, when you think about it. The workforce has changed dramatically. People tend to change jobs and sometimes careers, often. And the workforce not only has men in it, but it has got women who work both in the house and outside the house. We have time—times have changed, yet the fundamental systems of our Government have not changed. The fundamental systems of Government were designed for yesterday, not for tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to help redesign the systems of Government so people have a chance to realize their dreams.

The job of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to dictate to people. There's a fundamental philosophical difference in this campaign about the role for Government in people's lives. We believe Government ought to help people. My opponent believes Government ought to tell people how to live their lives.

And so they said, "What do you mean?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. I mean, for example, labor laws ought to be changed. There ought to be flex-time in the labor laws. That will allow moms to be able to do their work at the workplace and the home. The labor laws ought to be family-friendly. They ought to change with the times.

The Tax Code needs to change. The Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll bring people from both parties together to simplify the U.S. Tax Code, the Federal Tax Code, that will reflect the changing times and make the code more fair.

The pension plans—we need to think differently about pension plans. Listen, times have changed, but the Social Security system hasn't. Now, listen, if you're on Social Security, you're going to get your check. I remember the 2000 campaign. They all said, "Well, if George W. gets in, you're not going to get your check." You got your check, didn't you? You'll probably hear it again. You'll probably hear it again: "Oh, he's got some plan to take—he'll take the money away from you." It's just not the case. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to think about our kids and our grandkids when it comes to Social Security. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account so Social Security has a chance to meet its promise, a personal savings account you call your own, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away.

The health care system ought to reflect changing times. I mean, if you're changing jobs, it makes sense to have a health care system that enables you to carry with you a health savings account. See, I believe we ought to continue to expand health savings accounts, which gives people a chance to save tax-free, earn money tax-free, spend money on health care needs tax-free, that you own. It's a new way of looking at health care, but it's a way to make sure that the decisions are made between doctors and patients, not between bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

A couple of other points I want to make on health care. It makes sense to take care of those who can't help themselves. We need to help the poor and the indigent when it comes to health care. That's why I'm for expanding community health centers to every poor county in America. We want people to get good primary care and

good preventative care in places other than the emergency rooms of hospitals. So we'll continue to take care of those who need help here in America. We'll make sure the children's health care program for low-income families is expanded and families take advantage of that.

We'll continue to make sure Medicare fulfills its promise. You might remember those old Medicare debates. They called them "Medi-scare." They tried to lure you into talking about Medicare, then they tried to whip you in the political process if you did. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I saw a problem in Medicare, and I'll tell you what it is. Medicare would pay, for example, nearly $100,000 for heart surgery. It would not pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense to the senior citizens, and it made no sense to the taxpayers. We've strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and in 2006, seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage in Medicare. And the system is better, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of not making sure our seniors have got good health care.

Now that you got me cranked up, on health care, I've got a few other things to tell you. Most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. One of the reasons why is there's no purchasing power. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do.

No, I got a lot of ideas on how to make sure health care works. I understand what's causing some of the cost of health care to rise, and these are these frivolous lawsuits. You ask your docs what it's like to try to practice medicine, ask your ob-gyns what it's like to try to practice medicine when they're getting sued and sued and sued by frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors, the hospitals, and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

As you can tell, I'm ready to go. What I'm telling you, there's a big philosophical difference in the campaign. There really is, when it comes to health care. My opponent believes the Government ought to decide for you. I don't. I believe the best health care system is when we take care of the poor, make sure seniors have got good health care, and make sure the decisions in the health care are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in the Nation's Capital.

See, I believe that we're recognizing the world is changing, and make sure the systems of Government change with the world so people can realize their dreams. We've created—will help to create a hopeful society, but you can't be a hopeful society unless this economy grows.

Now, listen, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we've been through when it comes to this economy. We went through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to go down months before Vice President Cheney and I showed up in Washington, and then we had a recession. We started to recover from the recession, and we found out some of the citizens of this country forgot what it meant to be a responsible person. In other words, they didn't tell the truth. And those corporate scandals shook our confidence, make no mistake about it. By working with Members of Congress and in the Senate, we passed tough laws, and we made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us, and it cost us jobs.

These were mighty obstacles to overcome. But we've overcome those obstacles. One, we got great workers in America. We

got great farmers in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We also overcame it because of well-timed tax cuts. The economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I understand you've been hit hard in Ohio. I know that. That's why I proposed what's called opportunity zones, a place where counties like Clark County can apply to become an opportunity zone and be able to have—be able to get—attract business with better tax treatment, better regulatory treatment, ways to make sure that in changing times economies that need help are able to get the help. No, I know there's people still hurting in this State, and that's why it's important to continue to promote pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer economic policies.

It's one thing to say we've overcome the obstacles. The real question is how do we make sure that this prosperity lasts. So I'll give you some ideas. First, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs to stay right here in America, we better make sure this is the best place to create jobs. That means less regulations on our businessowners and employers. It means we've got to do something about frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for people to expand their job base.

If you want to make sure jobs stay here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. Listen, if you don't have energy, you're not going to have jobs. We need to make sure the electricity system is reliable. You in Ohio know what I'm talking about. We've got to make sure that we use alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We've got to make sure that we continue to enhance conservation. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can burn coal. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can continue to explore for natural gas. What I'm telling you is if we want jobs to be here in America, this country must become less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

A couple other points I want to talk about. One, in order to make sure jobs are here, we need to open up markets for U.S. products. It would be a mistake to adopt the policies of economic isolationism. Do you realize, one in five manufacturing jobs in America depend upon exports? If you're good at something, we ought to promote it. If you're good at growing crops, we ought to be selling crops all around the world. If you're good at manufacturing things, we ought to make sure you have a chance to do so. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods. This is not just the policy of this administration, it's the policy of both Republican and Democrat Presidents. And I'll tell you why. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price or higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. It makes sense to—to give you more choices as a consumer. It makes economic sense.

And so what I say to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I say that—and not only that, we've used the tools at my disposal to make it clear to China and other countries we expect to be treated fairly. And the reason I say that with certainty—that it's good for America—is I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

Finally, to make sure you've got jobs here in Ohio and all across America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes—running up taxes on the American people would hurt economic growth. So the—so taxes are an issue.

The fellow I'm running against has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending so far. [*Laughter*] We still got October to go—[*laughter*]—three debates in October. So they said, "How are you going to pay for all that money?" And by the way, 2.2 trillion is a lot, particularly for—or even

for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" It's a legitimate question, isn't it? "In the course of a campaign, you made all these promises, you're going to do all this stuff on health care, and all this stuff on here, and all that stuff on there, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's easy. We'll just tax the rich."

Now, we've heard that before. I know you've heard that before. By the way, most small businesses in America are—pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Ninety percent of the small businesses are sole proprietorships or limited partnerships. Therefore, they pay income tax at the individual rate. And so you hear him say, "Well, we're going to tax the rich. We're just going to run up the top two brackets." The first thing wrong with that proposal is you're starting to tax the job creators of America. Seventy percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses. It makes no sense to tax the job creators in this country just as this economy is being to recover.

Secondly, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending. So there's a tax gap. Guess who usually fills the tax gap when there is one? You do. Yes, I know. Thirdly, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason. That's to stick you with the bill. The good news is you're not going to get stuck with the bill, because we're going to carry Ohio again and win in November. [*Applause*]

Okay. Let me talk about—thank you for coming. Thank you. We got work to do. Save your energy. Save your energy. [*Laughter*]

I want to talk about education. A hopeful America is one in which not one child is left behind. I went to Washington, as I told you, to solve problems, not to pass them on to future generations. We saw a problem. Congressman Boehner saw a problem too in public schools, and the problem was this, that people were just being shuffled through school grade after grade, year after year, without learning the basics. That's a problem.

If you want a hopeful America, you better make sure every child learns and they learn early, before it's too late. So I worked with the Congressman. I said, "I tell you what we'll do. We'll increase spending at the Federal level, but we're going to start asking some important questions, starting with, can the children read?" Seems like to make sense, doesn't it? If you're going to increase spending, you ought to at least know whether or not the system is working.

So John and I and others drafted some legislation called the No Child Left Behind Act, the heart of which says the following things. One, we trust local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're going to talk about some school decisionmakers—with some school decisionmakers here.

Secondly, it says we need to measure, not the Federal Government doesn't need to measure, the people outside of Washington need to measure so we can determine whether or not we're meeting goals. And the first goal is every child reading by third grade—at grade level by the third grade. It seems to make sense, doesn't it? That's a legitimate request to ask of the school systems, in return for 49-percent increase in K-through-12 funding since I've been in Washington, DC, that people learn how to read, write, add, and subtract.

Thirdly, we're raising the standards. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. What that means is, when you lower the standards, you get lousy results. We can't have a hopeful America unless every child has a chance to succeed because every child has been taught how to read and write and add and subtract. As a result of the legislation we passed, an achievement gap is beginning to close in this country. It's happening.

I'll tell you what else we did, which is an important part of the accountability system. We—I'm going to use a fancy word—

disaggregated results. That means we measured by race, for example. See, we want to know if every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract. We don't want any doubt in our mind that the system is making sure it's hopeful for everybody. You don't know whether every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract unless you measure, unless you show the results, unless you say to parents, "This school is great. This school needs help."

Some people say, "You shouldn't test. You're just punishing the schools." I disagree. By not testing, you're punishing children. By testing, you can determine what needs to be cured. You can't solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem. And we're using the accountability system as a diagnostic tool to lift the sights and the spirits of every child in this country.

So that's what we're here to talk about, the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a vital piece of legislation. Someone said, "Well, you know, when you look back, what's going to be important?" Well, I'll tell you, the peace is going to be important when I look back on my time as your President, but also making sure that this education system fulfilled its promise, that our teachers had the tools necessary to teach.

One of the things we've got in the program we're going to talk about is teacher training, that the local folks were able to make the right decisions, that moms and dads were happy with what they were receiving, that the community was involved. No, I'm proud of this piece of legislation. We're not going to turn back. We're not going to allow my opponent to weaken it. We're going to continue moving forward to make sure every child has a chance to realize his or her dreams.

A couple of other things I want to talk about. We're going to make sure that in high school, there's at-risk—programs for at-risk kids. Listen, if you're going to start a job in a changing world, you need a college degree. Yet, one in four of our students doesn't get there. And since they don't get there, it means we better do something better. So we're going to make sure we intervene in high schools on reading and math and sciences. We'll continue to expand reading and sciences. We're going to continue to expand Pell grants. We want to make sure that everybody has a chance to start their career with at least 2 years of college, in order to make sure there's a hopeful tomorrow. In other words, we got to plan not only to build on No Child Left Behind but to take the progress of No Child Left Behind, the success of No Child Left Behind to our high schools.

In a changing world, a lot of times people need a new set of skills. You know what I'm talking about. When you've seen jobs leave, new jobs come in, and oftentimes, somebody needs a little help in making sure they got the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system in America. I want to make sure workers have a lifetime of learning opportunity in this country.

These are all plans to make sure education works from K all the way through lifetime.

Now, let me talk to some people who know what I'm talking about. We got George Tombaugh with us. He is the superintendent of——

George Tombaugh. Westerville School District.

The President. Good. Where is that?

Mr. Tombaugh. Northeast side of Columbus, Ohio.

The President. There you go. How are things in Westerville?

Mr. Tombaugh. Very good, sir. We have a great school system and a great staff.

The President. Good. So tell me what life is like under No Child Left Behind.

[*At this point, Mr. Tombaugh made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, one thing that's important about accountability is it lets you

determine whether the curriculum you're using is working. If you're using a lousy curriculum, you're going to get lousy results. And it helps schools adjust. It helps teachers understand whether or not the systems they use work. This is a tool. This is a helpful tool. Measurement is good. I've heard all the excuses. Listen, I was a Governor at one time, and you heard them all, "Oh, all they're doing is teaching the test"—I'm sure you've heard that—or "They're testing too much."

If you use the accountability system properly, it is a great diagnostic tool to make sure children have a chance. You know what I'm talking about when I tell you sometimes we walk into a classroom and see a classroom full of child that are—these so-called "hard to teach." You know what happened with the so-called "hard to teach," don't you? They just moved them through. That's how you handled the so-called "hard to teach" when you didn't have an accountability system—or a classroom full of children whose moms or dads might not speak English as a first language. "Let's just move them through. No one is going catch us." I'm not saying it was that conscious, but it happened. It was practiced. And it wasn't right, and it wasn't fair, and it wasn't what America stands for. Every child should have a chance.

You ready to go? Good job. Kathy Rank, sitting right here next to—I'm sitting right here next to the Ohio Teacher of the Year. Thank you.

First of all, all the teachers out there need to know how much I appreciate you being a teacher. It is a noble and important profession. And if youngsters are looking for a great way to serve our country, teach. Teach a child. Impart knowledge. What a fantastic way to make a living. Thanks for coming. Where do you teach?

Kathy Rank. I teach at Bennett Intermediate, which is part of Piqua City School System.

The President. Great, and what grades?

Mrs. Rank. Fourth grade.

The President. Fourth grade. That's good. I remember my fourth grade teacher, Augustine B. Crosby. [*Laughter*] Somebody someday is going to sit back and say, "Gosh, I remember my teacher, Kathy Rank." What's the nature of the school, kind of school?

[*Mrs. Rank made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good job. That's great. You can see why she's teacher of the year. One of the things I think we need to do—and I talked to John about this on the bus, although I think people in the White House have already talked to him about it—is to set up about a half-a-billion-dollar fund to reward teachers who are helping students meet the standards and goals, as an incentive program. I know we need to have loan forgiveness—student loan forgiveness for teachers who teach in special ed or math or science in schools that need special ed, math, or science teachers. Matter of fact, the loan forgiveness ought to go from 5,000 to $17,500 to provide incentives for teachers to fill the needs where they're needed most. I still believe we ought to continue to increase teacher training funds. These teachers have got great hearts, and sometimes they need the tools necessary to be able to teach the curriculum that works.

So, thanks for coming. Congratulations. See you in Washington——

Mrs. Rank. All right. I'm looking forward to it.

The President. ——Teacher of the Year award.

Tracy Reiner is with us, a mom. Tell us about your little guy, Tracy.

Tracy Reiner. Well, I have three great kids. They're here with me today. I have Zach, who's in sixth grade; Joshua, who's in fourth grade; and Abby, who's in third grade. They attend Hopewell Elementary in the Lakota School System in West Chester——

The President. Good.

Mrs. Reiner. ——where you'll be speaking later today, I understand.

The President. Yes, we're ready to crank it up, yes. [*Laughter*] I'm just warming up here. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Reiner. And if I could just add real quick, the principal sends his greetings, and he wants you to know there is very much support in the Lakota School System for you.

The President. Oh, thank you. I appreciate you saying that. Tell me about Josh, and the No Child Left Behind Act.

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mrs. Reiner. And I need to add this, that my children know discipline. In fact, they were just reminded last night about discipline. But this is not—[*laughter*].

The President. You probably want to keep that one to yourself, Mom, you know. [*Laughter*] She's turning this into Dr. Phil, you know. [*Laughter*] Don't worry about it. The same thing happened to me a couple of times. [*Laughter*] Listen to your mother, though. Still listening to mine. [*Laughter*]

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks.*]

The President. It's working. Good job. Congratulations, Josh. Ninety-nine, brother. Let me—Tracy talked about parental involvement; I think there needs to be community involvement as well. See, I think we need to support our teachers and principals and superintendents. You know, a lot of people look to Washington. You're not going to find support out of Washington. You'll find money. You'll find good law, but the truth of the matter is, a responsible society is one in which people who live close to the school systems support the school systems and support the teachers.

Nick is with us today, Nick Lashutka. He is the—what do you do, Nick?

Nick Lashutka. I'm the director of government relations at the Ohio Business Roundtable.

The President. Good. And so, therefore, why are you sitting here? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lashutka. Because improving Ohio's public schools is the single most important priority for our organization.

The President. There you go. And your organization is called the Roundtable. I guess you meet at a round table, but why would you call it the—what's it—who sits at the table?

Mr. Lashutka. Our organization consists of the CEOs of the State's largest business enterprises, and we focus on issues of competitiveness. And for us, a growing economy and the elements of that are primary for our mission. And at the center of that, what really drives that is talent, and that's having an educated citizenry. It's having a qualified workforce, and it's having the kind of individuals in our public schools that are capable of going on, earning higher degrees and being able to be really——

The President. So what are you doing? How are you helping?

[*Mr. Lashutka made further remarks.*]

The President. Great. Good job. Thanks for coming. Listen, thank you all for being here. We're making progress. We're achieving what every American wants, every child receive—being able to realize their dreams through a good education.

I want to talk about keeping the peace. I want to talk about the challenges we face to secure this country, make the world and America a safer place. You know, later on this week, I'm going to have a chance to debate my opponent. It's been a little tough to prepare, because he keeps changing positions on the war on terror. He voted for the use of force in Iraq and then didn't vote to fund the troops. He complained that we're not spending enough money to help in the reconstruction of Iraq, and now he's saying we're spending too much. He said it was the right decision to go into Iraq; now he calls it the wrong war. Probably could spend 90 minutes debating himself. [*Laughter*]

You cannot lead when people don't know where you stand. In order to make sure America is a safer place——

Audience member. We need you as a leader! [*Laughter*]

The President. In order to make sure America is safer, the President must speak clearly and mean what he says. I'll share some lessons with you about September the 11th. We face a brutal enemy that has no conscience. They are the kind of people that you just can't reason with. It makes no sense for anybody to say, "Oh, all we've got to do is change our ways because they'll change their visions." It's just not true. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot rationalize with these people. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offense against them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're making progress. We're working with our friends and allies to bring Al Qaida to justice. Seventy-five percent of their leadership has been brought to justice. Just yesterday, if you noticed, that in Pakistan, one of the killers of Danny Pearl had been arrested. One by one, we're finding these people.

It's a different kind of war. And first of all, I wish I wasn't talking about war. We didn't ask for this war. This war came to our shores. And there's only one way to deal with it, and that is to do everything we possibly can to protect the American people using all our assets, using everything at our disposal. And anything short of that will mean this Government has not done its duty to the American people. Our most solemn duty is to protect you.

Now, we can make sure the Homeland Security Department works well and do a better job on our borders and ports, which we're doing. But the only way to protect America in the long term is to—to protect America at all is to stay on the offense against these killers and to spread liberty and freedom. That's the only way we can protect this country.

In a different kind of war, we had to recognize that we're not facing a nation; we're facing a group of people who have adopted an ideology of hatred and love to find places where they can hide. They're like parasites. They kind of leech on to a host and hope the host weakens over time so they can eventually become the host. That's why I said to the Taliban in Afghanistan, "Get rid of Al Qaida. See, you're harboring Al Qaida." Remember, this is a place where they trained—Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. And the Taliban, I guess, just didn't believe me. And as a result of the United States military, Taliban no longer is in existence and the people of Afghanistan are now free. In other words, when you say something as President, you better make it clear so everybody understands what you're saying and you better mean what you say. And I meant what I said. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on for a minute. Thank you all. I meant what I said for the sake of peace, because I understood that America would become more secure by denying Al Qaida safe haven and training bases in Afghanistan.

But I want to tell you something else that's on my mind during the course of my decisionmaking. I understand how powerful freedom can be. And I want you to think about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that the Taliban were running that country. People say, "What were they like?" They're the opposite of America. If you had a point of view that didn't coincide with what they thought, you were in trouble. They didn't believe in the freedom of anything. They have a dark vision about the world. We have a vision based upon light. We believe in freedom. We believe you can worship freely any—in this country, any way you want—any way you want. It's your right. You can speak your mind. You can participate in the political process. You can write any editorial you want in this country. That's freedom. That's not what the Taliban thought. You know that young

girls weren't allowed to go to school, or many—most young girls weren't allowed to go to school under the Taliban. Imagine a society like that. It's hard for Americans to visualize that.

So not only was Al Qaida being able to train there in Afghanistan, but it was a repressive society. Repressive societies breed violent people. Repressive societies breed those who are willing to strike at those of us who love freedom as well.

Today, in Afghanistan—I want you to hear this fact—today, in Afghanistan some—a little more than 3 years since we liberated them, 10 million people have registered to vote, 41 percent of whom are women, in the elections that will be held in about the first—let's see, I think the 9th of October. Think about that, a country that has gone from darkness to light because of freedom. Freedom is powerful. It's powerful. Unbelievable statistic, I think. And I tell you why it's important. One way to defeat the ideologues of hate is to spread freedom. Free societies answer to the hopes and needs of the average citizens. Free societies do not export terror. Afghanistan is an ally now in the war on terror. In order to make sure America is secure in the long run, we must have allies standing with us in the broader Middle East.

Another lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats when we see them. We've got to take a threat seriously before it fully materializes. Prior to September the 11th, the American President and policymakers could say, "Well, we see a threat, but it's probably not going to come and hurt us." That all changed on September the 11th. Every time we see a threat now, we must take it seriously before it comes to hurt us again.

And so I looked around the world and saw a significant threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat. One, he a was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. Secondly, he was firing missiles at U.S. pilots who were enforcing the sanctions placed upon him by the world. Thirdly, I knew exactly how he felt about the demands of the free world. As they say down in Texas, he could care less. After all, they'd passed 16 different resolutions, and he ignored them all. Fourthly, there was terrorists like Abu Abbas, Abu Nidal—Abu Abbas is the guy who killed Leon Klinghoffer; Abu Nidal, famous terrorists. We knew Zarqawi was in and out of Baghdad. He had terrorist connections. He also used weapons of mass destruction. The lessons of September the 11th were, we must take these threats seriously.

I went to the Congress and said, "We see a threat." Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I had just recited to you, and concluded that, yes, Saddam Hussein was a threat, and not only that, concluded that they—that force might be necessary, and they authorized the use of force for the President, if necessary, to use force to deal with the threat.

My opponent, he looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He remembered the same history I remembered. And when it came time to vote for the authorization of force, he voted yes.

So I went to the United Nations. Let me tell you why I did: Because the President must try all means to prevent war. I understand the consequences of putting our troops in harm's way, and before any President puts one troop in harm's way, they best try all different means the solve the problem. And I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I was hoping that finally Saddam Hussein would listen to the demands of the free world. At the United Nations, I laid out our case. They looked at the intelligence. They concluded with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council that Saddam Hussein should disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. Fifteen to nothing was the vote. As a matter of fact, they also sent in inspectors into Iraq. The problem was Saddam

Hussein systematically deceived the inspectors. You can't inspect unless you get cooperation. They got no cooperation.

It was clear that he wasn't about to cooperate with the United Nations. It was clear that, once again, he was going to ignore the demands of the free world. Diplomacy wasn't working. So I have a choice to make at this point in time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and just hope for the best when it came to a madman who brutalized his own people, or do I take action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

A couple of other things. I know what you know. We've got a great military. I want to thank those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. And when we put our troops in harm's way, they need to have the full support of the Federal Government—the full support. That's why I went and asked for $87 billion of additional spending for important—this is an important piece of legislation. After all, it's for ammunition, fuel, spare parts, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits, things necessary when you've got your troops in combat. This money was going to go to not only those in Afghanistan but Iraq. It was vital.

Fortunately, Members of Congress here knew how vital it was, and they stood up like most of the Members of Congress and voted, "Yes. We'll fund the troops." As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. Now, when you're out there campaigning, I want you to remind the good folks of this statistic. There were only four Members of the United States Senate who said, "Yes, we're going to send troops," but, "No, we're not going to pay for them." In other words, "Yes, we're going to send troops by authorizing force"—they voted to authorize force—but then when the troops were in harm's way, did not vote the money to support the troops. Only 4—there's 100 Members of the Senate; 4 voted that way, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him, they said, "How could you possibly have made that vote?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." You've got to be able to speak clearly in order to make this world a more peaceful place. You cannot expect to lead this world if you try to take both sides of every position. Finally, they kept pressing him. He said, "The whole thing's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We'll prevail. We will prevail if we're resolute and determined. We'll prevail because we'll stay on the hunt, and we've got a great coalition of nations. There are 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. People are doing hard work, and I appreciate the sacrifice the people of those countries are making right alongside our troops. I'll continue to build these coalitions. I'll continue to praise the people and not denigrate the contributions. But one thing I'll never do is I'll never turn over national—our country's national security decisions to leaders of other countries. [*Applause*]

Finally, a couple of other things. Thank you all very much. I appreciate that. A couple of other points I do want to make. They'll be short, you'll be happy to hear. [*Laughter*]

We've got hard work in Iraq, no question about it. And the reason why is because people are trying to stop the march of freedom. These terrorists cannot beat our military. They cannot beat our military. The only thing, the only weapon they have is their willingness to behead a citizen and put it on TV. The only weapon they have is the capacity to shake our conscience. They understand people in America. See, we value human rights and human dignity. Our heart breaks when a—for the family

of those two fellows who were beheaded, just as Prime Minister Allawi was here.

This guy, Zarqawi and his crowd, they are so coldblooded that they have no conscience. Yet, they know we do. And their main tool is their capacity to get on our TV screens, with horror that the American people just cannot stomach it, because we're civilized and we love and we're compassionate. It's really important for them not to be able to shake our will. I'll tell you why. A free Iraq is in our interests. A free Iraq will become an ally in the war on terror. A free Iraq will be such a hopeful example for other nations. A free Iraq will serve as stark contrast to the hateful ideology of these people.

We'll stay with the Iraqi people because when America gives its word, it must keep its word in order to make the world a more peaceful place. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because it's in our interests. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because they long for freedom; they desire to be free.

People say to me, "Well, maybe certain parts of the world don't want to be free." I strongly disagree. I believe people want to be free because I believe freedom is the gift from the Almighty God to each man and woman in this world.

Schools are being rebuilt. The electricity is up to prewar levels. Hospitals are functioning. Children are being immunized. But it's hard work. It's hard work. And—but amidst this hard work, remember this: Elections are going to be held in January. This country is headed to democracy. I appreciate visiting with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a guy who woke up one day in a London flat to see two men standing beside his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein to kill him. He, fortunately, got out of that, got wounded severely. He knows firsthand what it means to be dealing with a tyrant. He is determined. He is strong. He tells me right to my face, "Mr. President, we will succeed." And I believe him. We'll succeed so long as the United States does not grow weary or tired and allow these thugs to shake our will. And it's in our interests.

I want to tell you a story, and then I'll—let me tell you a story I like to tell people. It's my—with my dealings—the story is about my dealings with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him in New York recently. I said, "Do you mind if I tell people about you?" And he should have said, "You already started." But anyway—[*laughter*]—he said, "Not at all." So I'm going to tell you about him.

First, he likes Elvis—[*laughter*]—favorite movie is "High Noon." Anyway, I like to tell the story about talking to Prime Minister Koizumi, because I'm talking to the leader of a former enemy. It was 60 years ago or so, we were fighting the Japanese. My dad was there. I'm sure your relatives were there, a bloody war.

And after World War II was over with, Harry S. Truman, one of my predecessors, said, "We'll help Japan become a self-governing democracy." A lot of people in the United States didn't believe that was capable of happening. Some people said, "Why even bother. They're the enemy." But Harry Truman and others in this country believed that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies to allies. That's what he believed.

And that's what I believe. So I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, and we're talking about the peace we all want. We're talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. Think about that for a minute. There we were at war with an enemy, and today, the leader of Japan and the United States are working together in concert for peace. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, talking about how to make sure peace comes in a troubled part of the world so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a more peaceful, peaceful world.

We have an obligation, I think—this generation has an obligation to do the hard

work, the hard work to defend ourselves from these brutal killers, the hard work to spread freedom and liberty, the work necessary so that someday, people will look back at us and say, "Thank goodness they didn't lose faith. Thank goodness they were strong in their beliefs that we can overcome this evil and that liberty will help change the world for the better."

I want to thank you all for coming. I'm ready to go. God bless you all, and God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Midwest Livestock and Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; television host Phillip "Dr. Phil" McGraw; Amjad Hussain Farooqi, Pakistani terrorist killed by Pakistani military forces in Nawabshah, Pakistan, on September 26, who participated in the 2002 kidnaping and later killing of Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl; Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, American citizens who were killed in Iraq on September 20 and 21, respectively, by militants led by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Xenia, Ohio
September 27, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. There you go. Thanks, Mr. Mayor. Listen, thank you all for coming out to say hello. As you can see, I'm taking a bus trip. [*Laughter*] It's a fantastic way to see your beautiful State. I get to wave to people, shake some hands, and tell people that I'm running for a reason. I want this country to be a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country.

I'm proud to be with Mike and Fran DeWine and Congressman Dave Hobson. I want to thank you for coming out to say hello. I'm asking for your help. I'm asking for your vote. We've going to win Ohio again. We're going to win in November.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Great to see you all. Thanks for being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. at the Greene County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John Saraga of Xenia, OH; and Senator Mike DeWine of Ohio and his wife, Fran. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in West Chester, Ohio
September 27, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all for coming. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years. And I'm here to ask for your vote.

I think you've got to get out among the people and give them a reason. That's what I'm here to do today. I'm here to give you a reason why you ought to put me back in office for 4 more years. I not only want your vote; I want your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors, tell them we have a duty in this country to participate in democracy. Register your Republican friends; register your independent friends; register your discerning Democrat friends, people like Zell Miller. And then when it's voting time, head them to the polls and tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Thanks for coming. It's a good sign when this many people come here for a rally. Let me tell you what I think. I think we're going to carry Ohio again, and I think we're going to win a great victory in November.

I wish Laura were here today to see this crowd. I'm going to have dinner with her tonight, and I cannot wait to tell her what I saw. As you might remember, she was a public school librarian. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I don't ever have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people got to see her in New York City a while ago, saw what a strong, compassionate, great lady she is. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back into office is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is a fine man. Listen, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his sound judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be on this stage with John Boehner. What a fine man he is and a great United States Congressman. I'm proud to have worked with him on important legislation, and I'm proud to call him friend. I'm honored that Mike DeWine is with me today, the fine United States Senator from the State of Ohio. I appreciate you coming, Mike. Speaking about Senators, I hope you put George Voinovich back in office. He's a fine leader, good man.

I appreciate Congressman Rob Portman, Dave Hobson, who is with us, Mike Turner, Steve Chabot. I want to thank you all for coming. I'm proud you're serving the people of the great State of Ohio so well.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I know the Lieutenant Governor and the State auditor. My friend Joe Deters is here. Write him in. Make sure you write him in. He's a good one.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. I see my friend Anthony Munoz is here. I appreciate you.

Audience members. Munoz!

The President. Yes. He can still play, I agree. [*Laughter*] Fortunately, he's on my team. I need him, and I appreciate his hard work.

I want to thank Darryl Worley. I'm honored you're here, Darryl. I hope you like his music as much as I do.

Lakota East High School and Lakota West High School, thank you all for being here.

Most of all, thank you all for coming. It lifts my spirits to see so many people. I'm honored you're here, and I appreciate your interest in this campaign. You know, I'm looking forward to campaigning. I like it. I like to tell people what I believe, where I stand, and where I intend to lead this Nation for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I didn't like a system that had low expectations and just shuffled kids through school year after year, grade after grade without teaching the basics. That's not

right. That's not the America we know. So I worked with John Boehner to change the laws. We've raised the standards. We now measure so we can solve problems early, before they're too late. We trust the local people to run their schools. We're making progress in America. An achievement gap is closing, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I felt like we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing, but Medicare wasn't. Take, for example, the fact that Medicare would pay some $100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair to our seniors. It's not fair to the taxpayers. We brought people together. We've strengthened and modernized medicine. Our seniors will be getting prescription drugs in Medicare in 2006, and we're not going to turn back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers and small-business owners and farmers and ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

Listen, our economy has been through a lot. You might remember the stock market had been declining for about 5 months prior to our arrival in Washington, DC. And then when the recession came and hit us, and then some of our citizens forgot what it meant to be a responsible American. They didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. We passed tough laws in the face of those corporate scandals. We made it abundantly clear, we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got hit on September the 11th, and that hurt our economy as well.

When you're out there rounding up the vote, you remind people what this economy has been through. But our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the unemployment rate—average unemployment rate in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Still, parts of our country are lagging behind. You've got some people who are hurting here in Ohio. I know that. I'm not going to rest until every American who wants to work can find a job. We'll continue to promote pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer economic policy so everybody has a chance to be able to make a living.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we'll carry Ohio and win a great victory in November.

I understand the world we live in is changing. In the generation of our dads and granddads, a man generally had one job, one career, worked for one company that provided a pension plan and health care. This is a different world we're living in. Many people change jobs and careers during the course of a lifetime. Women work inside the house and now outside the house as well. Yet, the fundamental systems of our Government haven't changed. In a changing world—think about this—the fundamental systems, the Tax Code and health coverage and pension plans and worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to help transform these systems

so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices and pursue your own dreams.

A hopeful society is one that helps people realize their dreams. A hopeful society is one in which people can find work. I have a plan to make sure this recovery is lasting prosperity. If we want jobs to stay here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If we want jobs here, we've got to do something about these needless regulations that hamper our small-business owners. If you want jobs here in America, we must do something about the frivolous lawsuits that make it hard to expand the job base.

Listen, if you want jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. You cannot have a growing economy without a good energy plan. I submitted a plan that encourages conservation, a plan that uses renewables like ethanol and biodiesel, a plan that says we can use our coal in environmentally friendly ways by using clean coal technology, a plan that says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways using new technologies, a plan that modernizes our electricity grid, a plan that recognizes that in order to keep jobs here, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Listen, to create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism. We don't want to wall ourselves off from the world. One in five jobs in the manufacturing sector in this country depend on exports. See, we've opened up our markets—I didn't open up the markets. Previous Presidents, both Republicans and Democrats, just like me realized it's to your advantage that you've got more products to choose from. See, when you get more products to choose from, you're going to find what you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. That's why I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You treat us fairly just the way we treat you fairly. You open up your markets to our people." And I say that because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

To create jobs, to make sure people can find work here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Imagine what's going to happen when we get to October. [*Laughter*] Two-point-two trillion, that's a lot of money, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Fine. We'll just tax the rich." You've heard that, haven't you? See, you can't raise enough money to pay—by taxing the rich to pay off $2.2 trillion worth of new spending. There's a tax gap. You know who fills the tax gap.

Audience members. We do.

The President. Yes, you do. I'll tell you something else about that rhetoric, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason, to stick you with the bill. The good news is, he's not going to tax you, because we're going to win in November.

I'll say something else about the Tax Code.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I told you, our systems need to change. The Tax Code needs to change. It is a complicated mess. The Tax Code is a million pages long. Our people spend 6 billion hours a year filling out taxes. It's full of special interest loopholes. I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together in a new term to simplify this Tax Code, to make it more fair for the people of America.

See, I've got a plan to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. These are changing times, and the nature of jobs change

with them. And sometimes people need help in order to get the skills necessary to fill the jobs for the 21st century. That's why I'm such a strong backer in the community college system. I also understand that most new jobs in a changing world are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. That's why we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk in our high schools. That's why we'll emphasize math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we need to do something about our health care system. When it comes to health care, I want you to listen to this debate now, coming down the pike. When it comes to health care, we have a philosophical divide. My opponent wants Government to dictate to you. I want you to decide. I want you to be the decisionmaker.

More than half of the Americans who are currently uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. In order to make sure these good folks have got health care, in order to make sure health care is more available and affordable for small-business owners, we must allow small businesses to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can. Under this plan, small-business owners and employees will be the deciders. My opponent opposes this kind of plan. He wants Government to decide on behalf of people.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We need to expand tax-free health savings accounts. We'll give small-business owners tax credits to encourage them to put money in health savings accounts for their employees. We want people owning a health savings account so they can make medical decisions on the advice of a doctor, not on somebody working for an HMO. We will expand community health centers to every poor county in America to help the indigent and the poor. We want people to have access to health care. We'll make sure that our low-income children's programs are fully enrolled in. We want people to—people who can't afford health care—we want to make sure health care is available for them.

But I'm going to tell you what else we need to do. In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to stop these junk lawsuits that are running good doctors out of practice and running up the cost of your health care. I've talked to too many ob-gyns in this country who are getting sued and having trouble practicing their medicine, and that hurts women. No, we need to make sure that we do something different than what we're doing in lawsuits—in the legal system today. See, you cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now. Now, in all we do to make sure health care is available and affordable, we'll make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, in changing times, it helps people to have stability if they own something. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high under my administration. More and more people are owning their own home. We've got a plan over the next 4 years to continue to expand homeownership to every corner of this country. I want more people owning the—opening up that door of the house they live in and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

We've got to think differently about retirement systems too. Listen, if you're on Social Security, you don't have a thing to worry about. You might remember the campaign 4 years ago when they said, "If George W. gets elected, you're not going to get your check." Remember those ads? You got your check, didn't you? Don't listen to them this time, either. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to think differently about retirement. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set up a personal savings account to make sure Social Security meets its promise, a Social Security account you call your own, a Social Security account that Government cannot take away.

We have a difference of philosophy in this campaign. My opponent's programs expand Government. My programs expand freedom and opportunity for every American.

Listen, in changing times, things—some things won't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we'll support the institutions that gives our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

And we'll continue to work to spread the responsibility culture in this country. The culture of our country is changing from one that 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're responsible for the decisions we make in life.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We will transform our military. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. We will defeat the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will work to advance liberty and freedom throughout the world, and we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting terror; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members have been brought to justice. We've led; many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

We've still got hard work. This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some hard decisions. The hardest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression. We knew he was a sworn enemy of America. We knew of his support for terror. After all, he harbored Abu Nidal, the leader of a terrorist organization that carried out attacks throughout Europe and Asia. Abu Abbas was in his country. He's the person that killed Leon Klinghoffer. Zarqawi, the beheader, had been in Baghdad prior to our arrival. We knew Saddam Hussein's long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. We knew

that. And we know that after September the 11th, our country must think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In this dangerous world, we must never forget the lessons of September the 11th. We have a duty to protect the American people. We must take each threat seriously. So in Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat, and I went to the Congress. The Congress looked at the intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, and voted overwhelmingly to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at, and he voted yes when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, he must try everything possible to prevent war. And so I went to the United Nations hoping that diplomacy would finally work with Saddam Hussein. That's why I went there. I have a duty to the moms and dads and husbands and wives of those who wear the uniform to try everything to protect our country without the use of the military. And so I stood in front of the United Nations and made the case. They looked at the same intelligence I did. They remembered the same history, and they voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

Saddam Hussein didn't believe it. He didn't believe it. Why should he? After all, for 16 years, he had ignored the United Nations—excuse me, 10 years, 16 resolutions. That's resolution after resolution after resolution. As a matter of fact, when they sent inspectors into his country, he systematically deceived them. Diplomacy wasn't going to work. He wasn't about to listen to our demands. So we gave him a last chance. He ignored the last chance. And then I had a choice to make: Take the word of a madman, forget the lessons of September the 11th, or do what's necessary to defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq now live in freedom. Think about what happened in Afghanistan. That was a country run by the Taliban. They were barbarians. They think the exact opposite of the American people. They do not believe in freedom. Many young girls were not allowed to go to school in that country. Imagine a society that would not allow young girls to go to school, and then when their moms stepped out of line, they whipped them in the public square, sometimes killed them in a sports stadium. But today, the free people of Afghanistan are now able to register to vote. Ten million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October elections. It's a powerful statement of freedom.

It's in our interests that Afghanistan be free. There's no longer training camps there. Al Qaida can no longer find safe haven. Afghanistan is now an ally in the war on terror. And Afghanistan stands as a bright light, stands in contrast to that ideology of hatred spread by our enemies.

In Iraq, despite ongoing violence, they now have a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections will be held in January. I met with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong man. I wanted to make sure he was as committed to freedom as we were. He is. I looked him in the eye. He told me, he said, "Mr. President, we'll succeed if you don't let these terrorists shake your will." I told him, I said, "When America gives its word, Mr. Prime Minister, America will keep its word." A strong man, who knows that they can achieve their objective, which is a free society.

It's in our interest they achieve a free society. It's in our interest that Iraq be free. Iraq will be an ally in the war on terror. Iraq will be standing with the nations of freedom to stop these ideologues

of hate from advancing their cause. You know, when the Prime Minister was here, he received great accolades, except there was one noticeable voice. My opponent criticized Prime Minister Allawi here in the United States.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He criticized a brave man who's risking his life for the freedom of his country and for our security. You cannot lead; you cannot lead a coalition; you cannot convince the Iraqi people that we stand with them if when their Prime Minister and their leader comes to U.S. soil, someone is willing to criticize him. He was wrong to question his credibility. America must stand with these people as they make the hard choices for freedom; it's in our interest.

The world will be more peaceful when Iraq is free, and Iraq will be free. And that's our mission. We will help train Iraqi citizens and Afghan citizens so they can do the hard work of defending their country against these terrorists who want to stop the march of freedom. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with honor they have earned.

Listen, we've got a great United States military. I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. Thank you, sir.

And I want to assure the loved ones of those who wear the uniform, they'll have the full support of the Government. That's why I went to the Congress and asked for $87 billion to provide vital equipment and fuel and ammunition, body armor for our troops in harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This was an important piece of legislation. Matter of fact, it was so important, we got great bipartisan support. Only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding request, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out rounding up the vote, remind people of this fact: Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize force and didn't vote to fund the troops, only four Members, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember, they asked him, "How could you make that vote?" He said, "Well, I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." They kept pressing him. He said he's proud of his vote. And finally, he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

I appreciate the contributions our friends and allies are making in our cause. They've been helping. We've got some 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, nearly 30 in Iraq, and I thank them. I'm not going to denigrate their service. I'm going to continue to thank their service in the cause of freedom. I believe they're doing useful, important work. Over the next 4 years, I'll continue to work with our allies and friends, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Later this week, I'm going to have an opportunity to debate my opponent. It's been a little tough to prepare for the debates because he keeps changing his positions—[*laughter*]—especially on the war. I mean, after all, he voted for the use of force but against funding the troops. He said that we're not spending enough money to reconstruct Iraq, yet now says we're spending too much. He said it was the right decision to go into Iraq, yet now he calls it the wrong war.

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I think he can spend 90 minutes debating himself. [*Laughter*] You

cannot lead if you don't know where you stand. I'm going to continue to speak as clearly as I can and tell the people what I believe. And I'm not going to change positions when times get tough.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. I like to tell the people that one of my favorite leaders is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him in New York. I said, "Do you mind if I talk about you on the campaign trail?" He said, "Fine." I said, "All right. I'm going tell them you like Elvis"—[*laughter*]—which he does. [*Laughter*]

I want you to think about this when you're explaining to people about what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. Think about this fact, that it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting Japan as a sworn enemy of America. Fifty-eight years ago, it seems like a long—if you're 58 years old, it seems like a long time. [*Laughter*] In the march of history, it really wasn't all that long. My dad was in the war. I suspect many people's relatives were in that war against a sworn enemy.

After we won World War II, Harry Truman said, "Why don't we help the Japanese become a democracy," because he believed in the transformational power of liberty. There were a lot of skeptics in our country then. They said, "Well, you know, they were an enemy. They can't be a democracy," or, "Why worry? They were an enemy. They inflicted too much harm on us." But fortunately, the President and others stood their line. They believed, and today, because of that belief, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about how to keep the peace we all want. Think about that. And that's what we want. We want our children and grandchildren to be able to grow up in a peaceful world.

I believe we have that obligation to work for that peaceful world. And when we succeed in Iraq—you see, Zarqawi has only got one weapon. He can't beat us militarily. The only thing he can do is shake our conscience because we value human rights and human dignity. We weep when we see the brutality he inflicts on TV. It breaks our—that's the only weapon he has. We also understand that freedom will whip the Zarqawis of the world in the long term. In the long term, free societies will make this world a peaceful place. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, and they'll be talking about the peace. And our children and our grandchildren will be able to grow up in a better world.

I believe the women in the broader Middle East yearn to be free. I believe that moms in every society want to raise their children in a free society. I believe that if given the chance, people in the broader Middle East will choose the finest government ever devised by man, and that's democracy. I believe all these things not because freedom is America's gift to the world; I believe this because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we'll build a safer world and a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, we'll help more Americans realize their dreams. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to a new generation. We will continue to lead the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget the day. I'll never forget the sights

and sounds of standing in that rubble. I remember workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember doing my best to console those who had come out of the rubble, and a guy looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." I've waken up every morning since that day thinking about how best to protect America. I will never relent in defending the security of this country, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I said if you—I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve our great country, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thank you, firefighters.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:39 p.m. at Voice of America Park. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley and Auditor of State Betty Montgomery of Ohio; Ohio State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters, write-in candidate for county prosecutor, Hamilton County, OH; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; entertainer Darryl Worley; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Supplemental Budget Requests To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne

September 27, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On September 8th, I signed into law Public Law 108–303, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, which provided $2 billion in supplemental funds for hurricane-related disaster relief. On September 14th, I submitted a supplemental request totaling $3.1 billion to continue immediate assistance to address the impact of Hurricanes Charley and Frances.

Due to Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne and other hurricane-related needs, I am requesting additional emergency funds from the Congress. I now ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests, totaling over $7.1 billion, for additional emergency FY 2004 supplemental resources for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, the Interior, Justice, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; as well as the Corps of Engineers, International Assistance Programs, and the Small Business Administration.

I hereby designate these specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. These additional requests will support response and recovery effort to address the critical needs associated with the effects of Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne and other storms in southern and eastern States and other affected areas. In addition to this enacted and requested emergency funding, Federal agencies will continue to use existing resources and programs for response and recovery efforts from all recent hurricanes and storms.

I urge the Congress to limit this emergency funding to those items directly related to the recovery efforts from the impact of these recent major disasters and

to act expeditiously on this and my September 14th emergency supplemental request.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks Following an Inspection of Hurricane Damage in Lake Wales, Florida

September 29, 2004

I want to thank the McKenna boys for showing us around here, giving us a chance to see the devastation that took place here from not just one hurricane but three hurricanes. I want to thank my brother Jeb for his hospitality and his leadership. I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, for being down here. I want to thank Charlie Bronson, secretary of agriculture. I want to thank Adam Putnam, Congressman from this part of the world. Every time I see Adam, all he does is talk about oranges. His hair is kind of orange.

I understand a lot of people in this area, like Marty and Pat, were hit hard by Jeanne and Charley and Frances. These are storms that have taken lives, storms that have created severe flooding, storms that caused major power outages, and storms that damaged farms and homes and hospitals and roads. It's been a devastating period for the State of Florida. It is the first time in nearly 120 years that four hurricanes have hit the same State in a single season. People of Florida have met historic challenges with extraordinary strength and generosity.

State emergency response teams have saved lives by evacuating people before the storm and responding swiftly after the storm arrived. Power crews and telephone workers are putting in long hours to restore services. Despite week after week of strain, faith-based groups like Southern Baptists and the Salvation Army are setting up kitchens to feed the hungry. The Red Cross is running shelters and providing medical services for the injured. The National Guard is distributing supplies and conducting safety patrols. Across the State, people are showing great compassion and helping their neighbors make it through these storms, and I thank them for their care and their decency.

The Federal Government is continuing our active role in the recovery efforts. We're working closely with Governors like Jeb and with other State and local officials to make sure resources reach the people who need it. I've asked Congress to provide $12.2 billion to respond to Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. My request provides resources to repair bridges and highways and hospitals. It includes funding for the Small Business Administration to make loans to homeowners and small businesses. It includes more than $8 billion for FEMA, the largest amount ever provided in response to a natural disaster. FEMA has responded rapidly to all four storms, and they continue working to make disaster assistance available to people in need.

I want to thank Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and FEMA Director Mike Brown for their tremendous work these past few weeks. They, and those who work for FEMA, have the gratitude of the administration and the people of this country.

I know Florida's agriculture sector has been hit especially hard. Marty and Pat almost lost half their orange crop. I know a lot of other growers have lost a lot of crop too. My budget request will provide vital assistance to the citrus growers and to other farmers and ranchers who've suffered losses. Secretary Veneman and I will also ensure that Florida farmers are treated fairly on the global market and that no country takes advantage of citrus growers during this time of disaster. My administration will make sure that citrus remains a strong part of this State's economy.

The Federal Government is committed to helping people here get back on their feet. I call on Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so we can get more people in Florida the help they need. These have been trying weeks for Americans across the Southeast, especially in this State. Once again, I want to thank Jeb for his outstanding leadership. I thank the citizens of Florida for their great courage and their decency. Our Nation is praying for the victims of these storms. We pray for all who come to their aid.

May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:39 p.m. in an orange grove owned by brothers Marty and Pat McKenna. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles H. Bronson; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Disaster Relief Officials and Volunteers in Stuart, Florida
September 30, 2004

Thank you all very much for being here. And I'm really glad to be with my brother Jeb, the Governor, who has done such a—Jeb has shown tremendous leadership and compassion during these trying days for this great State. I am really proud of him.

I want to thank Mike Brown of FEMA. He has worked really hard as well to help relieve the suffering from these storms.

I want to thank all the State and local officials for working hard. I had the chance to meet some county commissioners from this county, people from the sheriff's office, people from the police department, all of whom are spending an extraordinary amount of time helping the citizens here who hurt.

I appreciate the strong leadership of the—of those who represent the armies of compassion. I'm proud to stand with the men and women of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other faith-based and community groups that are providing important relief. Volunteers like these behind me have worked long hours to help those affected by the storms—long hours not only in Florida but in other States as well. The Red Cross, for example, has sheltered over 400,000 people. The Salvation Army, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Convoy of Hope from Springfield, Missouri, and other faith-based groups have set up kitchens and helped feed the hungry.

Unions and truckers have transported supplies. Young people have given up free time to lend a hand. I just met with some of the high school students here from Martin High School who are volunteering to help the Red Cross. I thank them for their example. I thank them for their service.

See, these volunteers show the true heart of America. Because we're a compassionate people, we care when a neighbor hurts; we long to help somebody when help is needed. They have the gratitude of all they've served, and they have the admiration for our whole country.

Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne have strained the resources of many relief organizations. People across the Nation have donated money and supplies to help their efforts. I'm grateful for their generosity. I hope many more Americans will continue to contribute. It's very important for our fellow citizens to understand the strain on the resources for the Red Cross, for example, or the Salvation Army or other faith-based groups. And if you want to help, if you want to participate in helping the good folks in this part of the country who hurt, contribute. You can contact the Red Cross at 1–800–HELPNOW or the Salvation Army at 1–800–SALARMY or the Florida Volunteer and Donations Hotline at 1–800–FLHELP1. Or you can contact one of the many other organizations that are providing help.

The Federal Government is working closely with State and local authorities to help people recover. FEMA is working with Florida's Emergency Response Team and the National Guard to ensure safety. Medical personnel are treating the sick and the injured. Earlier today I visited a FEMA disaster recovery center where hurricane victims can go to register for disaster assistance.

I've asked Congress to provide $12.2 billion in Federal funds to respond to these storms. I urge the Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so the people of Florida can get the help they need.

People in Florida and many other States are coming through a trying time. I thank all those who've reached out to help the neighbors in need. I thank the leaders who have shown strength and composure during difficult times. And to our fellow citizens facing hardship, the prayers of our Nation are with you, and America stands with you.

Thank you all for coming. God bless your compassion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. at the American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

September 30, 2004

Today a bipartisan majority of U.S. Representatives voted in favor of a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. I am disappointed that the House failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote. Because activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are seeking to redefine marriage for the rest of the country, we must remain vigilant in defending traditional marriage. I welcome the important debate underway across America on this issue.

Presidential Debate in Coral Gables, Florida
September 30, 2004

Jim Lehrer. Good evening from the University of Miami Convocation Center in Coral Gables, Florida. I'm Jim Lehrer of the News Hour on PBS. And I welcome you to the first of the 2004 Presidential debates between President George W. Bush, the Republican nominee, and Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee.

These debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight's will last 90 minutes, following detailed rules of engagement worked out by representatives of the candidates. I have agreed to enforce their rules on them. The umbrella topic is foreign policy and homeland security. But the specific subjects were chosen by me. The questions were composed by me. The candidates have not been told what they are, nor has anyone else.

For each question, there can only be a 2-minute response, a 90-second rebuttal, and at my discretion, a discussion extension of 1 minute. A green light will come on when 30 seconds remain in any given answer, yellow at 15, red at 5 seconds, and then flashing red means time's up. There is also a backup buzzer system if needed. Candidates may not direct a question to each other. There will be 2-minute closing statements but no opening statements.

There is an audience here in the hall, but they will remain absolutely silent for the next 90 minutes, except for now, when they join me in welcoming President Bush and Senator Kerry. [*Applause*]

Good evening, Mr. President, Senator Kerry.

As determined by a coin toss, the first question goes to you, Senator Kerry. You have 2 minutes.

Preventing Future Terrorist Attacks

Do you believe you could do a better job than President Bush in preventing another 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States?

Senator Kerry. Yes, I do. But before I answer further, let me thank you for moderating. I want to thank the University of Miami for hosting us. And I know the President will join me in welcoming all of Florida to this debate. You've been through the roughest weeks anybody could imagine. Our hearts go out to you, and we admire your pluck and perseverance.

I can make America safer than President Bush has made us. And I believe President Bush and I both love our country equally, but we just have a different set of convictions about how you make America safe. I believe America is safest and strongest when we are leading the world and when we are leading strong alliances.

I'll never give a veto to any country over our security, but I also know how to lead those alliances. This President has left them in shatters across the globe, and we're now 90 percent of the casualties in Iraq and 90 percent of the costs. I think that's wrong, and I think we can do better.

I have a better plan for homeland security. I have a better plan to be able to fight the war on terror: by strengthening our military; strengthening our intelligence; by going after the financing more authoritatively; by doing what we need to do to rebuild the alliances; by reaching out to the Muslim world, which the President has almost not done; and beginning to isolate the radical Islamic Muslims, not have them isolate the United States of America.

I know I can do a better job in Iraq, where I have a plan to have a summit with all of the allies, something this President has not yet achieved, not yet been able to do to bring people to the table. We can do a better job of training the Iraqi forces to defend themselves. And I

know that we can do a better job of preparing for elections. All of these, and especially homeland security, which we'll talk about a little bit later.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, you have a 90-second rebut.

President Bush. I too thank the University of Miami and say our prayers are with the good people of this State who've suffered a lot.

September the 11th changed how America must look at the world. And since that day, our Nation has been on a multipronged strategy to keep our country safer. We've pursued Al Qaida wherever Al Qaida tries to hide; 75 percent of known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice. The rest of them know we're after them.

We've upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." And the Taliban, no longer in power; 10 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan in the upcoming Presidential election.

In Iraq, we saw a threat, and we realized that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. Saddam Hussein now sits in a prison cell. America and the world are safer for it.

We continue to pursue our policy of disrupting those who proliferate weapons of mass destruction. Libya has disarmed. The A.Q. Khan network has been brought to justice. And as well, we're pursuing a strategy of—of freedom around the world, because I understand free nations will reject terror; free nations will answer the hopes and aspirations of their people; free nations will help us achieve the peace we all want.

Likelihood of Future Terrorist Attack

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. Do you believe the election of Senator Kerry on November the 2d would increase the chances of the U.S. being hit by another 9/11-type terrorist attack?

President Bush. No, I don't believe it's going to happen. I believe I'm going to win because the American people know I know how to lead. I've shown the American people I know how to lead. I have—I understand everybody in this country doesn't agree with the decisions that I've made, and I made some tough decisions. But people know where I stand. People out there listening know what I believe, and that's how best it is to keep the peace.

This Nation of ours has got a solemn duty to defeat this ideology of hate, and that's what they are. This is a group of killers who will not only kill here but kill children in Russia, that will attack unmercifully in Iraq hoping to shake our will. We have a duty to defeat this enemy. We have a duty to protect our children and grandchildren. The best way to defeat them is to never waver, to be strong, to use every asset at our disposal, is to constantly stay on the offensive, and at the same time, spread liberty.

And that's what people are seeing now is happening in Afghanistan. Ten million citizens have registered to vote. It's a phenomenal statistic, that if given a chance to be free, they will show up at the polls. Forty-one percent of those 10 million are women.

In Iraq, no doubt about it, it's tough. It's hard work. It's incredibly hard. You know why? Because an enemy realizes the stakes. The enemy understands a free Iraq will be a major defeat in their ideology of hatred. That's why they're fighting so vociferously. They showed up in Afghanistan when they were there because they tried to beat us, and they didn't. And they're showing up in Iraq for the same reason. They're trying to defeat us. And if we lose our will, we lose. But if we remain strong and resolute, we will defeat this enemy.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. I believe in being strong and resolute and determined, and I will

hunt down and kill the terrorists, wherever they are. But we also have to be smart, Jim, and smart means not diverting your attention from the real war on terror in Afghanistan against Usama bin Laden and taking it off to Iraq, where the 9/11 Commission confirms there was no connection to 9/11 itself and Saddam Hussein, and where the reason for going to war was weapons of mass destruction, not the removal of Saddam Hussein.

This President has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the President of the United States of America.

I'm proud that important military figures are supporting me in this race: former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili; just yesterday General Eisenhower's son, General John Eisenhower, endorsed me; General—Admiral William Crowe; General Tony McPeak, who ran the Air Force war so effectively for his father. All believe I would make a stronger Commander in Chief. And they believe it because they know I would not take my eye off of the goal, Usama bin Laden. Unfortunately, he escaped in the mountains of Tora Bora. We had him surrounded. But we didn't use American forces, the best trained in the world, to go kill him. The President relied on Afghan warlords that he outsourced that job to. That's wrong.

President's Judgment on Foreign Policy

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. "Colossal" misjudgments—what colossal misjudgments, in your opinion, has President Bush made in these areas?

Senator Kerry. Well, where do you want me to begin? [*Laughter*] First of all, he made the misjudgment of saying to America that he was going to build a true alliance, that he would exhaust the remedies of the United Nations and go through the inspections. In fact, he first didn't even want to do that, and it wasn't until former Secretary of State Jim Baker and General Scowcroft and others pushed publicly and said, "You've got to go to the U.N.," that the President finally changed his mind—his campaign has a word for that—and went to the United Nations.

Now, once there, we could have continued those inspections. We had Saddam Hussein trapped.

He also promised America that he would go to war as a last resort. Those words mean something to me, as somebody who has been in combat, "last resort." You've got to be able to look in the eyes of families and say to those parents, "I tried to do everything in my power to prevent the loss of your son and daughter." I don't believe the United States did that, and we pushed our allies aside.

And so today, we are 90 percent of the casualties and 90 percent of the cost, $200 billion—$200 billion that could have been used for health care, for schools, for construction, for prescription drugs for seniors, and it's in Iraq. And Iraq is not even the center of the focus of the war on terror. The center is Afghanistan where, incidentally, there were more Americans killed last year than the year before, where the opium production is 75 percent of the world's opium production, where 40 to 60 percent of the economy of Afghanistan is based on opium, where the elections have been postponed 3 times. The President moved the troops, so he's got 10 times the number of troops in Iraq than he has in Afghanistan, where Usama bin Laden is. Does that mean that Saddam Hussein was 10 times more important than Usama bin Laden—excuse me—Saddam Hussein more important than Usama bin Laden? I don't think so.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Mr. President.

President Bush. My opponent looked at the same intelligence I looked at and declared, in 2002, that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat. He also said, in December of 2003, that anyone who doubts that the world is safer without Saddam Hussein

does not have the judgment to be President. I agree with him. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein.

I was hoping diplomacy would work. I understand the serious consequences of committing our troops into harm's way. It's the hardest decision a President makes. So I went to the United Nations. I didn't need anybody to tell me to go to the United Nations; I decided to go there myself. And I went there hoping that, once and for all, the free world would act in concert to get Saddam Hussein to listen to our demands. And they passed a resolution that said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

But Saddam Hussein had no intention of disarming. Why should he? He had 16 other resolutions, and nothing took place. As a matter of fact—my opponent talks about inspectors—the facts are that he was systematically deceiving the inspectors. That wasn't going to work. That's kind of a pre-September-10th mentality, to hope that somehow resolutions and failed inspections would make this world a more peaceful place. He was hoping we'd turn away. But there was, fortunately, others beside myself who believed that we ought to take action, and we did. The world is safer without Saddam Hussein.

Priorities in the War on Terror

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. What about Senator Kerry's point, the comparison he drew between the priorities of going after Usama bin Laden and going after Saddam Hussein?

President Bush. Jim, we've got the capability of doing both. As a matter of fact, this is a global effort. We're facing a—a group of folks who have such hatred in their heart, they'll strike anywhere with any means. And that's why it's essential that we have strong alliances, and we do. That's why it's essential that we make sure that we keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of people like Al Qaida, which we are. But to say that there's only one focus on the war on terror doesn't really understand the nature of the war on terror.

Of course we're after Saddam Hussein—I mean, bin Laden. He's—he's isolated. Seventy-five percent of his people have been brought to justice. The killer in—the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammad, is in prison. We're making progress, but the front on this war is more than just one place. The Philippines—we've got help—we're helping them there to bring—to bring Al Qaida affiliates to justice there. And of course Iraq is a central part of the war on terror. That's why Zarqawi and his people are trying to fight us. Their hope is that we grow weary and we leave. The biggest disaster that could happen is that we not succeed in Iraq. We will succeed. We've got a plan to do so, and the main reason we'll succeed is because the Iraqis want to be free.

I had the honor of visiting with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a strong, courageous leader. He believes in the freedom of the Iraqi people. He doesn't want U.S. leadership, however, to send mixed signals, to not stand with the Iraqi people. He believes, like I believe, that the Iraqis are ready to fight for their own freedom. They just need the help to be trained. There will be elections in January. We're spending reconstruction money. And our alliance is strong. That's the plan for victory. And when Iraq is free, America will be more secure.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. The President just talked about Iraq as a center of the war on terror. Iraq was not even close to the center of the war on terror before the President invaded it. The President made the judgment to divert forces from under General Tommy Franks from Afghanistan before the Congress even approved it, to begin to prepare to go to war in Iraq. And he

rushed to war in Iraq without a plan to win the peace.

Now, that is not the judgment that a President of the United States ought to make. You don't take America to war unless you have a plan to win the peace. You don't send troops to war without the body armor that they need. I've met kids in Ohio, parents in Wisconsin, places—Iowa, where they're going out on the Internet to get the state-of-the-art body gear to send to their kids—some of them have got them for a birthday present. I think that's wrong. Humvees—10,000 out of 12,000 Humvees that are over there aren't armored. And you go visit some of those kids in the hospitals today who were maimed because they don't have the armament.

This President just—I don't know if he sees what's really happening out there, but it's getting worse by the day—more soldiers killed in June than before, more in July than June, more in August than July, more in September than in August. And now we see beheadings, and we've got weapons of mass destruction crossing the border every single day, and they're blowing people up. And we don't have enough troops there.

President Bush. Can I respond?

Mr. Lehrer. Let's do a—one of these one-minute extensions. You have 30 seconds.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

First of all, what my opponent wants you to forget is that he voted to authorize the use of force and now says, "It's the wrong war at the wrong time at the wrong place." I don't see how you can lead this country to succeed in Iraq if you say "wrong war, wrong time, wrong place." What message does that send our troops? What message does that send our allies? What message does that send the Iraqis?

No, the way to win this is to be steadfast and resolved and to follow through on the plan that I've just outlined.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Yes, we have to be steadfast and resolved, and I am. And I will succeed for those troops, now that we're there. We have to succeed. We can't leave a failed Iraq. But that doesn't mean it wasn't a mistake of judgment to go there and take the focus off of Usama bin Laden. It was. Now, we can succeed, but I don't believe this President can. I think we need a President who has the credibility to bring the allies back to the table and to do what's necessary to make it so America isn't doing this alone.

Homeland Security

Mr. Lehrer. We'll come back to Iraq in a moment, but I want to come back to where I began, on homeland security. This is a 2-minute new question. Senator Kerry, as President, what would you do specifically, in addition to or differently, to increase the homeland security of the United States, than what President Bush is doing?

Senator Kerry. Jim, let me tell you exactly what I'll do, and there are a long list of things. First of all, what kind of mixed message does it send when you've got $500 million going over to Iraq to put police officers in the streets of Iraq and the President is cutting the COPS program in America? What kind of message does it send to be sending money to open firehouses in Iraq, but we're shutting firehouses, who are the first-responders, here in America?

The President hasn't put one nickel—not one nickel—into the effort to fix some of our tunnels and bridges and most exposed subway systems. That's why they had to close down the subway in New York when the Republican Convention was there. We hadn't done the work that ought to be done. The President—95 percent of the containers that come into the ports, right here in Florida, are not inspected. Civilians get onto aircraft, and their—their luggage is X-rayed, but the cargo hold is not X-rayed. Does that make you feel safer in America?

This President thought it was more important to give the wealthiest people in

America a tax cut rather than invest in homeland security. Those aren't my values. I believe in protecting America first. And long before President Bush and I get a tax cut—and that's who gets it—long before we do, I'm going to invest in homeland security, and I'm going to make sure we're not cutting COPS programs in America, and we're fully staffed at our firehouses and that we protect the nuclear and chemical plants. The President also, unfortunately, gave in to the chemical industry, which didn't want to do some of the things necessary to strengthen our chemical plant exposure.

And there's an enormous undone job to protect the loose nuclear materials in the world that are able to get to terrorists. That's a whole other subject, but—I see we still have a little bit more time. Let me just quickly say, at the current pace the President will not secure the loose material in the Soviet Union—former Soviet Union for 13 years. I'm going to do it in 4 years. And we're going to keep it out of the hands of terrorists.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Mr. President.

President Bush. I don't think we want to get to how he's going to pay for all these promises. It's like a huge tax gap and—anyway, that's for another debate.

My administration has tripled the amount of money we're spending on homeland security, to $30 billion a year. My administration worked with the Congress to create the Department of Homeland Security so we could better coordinate our borders and ports. We've got 1,000 extra Border Patrol on the southern border, more than 1,000 on the northern border. We're modernizing our borders. We've spent $3.1 billion for fire and police—$3.1 billion. We're doing our duty to provide the funding.

But the best way to protect this homeland is to stay on the offense. We have to be right 100 percent of the time, and the enemy only has to be right once to hurt us. There's a lot of good people working hard. And by the way, we've also changed the culture of the FBI to have counterterrorism as its number one priority. We're communicating better. We're going to reform our intelligence services to make sure that we get the best intelligence possible. The PATRIOT Act is vital. It's vital that the Congress renew the PATRIOT Act, which enables our law enforcement to disrupt terrorist cells.

But again, I repeat to my fellow citizens, the best way to protect you is to stay on the offense.

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, let's do a little—yes, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. The President just said the FBI had changed its culture. We just read on the front pages of America's papers that there are over 100,000 hours of tapes unlistened to. On one of those tapes may be the enemy being right the next time. And the test is not whether you're spending more money. The test is, are you doing everything possible to make America safe? We didn't need that tax cut. America needed to be safe.

President Bush. Of course we're doing everything we can to protect America. I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect America. That's my job. I work with Director Mueller of the FBI. He comes into my office, when I'm in Washington, every morning talking about how to protect us. There's a lot of really good people working hard to do so. It's hard work.

But again, I want to tell the American people, we're doing everything we can at home, but you better have a President who chases these terrorists down and bring them to justice before they hurt us again.

Criteria for Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. What criteria would you use to determine when to start bringing U.S. troops home from Iraq?

President Bush. Let me first tell you that the best way for Iraq to be safe and secure is for Iraqi citizens to be trained to do the job. And that's what we're doing. We got 100,000 trained now, 125,000 by the end of this year, over 200,000 by the end of next year. That is the best way. We'll never succeed in Iraq if the Iraqi citizens do not want to take matters into their own hands and protect themselves. I believe they want to. Prime Minister Allawi believes they want to.

And so the best indication about when we can bring our troops home—which I really want to do, but I don't want to do so for the sake of bringing them home; I want to do so because we've achieved an objective—is to see the Iraqis perform, is to see the Iraqis step up and take responsibility.

And so the answer to your question is, when our generals on the ground and Ambassador Negroponte tells me that Iraq is ready to defend herself from these terrorists, that elections will have been held by then, that there's stability, and that they're on their way to—you know, a nation of—that's free. That's when. And I hope it's as soon as possible. But I know putting artificial deadlines won't work. My opponent one time said, "Well, get me elected, I'll have them out of there in 6 months." That's—you can't do that and expect to win the war on terror.

My message to our troops is: Thank you for what you're doing; we're standing with you strong; we'll give you all the equipment you need; and we'll get you home as soon as the mission's done, because this is a vital mission. A free Iraq will be a ally in the war on terror, and that's essential. A free Iraq will set a powerful example in the part of the world that is desperate for freedom. A free Iraq will help secure Israel. A free Iraq will enforce the hopes and aspirations of the reformers in places like Iran. A free Iraq is essential for the security of this country.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Thank you, Jim. My message to the troops is also "Thank you" for what they're doing, but it's also, "Help is on the way." I believe those troops deserve better than what they are getting today. You know, it's interesting, when I was in the ropeline just the other day coming out here from Wisconsin, a couple of young returnees were in the line, one active duty, one from the Guard. And they both looked at me and said, "We need you. You've got to help us over there."

Now, I believe there's a better way to do this. You know, the President's father did not go into Iraq—into Baghdad, beyond Basra. And the reason he didn't is, he said—he wrote in his book, because there was no viable exit strategy. And he said our troops would be occupiers in a bitterly hostile land. That's exactly where we find ourselves today. There's a sense of American occupation.

The only building that was guarded when the troops went into Baghdad was the oil ministry. We didn't guard the nuclear facilities. We didn't guard the foreign office, where you might have found information about weapons of mass destruction. We didn't guard the borders. Almost every step of the way, our troops have been left on these extraordinarily difficult missions. I know what it's like to go out on one of those missions where you don't know what's around the corner. And I believe our troops need other allies helping. I'm going to hold that summit. I will bring fresh credibility, a new start, and we will get the job done right.

Mr. Lehrer. New——

President Bush. Jim——

Mr. Lehrer. All right, go ahead. Yes, sir.

President Bush. I think it's worthy for a followup——

Mr. Lehrer. Sure.

President Bush. ——if you don't mind.

Senator Kerry. Let's change the rules. We can add a whole—[*inaudible*].

Mr. Lehrer. We can do 30 seconds each here.

President Bush. All right. My opponent says, "Help is on the way," but what kind of message does it say to our troops in harm's way, "wrong war, wrong place, wrong time"? That's not a message a Commander in Chief gives—or "This is a great diversion." As well, help is on the way, but it's certainly hard to tell it when he voted against the $87 billion supplemental to provide equipment for our troops and then said he actually did vote for it before he voted against it. That's not what Commander in Chiefs does when you're trying to lead troops.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 30 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Well, you know, when I talked about the $87 billion, I made a mistake in how I talk about the war. But the President made a mistake in invading Iraq. Which is worse? I believe that when you know something's going wrong, you make it right. That's what I learned in Vietnam. When I came back from that war, I saw that it was wrong. Some people don't like the fact that I stood up to say no, but I did. And that's what I did with that vote. And I'm going to lead those troops to victory.

Planning and International Cooperation in Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. All right, new question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. Speaking of Vietnam, you spoke to Congress in 1971, after you came back from Vietnam, and you said, quote, "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" Are Americans now dying in Iraq for a mistake?

Senator Kerry. No, and they don't have to, providing we have the leadership that we put—that I'm offering. I believe that we have to win this. The President and I have always agreed on that. And from the beginning, I did vote to give the authority because I thought Saddam Hussein was a threat. And I did accept that—that intelligence. But I also laid out a very strict series of things we needed to do in order to proceed from the position of strength, and the President, in fact, promised them. He went to Cincinnati, and he gave a speech in which he said, "We will plan carefully. We will proceed cautiously. We will not make war inevitable. We will go with our allies." He didn't do any of those things.

They didn't do the planning. They left the planning of the State Department on the State Department desks. They avoided even the advice of their own general. General Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, said, "You're going to need several hundred thousand troops." Instead of listening to him, they retired him. The terrorism czar, who has worked for every President since Ronald Reagan, said, "Invading Iraq in response to 9/11 would be like Franklin Roosevelt invading Mexico in response to Pearl Harbor." That's what we have here.

And what we need now is a President who understands how to bring these other countries together to recognize their stakes in this. They do have stakes in it. They've always had stakes in it. The Arab countries have a stake in not having a civil war. The European countries have a stake in not having total disorder on their doorstep. But this President hasn't even held the kind of statesmanlike summits that pull people together and get them to invest in those stakes. In fact, he's done the opposite; he pushed them away. When the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, offered the United Nations, he said, "No, no, we'll go do this alone."

To save for Halliburton the spoils of the war, they actually issued a memorandum from the Defense Department saying, "If you weren't with us in the war, don't bother applying for any construction." That's not a way to invite people.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. That's totally absurd. Of course the U.N. was invited in, and we support the U.N. efforts there. They pulled out after Sergio de Mello got killed, but

they're now back in, helping with elections. My opponent says we didn't have any allies in this war? What's he say to Tony Blair? What's he say to Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland? I mean, you can't expect to build an alliance when you denigrate the contributions of those who are serving side by side with American troops in Iraq.

Plus, he says the cornerstone of his plan to succeed in Iraq is to call upon nations to serve. So what's the message going to be? "Please join us in Iraq for a grand diversion"? "Join us for a war that is a wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time"? I know how these people think. I deal with them all the time. I sit down with the world leaders frequently and talk to them on the phone frequently. They're not going to follow somebody who says this is "the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." They're not going to follow somebody whose core convictions keep changing because of politics in America.

And finally, he says we ought to have a summit. Well, there are summits being held. Japan is going to have a summit for the donors. There's $14 billion pledged, and Prime Minister Koizumi is going to call countries to account to get them to contribute. And there's going to be an Arab summit of the neighborhood countries, and Colin Powell helped set up that summit.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. The United Nations' Kofi Annan offered help after Baghdad fell. And we never picked him up on that and did what was necessary to transfer authority and to transfer reconstruction. It was always American-run.

Secondly, when we went in, there were three countries, Great Britain, Australia, and the United States. That's not a grand coalition. We can do better.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. Well, actually, he forgot Poland. And now, there are 30 nations involved, standing side by side with our American troops, and I honor their sacrifices. And I don't appreciate it when a candidate for President denigrates the contributions of these brave—brave soldiers. It's—you cannot lead the world if you do not honor the contributions of those who are with us. He called them the "coerced and the bribed." That's not how you bring people together.

Our coalition is strong. It will remain strong, for my—so long as I'm the President.

Postwar Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. You have said there was a, quote, "miscalculation of what the conditions would be in postwar Iraq." What was the miscalculation, and how did it happen?

President Bush. No, what I said was that because we achieved such a rapid victory, more of the Saddam loyalists were around. In other words, we thought we'd whip more of them going in. But because Tommy Franks did such a great job in planning the operations, we moved rapidly, and a lot of the Ba'athists and Saddam loyalists laid down their arms and disappeared. I thought we would—they would stay and fight, but they didn't. And now we're fighting them now.

It's—and it's hard work. I understand how hard it is. I get the casualty reports every day. I see on the TV screens how hard it is, but it's necessary work. And I'm optimistic. See, I think you can be realistic and optimistic at the same time. I'm optimistic we'll achieve—I know we won't achieve if we send mixed signals. I know we're not going to achieve our objective if we send mixed signals to our troops, our friends, the Iraqi citizens.

We've got a plan in place. The plan says there'll be elections in January, and there will be. The plan says we'll train Iraqi soldiers so they can do the hard work, and we are. And it's not only just America, but NATO is now helping. Jordan is helping train police. The UAE is helping train police. We've allocated $7 billion over the

next months for reconstruction efforts, and we're making progress there. And our alliance is strong. Now, I just told you, there's going to be a summit of the Arab nations. Japan will be hosting a summit. We're making progress.

It is hard work. It is hard work to go from a tyranny to a democracy. It's hard work to go from a place where people get their hands cut off or executed, to a place where people are free. But it's necessary work, and a free Iraq is going to make this world a more peaceful place.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. What I think troubles a lot of people in our country is that the President has just sort of described one kind of mistake, but what he has said is that even knowing there were no weapons of mass destruction, even knowing there was no imminent threat, even knowing there was no connection of Al Qaida, he would still have done everything the same way. Those are his words. Now, I would not.

So what I'm trying to do is just talk the truth to the American people and to the world. Truth is what good policy is based on. It's what leadership is based on.

The President says that I'm denigrating these troops. I have nothing but respect for the British and for Tony Blair and for what they've been willing to do. But you can't tell me that when the most troops any other country has on the ground is Great Britain with 8,300, and below that, the 4 others are below 4,000, and below that, there isn't anybody out of the hundreds, that we have a genuine coalition to get this job done. You can't tell me that on the day that we went into that war and it started, it was principally the United States, the—America and Great Britain and one or two others; that's it. And today we are 90 percent of the casualties and 90 percent of the costs.

And meanwhile, North Korea has gotten nuclear weapons. Talk about mixed messages, the President is the one who said we can't allow countries to get nuclear weapons. They have. I'll change that.

Candidates' Candor and Consistency

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes. You've just—you've repeatedly accused President Bush, not here tonight but elsewhere before, of not telling the truth about Iraq, essentially of lying to the American people about Iraq. Give us some examples of what you consider to be his not telling the truth.

Senator Kerry. Well, I've never, ever used the harshest word, as you did just then, and I try not to. I've been—but I'll, nevertheless, tell you that I think he has not been candid with the American people, and I'll tell you exactly how.

First of all, we all know that in his State of the Union Message he told Congress about nuclear materials that didn't exist. We know that he promised America that he was going to build this coalition. I just described the coalition. It is not the kind of coalition we were described when we were talking about voting for this. The President said he would exhaust the remedies of the United Nations and go through that full process. He didn't. He cut it off, sort of arbitrarily. And we know that there were further diplomatics—efforts underway. They just decided the time for diplomacy is over and rushed to war without planning for what happens afterwards. Now, he misled the American people in his speech when he said, "We will plan carefully." They obviously didn't. He misled the American people when he said, "We'd go to war as a last resort." We did not go as a last resort. And most Americans know the difference.

Now, this has cost us deeply in the world. I believe that it is important to tell the truth to the American people. I've worked with those leaders the President talks about. I've worked with them for 20 years, for longer than this President, and I know what many of them say today, and

I know how to bring them back to the table.

And I believe that fresh start, new credibility, a President who can understand what we have to do to reach out to the Muslim world, to make it clear that this is not—you know, Usama bin Laden uses the invasion of Iraq in order to go out to people and say the—America has declared war on Islam. We need to be smarter about how we wage a war on terror. We need to deny them the recruits. We need to deny them the safe havens. We need to rebuild our alliances. I believe that Ronald Reagan, John Kennedy, and others did that more effectively, and I'm going to try to follow in their footsteps.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. My opponent just said something amazing. He said Usama bin Laden uses the invasion of Iraq as an excuse to spread hatred for America. Usama bin Laden isn't going to determine how we defend ourselves. Usama bin Laden doesn't get to decide. The American people decide. I decided. The right action was in Iraq.

My opponent calls it a mistake. It wasn't a mistake. He said I misled on Iraq. I don't think he was misleading when he called Iraq a grave threat in the fall of 2002. I don't think he was misleading when he said that it was right to disarm Iraq in the spring of 2003. I don't think he misled you when he said that if—anyone who doubted whether the world was better off without Saddam Hussein in power didn't have the judgment to be President. I don't think he was misleading. I think what is misleading is to say you can lead and succeed in Iraq if you keep changing your positions on this war, and he has. As the politics change, his positions change, and that's not how a Commander in Chief acts.

I—let me finish. The intelligence I looked at was the same intelligence my opponent looked at, the very same intelligence. And when I stood up there and spoke to the Congress, I was speaking off the same intelligence he looked at to make his decisions to support the authorization of force.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds—we'll do a 30-second here.

Senator Kerry. I wasn't misleading when I said he was a threat. Nor was I misleading on the day that the President decided to go to war when I said that he had made a mistake in not building strong alliances and that I would have preferred that he did more diplomacy. I've had one position, one consistent position, that Saddam Hussein was a threat; there was a right way to disarm him and a wrong way. And the President chose the wrong way.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. The only thing consistent about my opponent's position is that he's been inconsistent. He changes positions. And you cannot change positions in this war on terror if you expect to win. And I expect to win. It's necessary we win. We're being challenged like never before, and we have a duty to our country and to future generations of America to achieve a free Iraq, a free Afghanistan, and to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction.

Hard Decisions/Support for the Military

Mr. Lehrer. New question, Mr. President, 2 minutes. Has the war in Iraq been worth the cost in American lives? Ten thousand fifty two—I mean, 1,052 as of today.

President Bush. No, every life is precious. Every life matters. You know, my hardest—the hardest part of the job is to know that I committed the troops in harm's way and then do the best I can to provide comfort for the loved ones who lost a son or a daughter or a husband and wife.

And you know, I think about Missy Johnson, who is a fantastic young lady I met in Charlotte, North Carolina, she and her son, Bryan. They came to see me. Her husband, P.J., got killed. He'd been in Afghanistan, went to Iraq. You know, it's hard

work to try to love her as best as I can, knowing full well that the decision I made caused her loved one to be in harm's way. I told her, after we prayed and teared up and laughed some, that I thought her husband's sacrifice was noble and worthy, because I understand the stakes of this war on terror. I understand that we must find Al Qaida wherever they hide. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize—and Saddam Hussein was a threat—and that we must spread liberty, because in the long run, the way to defeat hatred and tyranny and oppression is to spread freedom. Missy understood that. That's what she told me her husband understood.

So you say, was it worth it? Every life is precious. That's what distinguishes us from the enemy. Everybody matters. But I think it's worth it, Jim. I think it's worth it because I think—I know in the long term, a free Iraq, a free Afghanistan will set such a powerful example in the part of the world that's desperate for freedom—it will help change the world—that we can look back and say, "We did our duty."

Mr. Lehrer. Senator, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. I understand what the President is talking about, because I know what it means to lose people in combat. And the question, is it worth the cost, reminds me of my own thinking when I came back from fighting in that war, and it reminds me that it is vital for us not to confuse the war, ever, with the warriors. That happened before.

And that's one of the reasons why I believe I can get this job done, because I am determined, for those soldiers and for those families, for those kids who put their lives on the line—that is noble. That's the most noble thing that anybody can do. And I want to make sure the outcome honors that nobility.

Now, we have a choice here. I've laid out a plan by which I think we can be successful in Iraq, with a summit, by doing better training faster, by cutting—by doing what we need to do with respect to the U.N. and the elections. There's only 25 percent of the people in there. They can't have an election right now. The President is not getting the job done.

So the choice for America is, you can have a plan that I've laid out in four points, each of which I can tell you more about, or you can go to johnkerry.com and see more of it, or you have the President's plan, which is four words, "More of the same." I think my plan is better. And my plan has a better chance of standing up and fighting for those troops. I will never let those troops down and will hunt and kill the terrorists, wherever they are.

Mr. Lehrer. New—all right, sir, go ahead. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. I understand what it means to be the Commander in Chief, and if I were to ever say this is the wrong war at the wrong time at the right—wrong place, the troops would wonder, "How can I follow this guy?" You cannot lead the war on terror if you keep changing positions on the war on terror and say things like, "Well, this is just a grand diversion." It's not a grand diversion. This is an essential, that we get it right. And so I—the plan he talks about simply won't work.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, you have 30 seconds, right.

Senator Kerry. Secretary of State Colin Powell told this President the Pottery Barn rule: If you break it, you fix it. Now, if you break it, you made a mistake. It's the wrong thing to do, but you own it. And then you've got to fix it and do something with it. Now, that's what we have to do. There's no inconsistency.

Soldiers know, over there, that this isn't being done right yet. I'm going to get it right for those soldiers, because it's important to Israel. It's important to America. It's important to the world. It's important to the fight on terror. But I have a plan to do it. He doesn't.

Timeline for Withdrawal From Iraq/ Conditions in Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. Speaking of your plan, new question, Senator Kerry, 2 minutes. Can you give us specifics—in terms of a scenario, timelines, et cetera—for ending U.S.—major U.S. military involvement in Iraq?

Senator Kerry. The timeline that I've set out—and again, I want to correct the President, because he's misled again this evening on what I've said. I didn't say I would bring troops out in 6 months. I said, "If we do the things that I've set out, and we are successful, we could begin to draw the troops down in 6 months." And I think a critical component of success in Iraq is being able to convince the Iraqis and the Arab world that the United States doesn't have long-term designs on it.

As I understand it, we're building some 14 military bases there now, and some people say they've got a rather permanent concept to them. When you—when you guard the oil ministry but you don't guard the nuclear facilities, the message to a lot of people is, "Maybe—well, maybe they're interested in our oil." Now, the problem is that they didn't think these things through properly, and these are the things you have to think through.

What I want to do is change the dynamics on the ground. And you have to do that by beginning to not back off of Fallujahs and other places and send the wrong message to the terrorists. You have to close the borders. You've got to show you're serious in that regard. But you've also got to show that you're prepared to bring the rest of the world in and share the stakes.

I will make a flat statement: The United States of America has no long-term designs on staying in Iraq. And our goal, in my administration, would be to get all of the troops out of there, with the minimal amount you need for training and logistics as we do in some other countries in the world after a war to be able to sustain the peace. But that's how we're going to win the peace, by rapidly training the Iraqis themselves.

Even the administration has admitted they haven't done the training, because they came to Congress a few weeks ago and asked for a complete reprogramming of the money. Now, what greater admission is there, 16 months afterwards, "Oops, we haven't done the job. We've got to start to spend the money now. Will you guys give us permission to shift it over into training?"

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. There's 100,000 troops trained, police, guard, special units, border patrol. There's going to be 125,000 trained by the end of this year. Yes, we're getting the job done. It's hard work. Everybody knows it's hard work because there's a determined enemy that's trying to defeat us.

Now, my opponent says he's going to try to change the dynamics on the ground. Well, Prime Minister Allawi was here. He is the leader of that country. He's a brave, brave man. When he came, after giving a speech to the Congress, my opponent questioned his credibility. You can't change the dynamics on the ground if you've criticized the brave leader of Iraq. One of his campaign people alleged that Prime Minister Allawi was like a puppet. That's no way to treat somebody who's courageous and brave, that is trying to lead his country forward.

The way to make sure that we succeed is to send consistent, sound messages to the Iraqi people that when we give our word, we will keep our word; that we stand with you; that we believe you want to be free. And I do. I believe that the 25 million people, the vast majority, long to have elections. I reject this notion—and I'm not suggesting that my opponent says it, but I reject the notion that some say that if you're Muslim you can't be free; you don't desire freedom. I disagree, strongly disagree with that.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. I couldn't agree more that the Iraqis want to be free and that they could be free. But I think the President, again, still hasn't shown how he's going to go about it the right way. He has more of the same.

Now, Prime Minister Allawi came here, and he said the terrorists are pouring over the border. That's Allawi's assessment. The national intelligence assessment that was given to the President in July said: Best case scenario, more of the same of what we see today; worst case scenario, civil war. I can do better.

President Bush. Yes, let me——

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, 30 seconds.

President Bush. The reason why Prime Minister Allawi said they're coming across the border is because he recognizes that this is a central part of the war on terror. They're fighting us because they're fighting freedom. They understand that a free Afghanistan or a free Iraq will be a major defeat for them, and those are the stakes. And that's why it is essential we not leave. That's why it's essential we hold the line. That's why it's essential we win, and we will. Under my leadership, we're going to win this war in Iraq.

Future U.S. Military Action

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, a new question, 2 minutes. Does the Iraq experience make it more likely or less likely that you would take the United States into another preemptive military action?

President Bush. I would hope I never have to. I understand how hard it is to commit troops. I never wanted to commit troops. I never—when I was running—when we had the debate in 2000, I never dreamt I would be doing that. But the enemy attacked us, Jim, and I have a solemn duty to protect the American people, to do everything I can to protect us.

I think that by speaking clearly and doing what we say and not sending mixed messages, it is less likely we'll ever have to use troops. But a President must always be willing to use troops. It must—as a last resort.

The—I was hopeful diplomacy would work in Iraq. It was falling apart. There was no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein was hoping that the world would turn a blind eye. And if he had been in power—in other words, we had said, "Let's let the inspectors work," or "Let's hope to talk him out; maybe an 18th resolution would work," he'd have been stronger and tougher, and the world would have been a lot worse off. There's just no doubt in my mind. We would rue the day if Saddam Hussein had been in power.

So we use diplomacy every chance we get, believe me. And I—I would hope never to have to use force. But by speaking clearly and sending messages that we mean what we say, we've affected the world in a positive way. Look at Libya. Libya was a threat. Libya is now peacefully dismantling its weapons programs. Libya understood that America and others will enforce doctrine, and the world is better for it.

So to answer your question, I would hope we'd never have to. I think by acting firmly and decisively, it will mean it's less likely to—less likely we have to use force.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. Jim, the President just said something extraordinarily revealing and, frankly, very important in this debate. In answer to your question about Iraq and sending people into Iraq, he just said, "The enemy attacked us." Saddam Hussein didn't attack us. Usama bin Laden attacked us. Al Qaida attacked us.

And when we had Usama bin Laden cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora, 1,000 of his cohorts with him in those mountains, with the American military forces nearby and in the field, we didn't use the best trained troops in the world to go kill the world's number one criminal and terrorist. They outsourced the job to Afghan warlords who only a week earlier had been on the other side fighting against us, neither of

whom trusted each other. That's the enemy that attacked us. That's the enemy that was allowed to walk out of those mountains. That's the enemy that is now in 60 countries with stronger recruits.

He also said Saddam Hussein would have been stronger. That is just factually incorrect. Two-thirds of the country was a no-fly zone when we started this war. We would have had sanctions. We would have had the U.N. inspectors. Saddam Hussein would have been continually weakening. If the President had shown the patience to go through another round of resolution, to sit down with those leaders and say, "What do you need? What do you need now? How much more will it take to get you to join us," we would be in a stronger place today.

President Bush. First, listen——

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. ——of course I know Usama bin Laden attacked us. I know that. And secondly, to think that another round of resolutions would have caused Saddam Hussein to disarm, disclose is ludicrous, in my judgment. It just shows a significant difference of opinion. We tried diplomacy. We did our best. He was hoping to turn a blind eye, and, yes, he would have been stronger had we not dealt with him. He had the capability of making weapons, and he would have made weapons.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Thirty-five to forty countries in the world had a greater capability of making weapons at the moment the President invaded than Saddam Hussein. And while he has been diverted with 9 out of 10 active duty divisions of our Army either going to Iraq, coming back from Iraq, or getting ready to go, North Korea's got nuclear weapons, and the world is more dangerous. Iran is moving towards nuclear weapons, and the world is more dangerous. Darfur has a genocide. The world is more dangerous. I'd have made a better choice.

Preemptive Action/International Cooperation

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. What is your position on the whole concept of preemptive war?

Senator Kerry. The President always has the right and always has had the right for preemptive strike. That was a great doctrine throughout the cold war, and it was always one of the things we argued about with respect to arms control. No President, through all of American history, has ever ceded, and nor would I, the right to preempt in any way necessary to protect the United States of America. But if and when you do it, Jim, you've got to do in a way that passes the test, that passes the global test, where your countrymen, your people, understand fully why you're doing what you're doing and you can prove to the world that you did it for legitimate reasons.

Here we have our own Secretary of State who's had to apologize to the world for the presentation he made to the United Nations. I mean, we can remember when President Kennedy, in the Cuban missile crisis, sent his Secretary of State to Paris to meet with de Gaulle, and in the middle of the discussion to tell them about the missiles in Cuba, he said, "Here, let me show you the photos." And de Gaulle waved them off and said, "No, no, no, no. The word of the President of the United States is good enough for me." How many leaders in the world today would respond to us, as a result of what we've done, in that way?

So what is at test here is the credibility of the United States of America and how we lead the world. Iran and Iraq are now more—Iran and North Korea are now more dangerous. Now, whether preemption is ultimately what has to happen or not, I don't know yet. But I'll tell you this, as President, I'll never take my eye off that ball. I've been fighting for proliferation the entire time—antiproliferation the entire time I've been in the Congress. And we've watched

this President actually turn away from some of the treaties that were on the table. You don't help yourself with other nations when you turn away from the global warming treaty, for instance, or when you refuse to deal at length with the United Nations. You have to earn that respect. And I think we have a lot of earning back to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. Let me—I'm not exactly sure what you mean, "passes the global test." You take preemptive action if you pass a global test? My attitude is you take preemptive action in order to protect the American people, that you act in order to make this country secure.

My opponent talks about me not signing certain treaties. But let me tell you one thing I didn't sign—and I think it shows a difference of our opinion, the difference of opinions—and that is that I wouldn't join the International Criminal Court. This is a body based in The Hague where unaccountable judges and prosecutors could pull our troops, our diplomats up for trial. And I wouldn't join it. And I understand that in certain capitals around the world that that wasn't a popular move. But it's the right move, not to join a foreign court that could—where our people could be prosecuted. My opponent is for joining the International Criminal Court. I just think trying to be popular kind of in the global sense, if it's not in our best interest, makes no sense. I'm interested in working with other nations and do a lot of it. But I'm not going to make decisions that I think are wrong for America.

North Korea and Iran

Mr. Lehrer. New question. Mr. President, do you believe that diplomacy and sanctions can resolve the nuclear problems with North Korea and Iran? Taking them in any order you would like.

President Bush. North Korea, first—I do. Let me say I certainly hope so. Before I was sworn in, the policy of this Government was to have bilateral negotiations with North Korea. And we signed an agreement with North Korea that my administration found out that was not being honored by the North Koreans. And so I decided that a better way to approach the issue was to get other nations involved, just—besides us.

And in Crawford, Texas, Jiang Zemin and I agreed that the nuclear-weapons-free North—peninsula—Korean Peninsula was in his interest and our interest and the world's interest. And so we began a new dialog with North Korea, one that included not only the United States but now China. And China has got a lot of influence over North Korea, in some ways more than we do.

As well we included South Korea, Japan, and Russia. So now there are five voices speaking to Kim Chong-il, not just one. And so if Kim Chong-il decides again to not honor an agreement, he's not only doing injustice to America, he'd be doing injustice to China as well. And I think this will work. It's not going to work if we open up a dialog with Kim Chong-il. That's what he wants. He wants to unravel the six-party talks—or the five—the five-nation coalition that's sending him a clear message.

On Iran, I hope we can do the same thing, continue to work with the world to convince the Iranian mullahs to abandon their nuclear ambitions. We've worked very closely with the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, and Great Britain, who have been the folks delivering the message to the mullahs that if you expect to be part of the world of nations, get rid of your nuclear programs. The IAEA is involved. There's a special protocol recently been passed that allows for instant inspections. I hope we can do it, and we've got a good strategy.

Mr. Lehrer. Senator Kerry, 90 seconds.

Senator Kerry. With respect to Iran, the British, French, and Germans were the ones who initiated an effort—without the United States, regrettably—to begin to try

to move to deter the nuclear possibilities in Iran.

I believe we could have done better. I think the United States should have offered the opportunity to provide the nuclear fuel, test them to see whether or not they were actually looking for it for peaceful purposes. If they weren't willing to work a deal, then we could have put sanctions together. The President did nothing.

With respect to North Korea, the real story, we had inspectors and television cameras in the nuclear reactor in North Korea. Secretary Bill Perry negotiated that under President Clinton. And we knew where the fuel rods were, and we knew the limits on their nuclear power. Colin Powell, our Secretary of State, announced one day that we were going to continue the dialog and work with the North Koreans. The President reversed him publicly, while the President of South Korea was here. And the President of South Korea went back to South Korea bewildered and embarrassed because it went against his policy. And for 2 years, this administration didn't talk at all to North Korea.

While they didn't talk at all, the fuel rods came out. The inspectors were kicked out. The television cameras were kicked out. And, today, there are four to seven nuclear weapons in the hands of North Korea. That happened on this President's watch. Now, that, I think, is one of the most serious sort of reversals or mixed messages that you could possibly send.

Mr. Lehrer. I want to make sure—yes, sir—but in this one minute, I want to make sure that we understand—the people—the people watching you understand the differences between the two of you on this. You want to continue the multinational talks, correct?

President Bush. Right.

Mr. Lehrer. And you want—you're wanting to do it——

Senator Kerry. Both. I want bilateral talks which put all of the issues from the Armistice of 1952, the economic issues, the human rights issues, the artillery disposal issues, the DMZ issues, and the nuclear issues on the table.

Mr. Lehrer. And you're opposed to that, right?

President Bush. The minute we have bilateral talks, the six-party talks will unwind. It's exactly what Kim Chong-il wants. And by the way, the breach on the agreement was not to plutonium. The breach on the agreement is highly enriched uranium. That's what we caught him doing. That's where he was breaking the agreement.

Secondly, you said—my opponent said that he'd work to put sanctions on Iran. We've already sanctioned Iran. We can't sanction them anymore. There are sanctions in place on Iran. And finally, we were a party to the convincing—to working with Germany, France, and Great Britain to send their Foreign Ministers into Iran.

Iran/Sudan

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. You mentioned Darfur, the Darfur region of Sudan. Fifty thousand people have already died in that area, more than a million are homeless, and it's been labeled an act of ongoing genocide. Yet, neither one of you or anyone else connected with your campaigns or your administration that I can find has discussed the possibility of sending in troops. Why not?

Senator Kerry. Well, I'll tell you exactly why not, but I first want to say something about those sanctions on Iran. Only the United States put the sanctions on, alone, and that's exactly what I'm talking about. In order for the sanctions to be effective we should have been working with the British, French, and Germans and other countries. And that's the difference between the President and me. And there again, he sort of slid by the question.

Now, with respect to Darfur, yes, it is a genocide. And months ago, many of us were pressing for action. I think the reason that we're not saying send American troops in at this point is several-fold. Number one,

we can do this through the African Union, providing we give them the logistical support. Right now, all the President is providing is humanitarian support. We need to do more than that. They've got to have the logistical capacity to go in and stop the killing, and that's going to require more than is on the table today.

I also believe that it is—one of the reasons we can't do it is we're overextended. Ask the people in the Armed Forces today. We've got Guards and Reserves who are doing double duties. We've got a backdoor draft taking place in America today, people with stop-loss programs where they're told, "You can't get out of the military," 9 out of our 10 active duty divisions committed to Iraq one way or the other, either going, coming, or preparing. So this is the way the President has overextended the United States.

That's why, in my plan, I add two active duty divisions to the United States Army, not for Iraq but for our general demands across the globe. I also intend to double the number of Special Forces so that we can do the job we need to do with respect to fighting the terrorists around the world. And if we do that, then we have the ability to be able to respond more rapidly. But I'll tell you this, as President, if it took American forces, to some degree, to coalesce the African Union, I'd be prepared to do it, because we could never allow another Rwanda. It's a moral responsibility for us in the world.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds.

President Bush. Back to Iran, just for a second. It was not my administration that put the sanctions on Iran. That happened long before I arrived in Washington, DC.

In terms of Darfur, I agree, it's genocide, and Colin Powell so stated. We have committed $200 million worth of aid. We're the leading donor in the world to help the suffering people there. We will commit more, over time, to help.

We were very much involved at the U.N. on the sanction policy of the Bashir Government in the Sudan. Prior to Darfur, Ambassador Jack Danforth had been negotiating a north-south agreement that we would hope would have brought peace to the Sudan. I agree with my opponent that we shouldn't be committing troops, that we ought to be working with the African Union to do so—precisely what we did in Liberia. We helped stabilize the situation with some troops, and when the African Union came, we moved them out. My hope is that the African Union moves rapidly to help save lives. Fortunately, the rainy season will be ending shortly, which will make it easier to get aid there and help the long-suffering people there.

Character of the Candidates

Mr. Lehrer. New question, President Bush. There are clearly, as we have heard, major policy differences between the two of you. Are there also underlying character issues that you believe—that you believe—are serious enough to deny Senator Kerry the job as Commander in Chief of the United States?

President Bush. Whew, that's a loaded question. [*Laughter*]

First of all, I admire Senator Kerry's service to our country. I admire the fact that he is a great dad. I appreciate the fact that his daughters have been so kind to my daughters in what has been a pretty hard experience for, I guess, young girls seeing their dads out there campaigning. I admire the fact that he's served for 20 years in the Senate, although I'm not so sure I admire the record. I won't hold it against him that he went to Yale. Nothing wrong with that.

I—my concerns about the Senator is that in the course of this campaign I've been listening very carefully to what he says, and he changed his positions on the war in Iraq, changed his positions on something as fundamental as what you believe in your core, in your heart of hearts, is right in Iraq.

You cannot lead if you send mixed messages. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to our troops. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to our allies. Mixed messages send the wrong signals to the Iraqi citizens.

And that's my biggest concern about my opponent. I admire his service. But I just know how this world works and that in the councils of government, there must be certainty from the U.S. President. Of course, we change tactics when need to, but we never change our beliefs, the strategic beliefs that are necessary to protect this country in the world.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety-second response, Senator.

Senator Kerry. Well, first of all, I appreciate enormously the personal comments the President just made, and I share them with him. I think only if you've—if you're doing this, and he's done it more than I have in terms of the Presidency, can you begin to get a sense of what it means to your families. And it's tough. And so I acknowledge his daughters. I've watched them. I've chuckled a few times at some of their comments. [*Laughter*] And——

President Bush. I'm trying to put a leash on them. [*Laughter*]

Senator Kerry. Well, I know, I've learned not to do that. [*Laughter*] And I have great respect and admiration for his wife. I think she's a terrific person——

President Bush. Thank you.

Senator Kerry. ——and a great First Lady. But we do have differences. I'm not going to talk about a difference of character. I don't think that's my job or my business. But let me talk about something that the President just sort of finished up with—maybe someone would call it a character trait; maybe somebody wouldn't—but this issue of certainty. It's one thing to be certain, but you can be certain and be wrong. It's another to be certain and be right, or be certain and be moving in the right direction, or be certain about a principle and then learn new facts and take those new facts and put them to use in order to change and get your policy right.

What I worry about with the President is that he's not acknowledging what's on the ground. He's not acknowledging the realities of North Korea. He's not acknowledging the truth of the science of stem cell research or of global warming and other issues. And certainty sometimes can get you in trouble.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

President Bush. Well, I think—listen, I fully agree that one should shift tactics, and we will in Iraq. Our commanders have got all the flexibility to do what is necessary to succeed. But what I won't do is change my core values because of politics or because of pressure. And it is—one of the things I've learned in the White House is that there's enormous pressure on the President, and you cannot wilt under that pressure. Otherwise the world won't be better off.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds.

Senator Kerry. I have no intention of wilting. I've never wilted in my life, and I've never wavered in my life. I know exactly what we need to do in Iraq and my position has been consistent. Saddam Hussein is a threat. He needed to be disarmed. We needed to go to the U.N. The President needed the authority to use force in order to be able to get him to do something because he never did it without the threat of force, but we didn't need to rush to war without a plan to win the peace.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Lehrer. New question, 2 minutes, Senator Kerry. If you are elected President, what will you take to that office thinking is the single most serious threat to the national security of the United States?

Senator Kerry. Nuclear proliferation—nuclear proliferation. There are some 600-plus tons of unsecured material still in the former Soviet Union, in Russia. At the rate that the President is currently securing that, it will take 13 years to get it.

I did a lot of work on this. I wrote a book about it several years ago—maybe 6 or 7 years ago, called "The New War," which saw the difficulties of this international criminal network. And back then, we intercepted a suitcase in a Middle Eastern country with nuclear materials in it, and the black market sale price was about $250 million. Now, there are terrorists trying to get their hands on that stuff today.

And this President, I regret to say, has secured less nuclear material in the last 2 years since 9/11 than we did in the 2 years preceding 9/11. We have to do this job. And to do the job, you can't cut the money for it. The President actually cut the money for it. You have to put the money into it and the funding and the leadership.

And part of that leadership is sending the right message to places like North Korea. Right now the President is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to research bunker-busting nuclear weapons. The United States is pursuing a new set of nuclear weapons. It doesn't make sense. You talk about mixed messages. We're telling other people, "You can't have nuclear weapons," but we're pursuing a new nuclear weapon that we might even contemplate using.

Not this President. I'm going to shut that program down, and we're going to make it clear to the world we're serious about containing nuclear proliferation. And we're going to get the job of containing all of that nuclear material in Russia done in 4 years. And we're going to build the strongest international network to prevent nuclear proliferation. This is the scale of what President Kennedy set out to do with the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It's our generation's equivalent, and I intend to get it done.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. Actually, we've increased funding for dealing with nuclear proliferation about 35 percent since I've been the President.

Secondly, we've set up what's called the—well, first of all, I agree with my opponent that the biggest threat facing this country is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist network. And that's why we've put proliferation as the—one of the centerpieces of a multipronged strategy to make the country safer.

My administration started what is called the Proliferation Security Initiative, over 60 nations involved with disrupting the transshipment of information and/or weapons of mass destruction materials. And we're—been effective. We busted the A.Q. Khan network. This was a proliferator out of Pakistan that was selling secrets to places like North Korea and Libya. We convinced Libya to disarm. It was an essential part of dealing with weapons of mass destruction and proliferation.

I'll tell you another way to help protect America in the long—in the long run is continue with missile defenses, and we've got a robust research and development program that has been ongoing during my administration. We'll be implementing a missile defense system relatively quickly. And that is another way to help deal with the threats that we face in the 21st century. My opponent is opposed to the missile defenses.

Mr. Lehrer. Just for this one-minute discussion here, is it just—for whatever seconds it takes—so it's correct to say that if somebody is listening to this, that both of you agree—if you're reelected, Mr. President, and if you are elected—the single most serious threat you believe—both of you believe is nuclear proliferation?

President Bush. In the hands of a terrorist enemy.

Senator Kerry. Weapons of mass destruction, nuclear proliferation. But again, the test of the difference between us—the President has had 4 years to try to do something about it, and North Korea has got more weapons. Iran is moving towards

weapons. And at his pace, it will take 13 years to secure those weapons in Russia. I'm going to do it in 4 years, and I'm going to immediately set out to have bilateral talks with North Korea.

Mr. Lehrer. Your response to that.

President Bush. Again, I can't tell you how big a mistake I think that is, to have bilateral talks with North Korea. It's precisely what Kim Chong-il wants. It will cause the six-party talks to evaporate. It means that China no longer is involved in convincing, along with us, for Kim Chong-il to get rid of his weapons. It's a big mistake to do that. We must have China's leverage on Kim Chong-il, besides ourselves. And if you enter bilateral talks, they'll be happy to walk away from the table. I don't think that will work.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Mr. Lehrer. All right, Mr. President, this is—this is the last question, and 2 minutes. It's a new—new subject, new question. And it has to do with President Putin and Russia. Did you misjudge him, or are you—do you feel that what he is doing in the name of antiterrorism by changing some democratic processes is okay?

President Bush. No, I don't think it's okay and said so publicly. I think that there needs to be checks and balances in a democracy and made that very clear—that by consolidating power in a central government, he's sending a signal to the Western world and the United States that—that perhaps he doesn't believe in checks and balances. And I've told him that.

He's also a strong ally in the war on terror. He is—listen, they went through a horrible situation in Beslan where these terrorists gunned down young school kids. But it's the nature of the enemy, by the way. That's why we need to be firm and resolved in bringing them to justice. It's precisely what Vladimir Putin understands as well.

I've got a good relation with Vladimir, and it's important that we do have a good relation because that enables me to better comment to him and to—better to discuss with him some of the decisions he makes. I found that in this world that it's important to establish good personal relationships with people so that when you have disagreements, you're able to disagree in a way that is effective.

And so I've told him my opinion. I look forward to discussing it more with him as time goes on. Russia is a country in transition. Vladimir is going to have to make some hard choices, and I think it's very important for the American President as well as other Western leaders to remind him of the great benefits of democracy, that democracy will best help the people realize their hopes and aspirations and dreams. And I will continue working with him over the next 4 years.

Mr. Lehrer. Ninety seconds, Senator Kerry.

Senator Kerry. Well, let me just say quickly that I've had an extraordinary experience of watching up close and personal that transition in Russia, because I was there right after the transformation, and I was probably one of the first Senators, along with Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire, a former Senator, to go down into the KGB underneath Treblinka Square and see reams of files with names in them. And it sort of brought home the transition to democracy that Russia was trying to make.

I regret what's happened in these past months, and I think it goes beyond just the response to terror. Mr. Putin now controls all the television stations. His political opposition is being put in jail. And I think it's very important for the United States, obviously, to have a working relationship that is good. This is a very important country to us, and we want a partnership. But we always have to stand up for democracy. As George Will said the other day, "Freedom on the march, not in Russia right now."

Now, I'd like to come back for a quick moment, if I can, to that issue about China and the talks, because that's one of the most critical issues here, North Korea. Just because the President says it can't be done, that you'd lose China, doesn't mean it can't be done. I mean, this is the President who said there were weapons of mass destruction, said "mission accomplished," said we could fight the war on the cheap, none of which were true. We can have bilateral talks with Kim Chong-il, and we can get those weapons at the same time as we get China, because China has an interest in the outcome too.

Mr. Lehrer. Thirty seconds, Mr. President.

President Bush. You know my opinion on North Korea. I can't say it any more plainly.

Mr. Lehrer. Right. Well, but what—he used the word "truth" again.

President Bush. Pardon me?

Mr. Lehrer. Talking about the truth of the matter. He used the word "truth" again. Did that raise any hackles that you—with you?

President Bush. Oh, I'm a pretty calm guy. [*Laughter*] I mean, I don't take it personally.

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Yes.

President Bush. But you know, look, we looked at the same intelligence. We came to the same conclusion, that Saddam Hussein was a grave threat. And I don't hold it against him that he said "grave threat." I'm not going to go around the country saying he didn't tell the truth, when he looked at the same intelligence I did.

Senator Kerry. It was a threat. That's not the issue. The issue is what you do about it. The President said he was going to build a true coalition, exhaust the remedies of the U.N., and go to war as a last resort. Those words really have to mean something. And unfortunately, he didn't go to war as a last resort. Now we have this incredible mess in Iraq, $200 billion—it's—it's not what the American people thought they were getting when they voted.

Closing Statements

Mr. Lehrer. All right, that brings us to closing statements. And again, as determined by a coin toss, Senator Kerry, you go first, and you have 2 minutes.

Senator Kerry. Thank you, Jim, very much. Thank you very much to the university again. Thank you, Mr. President.

My fellow Americans, as I said at the very beginning of this debate, both President Bush and I love this country very much. There is no doubt, I think, about that. But we have a different set of convictions about how we make our country stronger here at home and respected again in the world.

I know that for many of you sitting at home, parents of kids in Iraq, you want to know, who is the person who could be a Commander in Chief who can get your kids home and get the job done and win the peace? And for all the rest of the parents in America who are wondering about their kids going to a school or anywhere else in the world, what kind of world they're going to grow up in, let me look you in the eye and say to you: I've defended this country as a young man in war, and I will defend it as President of the United States. But I have a difference with this President. I believe we're strongest when we reach out and lead the world and build strong alliances. I have a plan for Iraq. I believe we can be successful. I'm not talking about leaving. I'm talking about winning. And we need a fresh start, a new credibility, a President who can bring allies to our side.

I also have a plan to win the war on terror, funding homeland security, strengthening our military, cutting off finances, reaching out to the world—again, building strong alliances.

I believe America's best days are ahead of us because I believe that the future belongs to freedom, not to fear. That's the

country that I'm going to fight for, and I ask you to give me the opportunity to make you proud. I ask you to give me the opportunity to lead this great Nation so that we can be stronger here at home, respected again in the world, and have responsible leadership that we deserve.

Thank you, and God bless America.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, 2 minutes.

President Bush. Thank you very much, tonight, Jim. Thank you, Senator.

If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen so long as I'm your President. In the next 4 years, we will continue to strengthen our homeland defenses. We will strengthen our intelligence gathering services. We will reform our military. The military will be an all-volunteer army. We will continue to stay on the offense. We will fight the terrorists around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We'll continue to build our alliances. I'll never turn over America's national security needs to leaders of other countries as we continue to build those alliances. And we'll continue to spread freedom. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I believe that a free Iraq is in this Nation's interests. I believe a free Afghanistan is in this Nation's interests, and I believe both a free Afghanistan and a free Iraq will serve as a powerful example for millions who plead in silence for liberty in the broader Middle East.

We've done a lot of hard work together over the last 3½ years. We've been challenged, and we've risen to those challenges. We've climbed the mighty mountain. I see the valley below, and it's a valley of peace. By being steadfast and resolute and strong, by keeping our word, by supporting our troops, we can achieve the peace we all want.

I appreciate your listening tonight. I ask for your vote. And may God continue to bless our great land.

Mr. Lehrer. And that ends tonight's debate. A reminder, the second Presidential debate will be a week from tomorrow, October 8th, from Washington University in St. Louis. Charles Gibson of ABC News will moderate a townhall-type event. Then, on October 13th, from Arizona State University in Tempe, Bob Schieffer of CBS News will moderate an exchange on domestic policy that will be similar in format to tonight's. Also, this coming Tuesday, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the Vice Presidential candidates, Vice President Cheney and Senator Edwards, will debate with my PBS colleague, Gwen Ifill, moderating.

For now, thank you, Senator Kerry, President Bush. From Coral Gables, Florida, I'm Jim Lehrer. Thank you, and good night.

NOTE: The debate began at 9:02 p.m. in the Convocation Center at the University of Miami. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; former President Jiang Zemin of China; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; and former Senator John C. Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan. Senator Kerry referred to Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN

(Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Gen. Merrill A. "Tony" McPeak, USAF (Ret.), former Air Force Chief of Staff; Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.), former National Security Adviser; Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, USA (Ret.), former Army Chief of Staff; former Secretary of Defense William Perry; and President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea. Senator Kerry also referred to the National Intelligence Estimate and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Remarks at a Presidental Debate Watch Party in Coral Gables, Florida
September 30, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Anything worthwhile on TV tonight? [*Laughter*] I enjoyed it. I had a good time up there talking about what I believe. No, it's not hard to debate if you know what's in your heart, know where you want to lead this country.

Listen, I too want to thank the people of this State for their courage, compassion, and decency in the face of incredible suffering. These four hurricanes came to this State, and the people of this State have risen up. And when they found a neighbor in need, they provided compassion and help. When they found somebody who's hurting, they provided succor needed. And I thank the people of this State so very much for setting such a great example for the rest of our country.

There I was, standing there on the stage, and guess who I was looking at the whole time? Laura. If you could see a smile occasionally come across my face, that's because I was looking at a lady I love. Then occasionally I'd glance over and see Barbara and Jenna. I love them too. Oh, yes, I want to thank Jenna and Barbara for working so hard in this campaign. I want to thank Laura for her great compassion and composure.

I want to thank my brother Jeb for being such a great Governor for Florida. I mean, when this State needed him, needed his leadership, he showed up. He'd been every—he's been all over this State, working hard to make sure that those who have suffered realize that help is around the corner, that we're doing everything we can to protect people.

Listen, I'm honored to be here with the next United States Senator, Mel Martinez. This man needs to be in the United States Senate. He not only had a fantastic past—as a matter of fact, he's a member of Pedro Pan—but he's got a great future, and the people of Florida will benefit by having Mel Martinez in the U.S. Senate. We love Kitty, Kitty Martinez. She's one of our favorites.

I want to thank—before I went out there to debate, I saw two of the preprogram participants—it's kind of hard for a Texan to say—[*laughter*]—preprogram participants. That would be Rudy Giuliani. I want to thank him for being here.

Audience members. Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!

The President. And I want to thank my friend General Tommy Franks for being here as well.

Now, we've got two more campaigns to go—I mean, two more debates to go. No more campaigns except this one, two more debates to go and a lot of hard work. There's no doubt in my mind, with your help, we're going to carry Florida again.

I was only disappointed in one thing about the debate tonight: There was not one question on Cuba. Let me tell you my question: *Cuba libre.* [*Applause*] *Quatro mas años.* No, people know where I stand. People know what I believe. I've got a plan

to fight these terrorists, to keep this country secure. I've got a plan to spread freedom, not only in the greater Middle East but in our own hemisphere, in places like Cuba. I've got a plan to make this world more peaceful.

I'm looking forward to the debate on domestic policy too. There's some big differences. He's going to run up your taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm going to keep them low. We've got a plan to continue growing this economy, a plan to make sure our children get a good education, a plan to make sure health care works, but a plan that recognizes this: The role of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to tell people how to live their lives.

Now, I'm honored you all came out. As you know, I'm kind of getting older, so I need to get my sleep. [*Laughter*] We have come to thank you for your steadfast support. Tomorrow morning, first thing, I'm getting up and heading to Pennsylvania, and then I'm going to New Hampshire. What I'm telling you is, I'm going to keep campaigning as hard as I possibly can, carrying our message of a better tomorrow, and we're going to win in November.

God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 p.m. at the Coconut Grove Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Kitty Martinez, wife of Florida senatorial candidate Mel R. Martinez; Rudolph W. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City; and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

Subject Index

Abortion. *See* Health and medical care
Acquired immune deficiency syndrome. *See* HIV/AIDS; *specific country or region*
Administration. *See other part of subject*
Advisory. *See other part of subject*
Aeronautics and Space Administrations, National. *See* Space program
Affirmative action. *See* Education
Afghanistan
  Counterterrorism operations—1289
  Democracy efforts—1465, 1466, 1825, 1896, 2113, 2145, 2150–2152, 2187
  Former regime—1573
  Girls' soccer team—1436
  International assistance—1239, 2143
  President—1239, 1289, 1318, 2288
  Reconstruction and reform efforts—1289, 1291, 1318
  Terrorist attacks—1465
  U.S. military forces, casualties—2128
Africa
  See also specific country
  Development efforts—1291–1293
  Trade with U.S.—1291
Africa Education Initiative—2113
Africa, Initiative to End Hunger in—2113
African Development Foundation—2276
African Growth and Opportunity Act—1292, 1467, 1532
African Union—1414, 2144, 2265
Agency. *See other part of subject*
AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004—1292, 1413
Agriculture
  Cattle, inspection of beef—2001
  Dairy compacts—1697
  Economic growth—1483
  Land stewardship and conservation—1482, 1484
  Mad cow disease—2000, 2001
Agriculture, Department of
  Assistant Secretary—2286
  Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)—1482, 1484, 1843
  Secretary—1484, 1843
AIDS. *See* HIV/AIDS; *specific country or region*
Airbus—1656, 1682
Alabama
  Disaster assistance—2287
  Governor—2114, 2286
  President's visit—2114, 2287
Albania, U.S. Ambassador—2288
Al Qaida terrorist group. *See* Terrorism
American. *See other part of subject*
American Indian, National Museum of the. *See* Smithsonian Institution
Amtrak Reform Board—2273, 2278
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—1578, 1897
Arctic Research Commission—2285
Arizona
  President's visits—1612, 2281
  Unemployment rate—1614
Arkansas, disaster assistance—2273
Armed Forces, U.S.
  See also Defense and national security; Veterans; *specific military department*; *specific country or region*
  All-Volunteer Force—1584, 1608
  Draft—1948
  Funding—1406
  International Criminal Court, exemption of U.S. troops—1586, 2263
  Medical care—1584, 1610
  Minority service members—1250, 2062
  National Guard—2055, 2056, 2164, 2245, 2247
  Pay and benefits—1494, 1584, 1948, 2056
  Service members, deployments—1672, 1673, 1715, 1839, 1948
  Technology and equipment—1494
Arms and munitions
  See also Defense and national security; *specific country or region*
  Gun ownership—1360, 1791, 1792
  Proliferation Security Initiative—1221, 1291, 1947, 2267
  Weapons of mass destruction—1287, 1288, 1462, 2174, 2249, 2267
Army, Department of the
  See also Armed Forces, U.S.
  Army Corps of Engineers, U.S.—1636, 1638
  Assistant Secretary—2273
  Secretary—2287
Arts, National Endowment for the—1720

Arts, National Council on the—2274
Association. *See other part of subject*
Atomic Energy Agency, International—1465
Attorney General. *See* Justice, Department of
Australia
  Free trade agreement with U.S.—1234, 1242, 1467
  Prime Minister—1468
  Relations with U.S.—1467, 1468
Austria, President Klestil, death—1251, 2274

Bahamas, U.S. Ambassador—2278
Barbados-U.S. Taxation Convention, second protocol amending—2046
Blind or Severely Disabled, Committee for Purchase From People Who Are—2285
Board. *See other part of subject*
Boeing Company—1656, 1680, 1682, 2281, 2282
Born-Alive Infants Protection Act of 2002—1473
Brazil, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Budget, Federal
  See also Economy, national; *specific agency*
  Amendments—1346, 1919, 1960, 2221
  Appropriations, supplemental—2060, 2242
  Deficit—1327, 1436, 1999
Business and industry
  See also Employment and unemployment; Taxation; *specific company or industry*
  Class action reform legislation—1231
  Opportunity zones—1857, 1888–1900
  Small and minority business—1223, 1224, 1249, 1250, 1408, 1409, 1555, 1556, 2064
  Unionized workers—1717, 1718
  Women businessowners—2104

Cabinet
  See also specific position under Federal department or executive branch agency
  Diversity—1529, 1530, 2005
  Members, meeting with President—2297
California
  Disaster assistance—2273
  President's visit—1628, 2281
Cancer Advisory Board, National—2275
Capital Revitalization Corporation, National—2282
Central Intelligence Agency—1261, 1290, 1334, 1365, 1461, 1462, 1464, 1564, 1767, 2174, 2280, 2288
Character Education Initiative—1363
Charleston Daily Mail—2273
Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board—2278
Children and youth
  Children of prisoners, mentoring—1472
Children and youth—Continued
  Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use—1363, 1436
  Minority youth—1363
  Sexually transmitted diseases—1363
  Social values—1587
  Teenage pregnancy—1363, 1473
  Violent crime—1363
Chile
  Free trade agreement with U.S.—1364, 1467
  Peacekeeping operations, role—1366
  President—1364
  Relations with Haiti—1366
  Relations with U.S.—1364
  Relations with Venezuela—1366
China
  President—2263
  Relations with Taiwan—1560
  Trade with U.S.—1544
Citizens Flag Alliance—1836
Civil Liberties, President's Board on Safeguarding Americans'—1767
Civil rights
  Freedom of religion—1381, 1469, 1588, 1654, 1795, 1949, 1950
  Racial profiling—1412, 1528
  Same-sex marriage. *See* Marriage
  School desegregation—2062
  Voting rights—1530, 1531
Civil Rights Act of 1964, 40th anniversary—1222
CNN—2281
Coast Guard, U.S. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004—1564
Colombia
  Antinarcotics campaign, U.S. assistance—1513
  President—1513
Colorado
  President's visit—2047, 2286
  Unemployment rate—2048
Columbia River Deepening Project—1636
Commerce, Department of
  Assistant Secretaries—2273
  Deputy Secretaries—2273
  Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National—2134
  Under Secretaries—2278
Commerce, international
  See also specific country or subject
  Beef safety—2001
  Export controls, U.S. national emergency—1543

Commerce, international—Continued
Free and fair trade—1226, 1227, 1264, 1273, 1291, 1324, 1437, 1467, 1559, 1656, 1657, 1682, 1719
Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)—1960
Group of Eight (G–8) nations—2144
North American Free Trade Agreement—1532
Steel tariffs—1805
U.S. Pacific Northwest, cargo shipping—1637
Commission. *See other part of subject*
Committee. *See other part of subject*
Commodity Futures Trading Commission—2276
Communications
See also specific news organization
News media, diversity—1522
Congress, meeting with Members—1960
Connecticut, Governor—2273
Conservation Reserve Program. *See* Agriculture, Department of
Conservation. *See* Agriculture; Environment
Convoy of Hope organization—1962, 2246
Cote d'Ivoire, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Council. *See other part of subject*
Counterterrorism Center, National—1462, 1545, 1767
Crime. *See* Law enforcement and crime
Criminal Court, International. *See* Armed Forces, U.S.
Croatia, Ambassador to U.S.—2286
Cuba
Child prostitution—1353
Democracy and human rights—1353, 1362, 1761, 2271
President—1353, 2002
Tourism, human trafficking—1353
U.S. sanctions—2002
Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996—1362
Czech Republic, Prime Minister—2284

Declassification Board, Public Interest—2286
Defense and national security
See also Armed Forces, U.S.; Arms and munitions; Terrorism
BioWatch Program—1391, 1403
Draft. *See* Armed Forces, U.S.
First-responders—1400–1404, 1417, 2284
Funding—2253
Intelligence—1261, 1276, 1290, 1334, 1365, 1393, 1404, 1460–1466, 1545, 1732, 1763, 1765, 1960
Missile defense—1682, 2268
Defense and national security—Continued
Project BioShield—1339, 1389, 1404, 1417, 1461
Terrorist-related screening procedures—1763, 1765
War on terror—1238, 1265, 1266, 1288, 1317, 1329, 1330, 1401, 1413, 1417, 1451, 1452, 1463, 1532, 1544, 1545, 1609, 1763, 1765, 1836, 1948, 2015, 2016, 2057, 2173, 2174, 2182, 2249, 2251, 2261
Weapons of mass destruction. *See* Arms and munitions
Defense Appropriations Act, 2005, Department of—1492–1494
Defense, Department of
See also Armed Forces, U.S.; *specific military department*
Deputy Under Secretaries—2277, 2278
Funding—1492
Joint Chiefs of Staff—1466
Northern Command, U.S.—1403
Secretary—1463, 2275, 2276, 2282, 2288
Democratic Party, African American participation and support—1414
Detention Operations, Independent Panel To Review Department of Defense—2282
Development, U.S. Agency for International—1418, 2278, 2285
Diamond V Mills—1373
Disabled persons—1607, 2276
Disaster assistance
Alabama—2287
Arkansas—2273
California—2273
Florida—1668, 2281, 2282, 2284, 2287, 2289
Georgia—2287
Guam—2278
Indiana—2284
Kansas—2279, 2289
Kentucky—2280
Louisiana—2287
Michigan—2273
Micronesia—2277
Mississippi—2287
Nevada—2283
New Jersey—2275
New York—2279
North Carolina—2286, 2287
Northern Mariana Islands—2278, 2283
Pennsylvania—2280, 2287
South Carolina—2284, 2287
South Dakota—2276
Vermont—2288
Virginia—2284

Disaster assistance—Continued
West Virginia—2280, 2288
Discrimination, racial segregation—1222, 2062
Diseases
Animals—2001
Humans—1363, 2113, 2144
District of Columbia
Budget—1515
Republican Party events—1394, 2093
School choice—1410
Doctors Without Borders—1465
Dominican Republic, President—2281
Drug abuse and trafficking
Interdiction efforts—1412, 1513
Prevention and treatment efforts—1412, 1512, 1719
Youth drug abuse—1363

Eclipse Aviation—1595
Economy, international. *See* Commerce, international
Economy, national
Agricultural growth rate—1483
Growth rate—1234, 1270, 1407, 1436, 1563, 1899
Education
See also specific State
Abstinence-only education—1363
Adjunct Teacher Corps—2157
Advanced Placement programs—1729
English language students—1949, 2063
Funding—1337, 1409, 1523, 1555, 1556
Literacy initiatives—1410, 1411, 1556, 2157, 2158
Local control of schools—1588, 1589, 1654, 2005
Minority students—1248, 1249, 1410, 1411, 1523, 1529, 1530
No Child Left Behind Act—1277, 1320, 1335, 1410, 1435, 1556, 1728, 1947, 2003, 2063, 2160
Pell grants—1337, 1523, 1556, 2205
School choice—1523
School drug testing—1363
Secondary education
Affirmative action—1529, 1533, 1534
College admissions programs, diversity and use of legacy in—1533
Job training—1228, 1229, 1236, 1263, 1273, 1325, 1410, 1411, 1506, 1656, 1888, 1889, 2205
Standards and school accountability—1409, 1410, 1522–1526, 1555, 1588, 1589, 1728, 1729, 1895, 1949, 2063, 2157
Education—Continued
Teachers—2157, 2228
Elections
See also specific party, State, or country
2004 Presidential election—1241, 1244, 1330, 1380, 1393, 1651, 1652, 1730, 1731, 1855, 1896–1898, 1950, 2000, 2248, 2258, 2284
Campaign finance reform—2283
Electoral reform—1898
El Salvador, President—2275
Emergency Management Agency, Federal. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
Employment and unemployment
See also Business and industry; Economy, national; *specific State*
Construction jobs and training—1622
Job creation and growth—1225, 1226, 1234, 1321, 1329, 1408, 1436, 1563, 1899, 1900
Minimum wage—1334, 1335
Energy
Alternative sources and technologies—1232, 1236, 1264, 1273, 1324, 1331, 1417, 1437, 1578, 1731, 1897
Coal—1357, 1805, 1898
Electricity—1264
Gasoline and oil costs—1731
Nuclear energy
Spent fuel and waste disposal—1623
Use and development—1898
Energy, Department of
Chief Financial Officer—2278
Funding—2221
Environment
Brownfields cleanup—1409
Conservation
Land—1482, 1484
Water resources—1623
Wetlands conservation and expansion—1484
Pollution prevention and reduction—1417
Environmental Protection Agency—1247, 1418, 1926, 2278, 2285, 2288
Estonia, U.S. Ambassador—2279

Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003—1347
Faith-based and community organizations initiative. *See* Government organizations and employees; *specific Federal department or agency*
FBI. *See* Justice, Department of
FDA. *See* Health and Human Services, Department of
Federal. *See other part of subject*
FEMA. *See* Homeland Security, Department of
Field & Stream magazine—2278

Flag, United States, constitutional amendment prohibiting desecration—1836
Florida
Charlotte County Emergency Operations Center in Punta Gorda—2281
Disaster assistance—1668, 2281, 2282, 2284, 2287, 2289
Governor—1755, 1962, 2114, 2283, 2286, 2289
Hurricanes and tropical storms, damage and recovery efforts—1657, 1667, 1755, 1919, 1961, 2055, 2060, 2245, 2246, 2281–2284, 2289
National Hurricane Center in Miami—2285
Okaloosa-Walton College in Niceville—1573
Presidential debate in Coral Gables—2248
President's visits—1350, 1566, 1573, 1589, 1667, 1755, 1756, 1961, 2245, 2246, 2248, 2271, 2275, 2280, 2281, 2283, 2285, 2289
Republican Party event—2271
Unemployment rate—1568, 1578, 1591, 1758
U.S. Senate election—2284
Foreign policy, U.S.
See also specific country, region, or subject
Debt reduction—2144
Democratization—2144
Human rights—2143
International aid—1822, 2113, 2144
International cooperation—1413, 1414, 2263
"One China" policy—1560
Trafficking in persons, efforts to combat—1350, 1351, 2144
Women and children, human rights—1350, 1351
FOX News—2288
France
Military, international operations—1946
Relations with U.S.—1946, 1947
Freedom, Presidential Medal of—1469

Gabon, Foreign Minister—2150
Georgia, disaster assistance—2287
Germany, relations with U.S.—1946, 1947
Ghana, Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Global Peace Operations Initiative—2144
Government organization and employees
See also specific agency or organization
Accountability—1560
Combined Federal Campaign—1926
Diversity—1412, 1413
Faith-based and community organizations initiative—1278, 1320, 1335, 1336, 1352, 1380, 1412, 1471, 1472, 1510, 1511, 1719, 2004
Identification standard for Federal employees and contractors—1765
Government organization and employees—Continued
Native American tribal sovereignty and self-determination, recognition—2177
Great Lakes Fishery Commission—2274
Great Lakes, water diversion—2033, 2040
Greece
Olympic games in Athens—1658, 1732, 2275, 2284
Prime Minister—2284
Group of Eight nations (G–8). *See* Commerce, international
Guam, disaster assistance—2278

Haiti
Peace and stabilization efforts—1366
Relations with Chile—1366
Health and Human Services, Department of
Biological terrorism, counterterrorism efforts—1389, 1390, 1403, 1404
Food and Drug Administration—1339, 1390
Health, National Institutes of—1390, 1403, 1404
Inspector General—2275, 2285
Medicare and Medicaid—1792, 2088
Secretary—1390
Strategic National Stockpile—1390
Health and medical care
Abortion—1719
Association health plans—1231, 1272, 1332, 1826
Community health centers—1793, 2078
Drug importation—1720
Exercise—2005
Generic drugs—1720, 1721, 1793
Health savings accounts—1231, 1272, 1332, 1437, 1507, 1508, 1784, 1793, 1826
Human cloning. *See* Science and technology
Information, access to—1721
Information technology—1332, 1333, 1793
Insurance—1858
Mad cow disease—2000, 2001
Medical liability reform—1232, 1272, 1323, 1332, 1437, 1793, 1826, 2000
Medical research. *See* Science and technology
Rural hospitals—1842
State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)—2108, 2123
Stem cell research. *See* Science and technology
Teenage pregnancy—1363, 1473
Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003—1750
Healthy Marriages Initiative—1363
Help America Vote Act of 2001—1531

Help America Vote Foundation—2274
Hispanic Heritage Month, National—2061
Hispanic Magazine—2273
HIV/AIDS
See also specific country or region
Domestic strategy to combat—1378, 1379
Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—2113
Global strategy to combat—1378, 1379, 1413, 1822
Homeland Security Council—2273, 2279
Homeland Security, Department of
Coast Guard, U.S.—1564, 2164
Emergency Management Agency, Federal—1657, 1668, 1755, 1919, 1961, 2074, 2114, 2165, 2245–2247
Headquarters, property for establishment—1233
Mission—1402, 1403, 1417, 1462
Operation Predator—1353
Secretary—1464, 1465
Under Secretaries—2282, 2283
Homeland security. *See* Defense and national security; Terrorism
Housing
Building codes—1890
Homeownership—1418, 1505, 1651
Minority homeownership—1411, 1418, 1524, 2064
Housing and Urban Development, Department of
Assistant Secretaries—2286
Chief Financial Officer—2278
Homeownership assistance programs—1524
Human Trafficking, National Training Conference on—1350
Human trafficking. *See* Foreign policy, U.S.; Law enforcement and crime
Hurricanes and tropical storms
See also specific State
Hurricane Charley. *See* Florida, Hurricanes and tropical storms, damage and recovery efforts
Hurricane Ivan—2061, 2074, 2286, 2287, 2114, 2244, 2287
Hurricane Jeanne—2244
Tropical Storm Bonnie. *See* Florida, Hurricanes and tropical storms, damage and recovery efforts
Tropical Storm Ivan—2163, 2288
Tropical Storm Jeanne—2289

Iceland
Prime Minister—1240
Iceland—Continued
U.S. military forces and equipment, deployment—1241
Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act—1346
Illinois
First-responders—1403
Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy in Glenview—1400, 1417, 2276
President's visits—1400, 2276, 2279
Republican Party event—2276
Immigration and naturalization
See also specific country or region
Arrivals to and departures from U.S.—1403, 1563
Citizenship—1531
Temporary-worker program—1250, 1531, 1718
U.S. residency requirements—1380
Independence Day—1234, 1235, 2273
India
Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Prime Minister—2142
Relations with U.S.—2142
Indiana, disaster assistance—2284
Indonesia, U.S. Ambassador—2275
Infrastructure Advisory Council, National—2275
Intellectual Disabilities, President's Committee for People with—2274
Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, Commission on the. *See* White House Office
Intelligence Director, National—1461–1466, 1541, 1545, 1767, 1960
Intelligence. *See* Central Intelligence Agency; Defense and national security
Inter-American Foundation—2279
Interior, Department of the, Secretary—1623
International. *See other part of subject*
Investigation, Federal Bureau of. *See* Justice, Department of
Iowa
Farm Progress Show in Alleman—1840
Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids—1368
President's visits—1368, 1474, 1658, 1840, 1877, 2276, 2279, 2281, 2283
Unemployment rate—1371, 1477, 1842, 1878
Iran
Democracy and human rights—1365, 1465, 1468
Nuclear weapons development—1291, 1365, 1465, 2263
Terrorism, sponsorship—1365, 1366
U.S. sanctions—2263

Iraq
2005 Governmental elections—1531, 2179, 2222, 2276
Coalition armed forces, deployment—1562, 1947
Counterterrorism efforts—2276
Debt reduction—2183
Democracy efforts—1319, 1532, 1821, 2113, 2129, 2130, 2145, 2147, 2148, 2150, 2178
Insurgency and terrorist attacks—1562, 2129, 2150, 2178, 2179
Interim Prime Minister—1239, 1319, 1516, 1533, 1576, 2130, 2147, 2178, 2221, 2241, 2251, 2260, 2276
International aid and support—1239, 2143, 2178, 2179, 2221, 2222, 2256
Iraqi military and security forces—1533, 2178, 2179, 2188, 2221, 2253
Reconstruction efforts and funding—1291, 1379, 1960, 2130, 2149, 2179, 2183, 2221, 2222, 2256
Terrorist organizations, links to former regime—1241, 1318
U.S. Ambassador—1221, 1533, 1562
U.S. military forces
Casualties—1344, 1947, 2258, 2259, 2276
Deployment—1585, 2198, 2253, 2260
U.S. national emergency—1418
Weapons of mass destruction—1290, 1465, 1466
Israel
See also Middle East
Prime Minister—1825
Italian Charities of America—2284
Italy, Prime Minister—2282

Jamaica, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation—2274
Japan
Prime Minister—1329, 2288
Universal Exposition in Aichi—2280
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. *See* Smithsonian Institution
Judiciary
Federal court nominations—1243, 1245, 1389, 1405, 1411, 1558, 1559, 1652, 2131
Judicial confirmation process—1244, 1246, 1247, 1405, 1558, 1559
Tort reform—1323, 1437
Justice, Department of
Assistant Attorney General—2275
Attorney General—1352
Civil Rights Division—1412
Justice, Department of—Continued
Investigation, Federal Bureau of—1402, 1462, 1464, 1528, 2253

Kansas, disaster assistance—2279, 2289
Kennedy Center. *See* Smithsonian Institution
Kentucky, disaster assistance—2280
Kenya, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Knights of Columbus—1469
Korea, North. *See* North Korea

Latvia, U.S. Ambassador—2285
Law enforcement and crime
See also Drug abuse and trafficking
Counterterrorism efforts. *See* Defense and national security; Terrorism
Domestic violence—1608
Firearms, crimes committed with—1411
Identity theft—1346
Prisoner reentry initiative—1411
Property crime—1411
Racial profiling. *See* Civil rights
Trafficking in persons, domestic efforts to combat—1351
Violence against women and unborn victims—1474, 1719
Youth crime—1363
Latin American Citizens, League of United, (LULAC)—1248
Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004—2276
Legal system. *See* Judiciary
Legion, American—1835
Liberia
Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Economic sanctions—1415
Former President—1415
Libya
Leader—1320, 1825
Trade with U.S.—2134
U.S. national emergency, termination—2134
Weapons of mass destruction, efforts to disclose and dismantle—1287, 1290, 1291, 1320, 1401, 1825
Literacy Advisory Board, National Institute for—2278
Louisiana
Disaster assistance—2287
Governor—2287

Maine
President's visits—2189, 2198, 2280, 2287, 2288
Unemployment rate—2191
Malawi, Ambassador to U.S.—2275

Malaysia
Counterterrorism efforts—1367
Prime Minister—1366, 2273
Relations with U.S.—1367
U.S. Ambassador—2273
Management and Budget, Office of—1560
Management Council, President's—2280
Marriage, same-sex marriage—1265, 1286, 1338, 1474, 1513, 1514, 1583, 1610, 2247
Maryland, President's visits—2273, 2286
Mauritania, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Medal. *See other part of subject*
Medicare and Medicaid. *See* Health and Human Services, Department of
Methane to Markets Partnership—1417
Mexico, immigration to U.S.—1532
Michigan
Disaster assistance—2273
Grand Rapids Community College in Grand Rapids—2278
Northern Michigan University in Marquette—1294
President's visits—1245, 1294, 1406, 1427, 1515, 1828, 2016, 2031, 2038, 2273, 2275, 2277–2279, 2281, 2283, 2286
Unemployment rate—1296, 1429, 1430, 1515, 1675, 1830, 2039
Micronesia, disaster assistance—2277
Middle East
See also specific country
Peace and democracy efforts—1238, 1239, 1288, 1289, 1291, 1367, 1557, 1585, 1653, 1825, 1826, 1895, 2015, 2061, 2146, 2147, 2174, 2271
Military, U.S. *See* Armed Forces, U.S.; Defense, Department of; *specific military department*
Millennium Challenge Accounts—1348, 2093, 2144
Minnesota
President's visits—1301, 1482, 1485, 1721, 2064, 2073, 2085, 2275, 2279, 2282, 2287
Unemployment rate—1303, 1480, 1723, 2066, 2076, 2087
Minority business. *See* Business and industry
Missionaries of Charity—2288
Mississippi
Disaster assistance—2287
Governor—2286
Mississippi River Commission—2275
Missouri
President's visits—1382, 1420, 1919, 1927, 1934, 1953, 2278, 2285
Unemployment rate—1384, 1422
Monetary Fund, International—1352
Mongolia
Democracy and development efforts—1348
President—1348, 2274, 2275
Relations with U.S.—1348
War on terrorism, participation—1348
Morocco
Free trade agreement with U.S.—1349, 1467
King—2273, 2274
Morris K. Udall Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation—2282

NAFTA. *See* Commerce, international
National. *See other part of subject*
Native Americans
Federal assistance—1529
Tribal sovereignty and self-determination—1529, 2177
Nauru, Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Navy, Department of the
See also Armed Forces, U.S.
Assistant Secretaries—2286, 2288
Transfer of property—1233
Nepal, Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Netherlands-U.S. Convention on Taxation—1362
Nevada
Disaster assistance—2283
National Guard Association conference in Las Vegas—2055
President's visits—1619, 2055, 2281, 2286
Unemployment rate—1620
Water resources—1623
Yucca Mountain—1623
New Hampshire
President's visits—1534, 1810, 2115, 2280, 2283, 2288
Unemployment rate—1537, 1814, 2118
Union Leader newspaper of Manchester—2287
WMUR–TV of Nashua—2283
New Jersey, disaster assistance—2275
New Mexico
President's visits—1595, 1733, 1740, 1747, 2280, 2283
Unemployment rate—1735, 1742, 1749
New York
Disaster assistance—2279
First-responders in Elmhurst—2284
President's visits—1855, 2135, 2142, 2150, 2151, 2284, 2288
Unemployment rate—2136
United Nations General Assembly in New York City—2142, 2150, 2288
News media. *See* Communications
Nigeria, Ambassador to U.S.—2275

NIH. *See* Health and Human Services, Department of
NOAA. *See* Commerce, Department of
No Child Left Behind Act. *See* Education
North Carolina
  Charlotte Merchandise Mart in Charlotte—2287
  Disaster assistance—2286, 2287
  President's visits—1243, 2101, 2273, 2287
  Republican Party event—2287
  Unemployment rate—2103
North Korea
  Chairman—1330, 2263, 2268
  Nuclear weapons—1291, 1348, 2263
  Relations with U.S.—2263
Northern Mariana Islands, disaster assistance—2278, 2283
Nuclear Regulatory Commission—1623
Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board—2281

Ocean Policy, U.S. Commission on—2133
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National. *See* Commerce, Department of
Office. *See other part of subject*
Ohio
  International Children's Games and Cultural Festival in Cleveland—2278
  Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Portsmouth—2286
  President's visits—1435, 1437, 1445, 1496, 1668, 1768, 1775, 1794, 1848, 1883, 1900, 1985, 1986, 2006, 2222, 2235, 2278, 2279, 2281, 2283, 2284, 2286, 2289
  Republican Party event—2278
  Underground Railroad Freedom Center, National, in Cincinnati—2281
  Unemployment rate—1440, 1447, 1502, 1796, 1850, 1885, 1901, 1988, 2008, 2226, 2237
Olympic games. *See* Greece; Sports
Oregon
  President's visits—1636, 1638, 2281
  Southridge High School in Beaverton—1638
  Unemployment rate—1641
Organization. *See other part of subject*

Pakistan
  Counterterrorism efforts—1289, 1320, 1825
  Democracy reforms—2175
  Nuclear weapons proliferation—1290, 1334, 1401
  President—1289, 1825, 2174, 2288
  Relations with U.S.—2174
  U.S. Ambassador—2288
Panama, President—2282
Pennsylvania
  Disaster assistance—2280, 2287
  Kutztown University in Kutztown—1251
  President's visits—1251, 1266, 1267, 1279, 1453, 1680, 1863, 1907, 1962, 1970, 2152, 2164, 2165, 2274, 2279, 2282–2285, 2288
  Tropical Storm Ivan, damage and recovery efforts—2164, 2288
  Unemployment rate—1269, 1281, 1455, 1864, 1865, 1972, 2154, 2167
Poland
  Citizens, entry into U.S.—1563
  Prime Minister—1562, 2277
  Troops in Iraq—1562
  Warsaw Uprising, 60th anniversary—2277
Portugal
  Counterterrorism efforts—2279
  Prime Minister—2279
Presidency
  Legacy—2003
  President's health—2005, 2006
Presidential. *See other part of subject*
Principals of the Year Award—2285
Project BioShield Act of 2004—1389
PROTECT Act of 2003—1353

Qatar, U.S. Ambassador—2278

Red Cross, American—1667, 1756, 1962, 2165, 2199, 2245, 2247
Red Cross and Red Crescent, International—2199
Redbook magazine—2279
Refugees. *See specific country or region*
Religious Freedom, U.S. Commission on International—2288
Republican Party
  See also specific State
  African American participation and support—1414, 1415
  Republican National Convention—2284
Research and development. *See* Science and technology
Retirement. *See* Social Security
Riggs Bank—1365
Romania
  2004 elections—1393
  Counterterrorism efforts—1391
  President Bush's visit—1393
  Prime Minister—1391, 2276
  Trade with U.S.—1392
Rosh Hashanah—2060
Rush Limbaugh radio show—2283
Russia
  Ambassador to U.S.—2016, 2200

Russia—Continued
President—1731, 2016, 2061, 2268, 2282, 2284
Terrorist attacks
Passenger jets—2282, 2284
School siege in Beslan—2016, 2061, 2131, 2143, 2200, 2268, 2284

St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation—2273, 2277, 2279
Salvation Army—2245, 2247
Same-sex marriage. *See* Marriage
Saudi Arabia
Counterterrorism efforts—1289, 1320, 2278
Crown Prince—2278
Schools. *See* Education; *specific State*
Science and technology
See also Health and medical care
Human cloning—1474, 2132, 2144
Medical research and technology—1720
Stem cell research—1606, 1607, 2132
Technology for disabled persons—1607
Science Board, National—2288
Science Foundation, National—2287
Scripps Howard Spelling Bee—2274
Security Council, National—2273, 2275, 2277, 2282, 2285, 2287
Security, national. *See* Defense and national security; Terrorism
Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee, President's National—2285
Sentencing Commission, U.S.—1347, 2278
Singapore, free trade agreement with U.S.—1467
Slovakia
Anti-Nazi uprising, anniversary—2283
Prime Minister—2283
Slovenia, Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Small Business Administration—1408, 1529, 1556, 2245
Small business. *See* Business and industry
Smithsonian Institution
American Indian, National Museum of the—2175
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts—2280, 2285
Social Security—1532, 1553
South Africa, President—2286
South Carolina, disaster assistance—2284, 2287
South Dakota, disaster assistance—2276
Southern Baptist Convention—2245, 2246
Space program, Apollo 11 moon landing, anniversary—2276
Spain, Ambassador to U.S.—2287
Sports
Football—1703
Indianapolis 500—2276
Olympic games—1657, 1732, 1733, 2275, 2284
Tee-ball—2274
Tour de France—2277
State and local governments. *See specific subject or State*
State, Department of
Ambassadors. *See specific country or region*
Inspector General—2285
Secretary—1263, 1414, 2275–2277, 2279, 2286
Trafficking in Persons Report, 2003—1352
Sudan
Civil conflict—1414, 1493
Genocide and human rights crisis—1292, 1977, 2144, 2265
Humanitarian aid—1414, 1393, 1394, 1977
United Nations actions, potential—1977, 2265

Taiwan, relations with China—1560
Taxation
New markets tax credits—1408
Small and minority businesses, tax cuts—1556, 1557
Tax Code reform—1865, 1896
Tax relief legislation—1226, 1227, 1235, 1270, 1271, 1321, 1322, 1408, 1436, 1532, 2198
Tennessee
Oak Ridge National Laboratory—1287, 2274
President's visits—1287, 1835, 2274, 2283
Terrorism
See also Defense and national security; *specific country, region, or terrorist group*
Al Qaida terrorist group—1289, 1320, 1333, 1334, 1365, 1366, 1401, 1402, 1460, 1461, 1492, 1544, 1545, 2145, 2249
Biological terrorism—1389, 1390, 1403, 1404
Counterterrorism efforts—1238, 1239, 1265, 1266, 1274, 1288, 1317, 1381, 1382, 1390, 1401–1403, 1417, 1461, 1465, 1528, 1545, 1763, 1765, 1767, 2113, 2249, 2270
Domestic threat—1461, 1464, 1539
Global threat—1288, 2143
Persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, U.S. national emergency—2150
September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks—1381, 1654, 1862, 2014, 2286, 2129
Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, National Commission on—1365, 1391, 1393, 1400, 1403, 1404, 1416, 1460, 1763, 1767, 2015, 2276–2278

Terrorist Threat Integration Center—1461, 1464, 1545, 1767
Texas
President's visits—1469, 1729, 2277, 2279, 2280, 2282, 2289
Republican Party events—2277, 2279
Thailand, Ambassador to U.S.—2275
Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel—2285
Today show—2283
Trade. *See* Business and industry; Commerce, international
Trade negotiations or agreements. *See* Commerce, international; *specific country or region*
Trade Commission, Federal—2279
Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.—1293, 1467, 1657
Transportation
See also specific industry
Highways, Federal funding—1951
Treasury, Department of the
Assistant Secretaries—2275, 2276, 2287
Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board—2278
Treasurer—2277
Treaties and conventions. *See* United Nations; *specific country, region, or subject*
Tropical storms. *See* Hurricanes and tropical storms

Uganda
HIV/AIDS prevention—1378
President—1293
Unborn Victims of Violence legislation—1473
Union Leader newspaper of Manchester, NH—2034
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America—1619
United Kingdom, Prime Minister—2178, 2282
United Nations
AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, Global Fund to Fight—2113, 2144
Democracy Fund, proposed—2146
General Assembly in New York City—2142, 2150
Heads of state, reception in New York City—2151
Human rights—2142, 2143
International stabilization efforts—2150
Secretary-General—1414, 2150
Sudan, potential actions—1977, 2265
U.S. Representatives—1221, 2277, 2286, 2288
United States-Australia Free Trade Implementation Act—1467
U.S. *See other part of subject*
U.S. News & World Report magazine—2283
USA PATRIOT Act—1274, 1328, 1461, 2131, 2253
USA Today newspaper—2283
UNITY: Journalists of Color convention—1522
Urban League, National—1406
USAID. *See* Development, U.S. Agency for International

Venezuela
Presidential referendum—1366
Relations with Chile—1366
Vermont, disaster assistance—2288
Veterans, benefits—1608, 1669, 1670, 1823, 1837, 1950
Veterans Affairs, Department of
Assistant Secretaries—2285
Hospitals—1669, 1670
Secretary—1669, 1837
Veterans Benefits Act of 2003—1670, 1837
Veterans of Foreign Wars—1668
Virginia
Disaster assistance—2284
Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale—1546
President's visits—1546, 2280
Voluntarism—1337

Washington
Boeing Delivery Center in Seattle—2281
President's visit—1656, 2281
Republican Party event—2281
Washington, DC. *See* District of Columbia
Weapons. *See* Arms and munitions
Welfare system, reform—1335
West Virginia
Cabela's Retail Store in Tridelphia—1452
Coal mining—1357
Disaster assistance—2280, 2288
President's visits—1235, 1236, 1354, 1452, 1802, 1913, 1978, 2273, 2275, 2279, 2282–2284, 2286
Unemployment rate—1356, 1690, 1804, 1914, 1978
White House Office
Assistant to the President, National Security Adviser—2282
Deputy Assistants to the President
Deputy National Security Adviser—2277
Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Director—1473

White House Office—Continued
Intergovernmental Affairs Director—2177
Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, Commission on the—1361, 2275
Wisconsin
Mick's Candyman in West Bend—1315
President's visits—1307, 1315, 1316, 1338, 1339, 1695, 1703, 1870, 2199, 2200, 2212, 2275, 2282, 2284
Unemployment rate—1310, 1321, 1341, 1697, 1872, 2203, 2214

Women. *See* Business and industry; Foreign policy, U.S.; *specific country, region, or subject*

Worker Investment Act—2205

World Bank—1352

World Trade Organization—1293, 1294, 1468, 1657

World War II Memorial, National—1670

Yom Kippur—2199

Name Index

Abdenur, Roberto—2275
Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi—1366, 2273
Abizaid, John P.—1730, 2182, 2184, 2288
Abraham, Spencer—1287
Aguirre, Eduardo—2061
Aldrin, Edwin E. "Buzz," Jr.—2276
Alexander, Lamar—1287, 1394
Allawi, Ayad—1239, 1241, 1276, 1319, 1370, 1387, 1501, 1532, 1533, 1540, 1562, 1576, 1715, 1752, 1772, 1790, 1819, 1832, 1860, 1875, 1881, 1905, 1911, 1917, 1924, 1931, 1957, 1969, 1975, 1983, 2011, 2029, 2036, 2043, 2052, 2057, 2070, 2090, 2099, 2111, 2126, 2129, 2130, 2139, 2140, 2145, 2147–2149, 2162, 2171, 2172, 2178, 2195, 2196, 2210, 2211, 2218, 2219, 2221, 2222, 2234, 2241, 2242, 2251, 2254, 2260, 2261, 2276
Allcorn, Donald J.—1942
Allen, Claude A.—1350
Allen, Duane—1280
Allen, George—1394, 1546, 1561
Amend, Alexandra—2281
Anderson, Carl A.—1469
Anderson, David W.—2175
Anderson, David E.—1901
Anderson, Patricia—1301, 1722
Annan, Kofi—1414, 2142, 2150, 2151
Annan, Nane Maria—2151
Appareddy, Vijayalakshmi—2274
Armitage, Richard L.—1221, 2277
Armstrong, Eugene—2234
Armstrong, Lance—2277
Armstrong, Neil A.—2276
Arnaout, Enaam M.—1402
Arnold, Brian—1785, 1786
Arnold, Jodie—1785, 1786
Arnold, William H.—2281
Arvizu, Dan—2288, 2295
Arvon, Manny P.—1688
Ashcroft, John—1346, 1352, 1382, 2277
Ashe, Victor—2277
Aung San Suu Kyi—2146

Babbio, Lawrence T., Jr.—2285
Bagabandi, Natsagiyn—1348, 2274, 2275
Bailey, Catherine Todd—2285, 2293
Baker, James A., III—2183, 2285
Baldwin, Valerie L.—2273, 2291
Ballantine, Patrick J.—2102
Ballinger, James—2274, 2291
Banas, Edward S.—1668
Banas, Sandra—1669
Banes, Douglas J.—1619
Barbour, Haley—2061, 2286
Barletta, Louis J.—1864
Barner, Michael—1557
Barnier, Michel—2263, 2264
Barrales, Ruben—2061
Barreto, Hector V., Jr.—2061
Barth, Carin M.—2278, 2293
Bartlett, Davey—1315, 1316
Barton, Joe L.—1390
Bass, Charles F.—1535, 1811, 1816, 2116, 2127
Bates-Harris, Cheryl—2285
Baucus, Max Sieben—1292
Beamish, Michael L.—1768
Beering, Steven C.—2288, 2295
Belka, Marek—1562, 2278
Bell, Jim—1377, 1378, 2120, 2121
Bellamy, David—1688, 2031
Bellamy, Howard—1688, 2031
Bement, Arden L., Jr.—2287, 2295
Bennett, Robert T.—1446, 2223
Bense, Allan—1574, 1590
Benson, Craig R.—1535, 1811, 1813, 1817, 1822, 2116, 2122
Benson, Denise—1811
Berdall, Ethel—1280
Berger, Samuel R.—1392
Berlusconi, Silvio—1387, 1604, 1684, 1691, 1861, 2282
Berry, Cherie Killian—2102
Berry, Keith—1841
Beyer, Todd—1899
Biagas, John F.—1229, 1230
Bickel, Amy—2283
Billington, Hardy—1920
bin Laden, Usama—1333, 1402, 2251, 2258, 2262
Bitsberger, Timothy S.—2275
Blackwell, J. Kenneth—1768, 1776, 1795
Blair, Tony—1387, 1604, 1649, 1684, 1691, 1947, 1976, 2178, 2211, 2219, 2256, 2282
Blanco, Kathleen Babineaux—2061, 2286
Blonshine, Sheila—2281

Bloomberg, Michael R.—1463, 2151
Bloomhall, John C.—1373, 1374
Blum, H. Steven—2055
Blunt, Matt—1383, 1920, 1953
Blunt, Roy—1420
Board, Ralph S.—1913
Bodden, Mark—1327
Bodden, Wendy—1327
Bodenhamer, David L.—2114
Bodensteiner, William—1841
Boehner, John A.—1768, 1769, 1777, 2223, 2227, 2229, 2236, 2237
Boldrick, Michael—1452, 1453
Bollinger, Jay—2280
Bolten, Joshua B.—2277
Bond, Christopher S. "Kit"—1420, 1920, 1927
Bonner, Josiah R. "Jo," Jr.—2114
Bonsall, Joseph S.—1280
Boyko, Christopher A.—2292
Boyle, Terrence W.—1243
Brackett, Alison—1812, 1813
Bradley, Dot—1315, 1316
Bradley, Helen—1535
Bradley, Jeb—1535, 1811, 1816, 2116, 2127
Bradley, Jennette B.—1222, 1497, 2236
Bradshaw, David R.—1287
Brando, Marlon—1234
Branstad, Terry E.—1841
Brault, Kevin—1551, 1552
Breault, Jack D.—1704
Brennan, Lynn—2281
Brett, James T.—2274
Brewer, Janice K.—1613
Brieden, John A., III—1836
Brier, Jen—2121–2123
Brock, Sandra S.—2280
Bronson, Charles H.—2245
Brooke, Charles W.—1475
Brooks, Kix—1748
Broomes, Jack—1572
Broomes, Julie—1572
Brown, Alice C.—2274
Brown, Becky—1769, 1776
Brown, Gregory Q.—2285
Brown, George H. "Hank"—2048
Brown-Hruska, Sharon—2276, 2292
Brown, Melissa—2153
Brown, Michael D.—1657, 1668, 1755, 1756, 1961, 2074, 2115, 2164, 2245, 2246, 2282, 2283, 2289
Brown, W.L. Lyons "Lee"—2274
Brownlee, Les—1492, 1836
Buestrin, Mary F.—1308, 2213
Bullock, Russell—2036
Bunker, Theresa—2055, 2286
Burgess, Sonny—1901
Burke, Sheila P.—2176
Burn, James—2164, 2165
Burr, Richard—1245, 2102
Burritt, Adam—1819, 1820
Burritt, Christine—1819, 1820
Busch, Daryl—2281
Bush, Barbara—1294, 1326, 1380, 1535, 1576, 1578, 1650, 1654, 1717, 1783, 1790, 1821, 1855, 1963, 2085, 2230, 2275
Bush, Barbara P.—1301, 1308, 1316, 1324, 1339, 1350, 1355, 1368, 1628, 1639, 1855, 1901, 1907, 2265, 2271, 2275
Bush, George H.W.—1379, 1380, 1501, 1534, 1535, 1549, 1586, 1605, 1626, 1633, 1650, 1654, 1664, 1678, 1716, 1781–1783, 1845, 1855, 1869, 1894, 1896, 1906, 1912, 1918, 1933, 1945, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1998, 2013, 2053, 2059, 2072, 2084, 2100, 2112, 2116, 2127, 2141, 2173, 2197, 2211, 2219, 2234, 2243, 2275
Bush, George P.—1469, 1496, 1535, 1566, 1573, 2280
Bush, Jeb—1350, 1354, 1469, 1496, 1531, 1535, 1566, 1573, 1579, 1583, 1589, 1657, 1667, 1668, 1755, 1756, 1961, 1962, 2061, 2114, 2116, 2245, 2246, 2271, 2283, 2286, 2289
Bush, Jenna—1252, 1267, 1271, 1277, 1279, 1368, 1628, 1639, 1855, 1901, 1907, 2265, 2271, 2275
Bush, Laura—1234, 1251, 1252, 1263, 1267, 1277, 1279, 1294, 1301, 1308, 1316, 1339, 1354, 1368, 1383, 1394, 1420, 1427, 1438, 1445, 1449, 1453, 1474, 1475, 1485, 1496, 1497, 1515, 1534, 1535, 1546, 1566, 1574, 1589, 1596, 1602, 1612, 1619, 1628, 1633, 1636, 1638, 1639, 1649, 1650, 1652, 1654, 1655, 1657, 1658, 1674, 1681, 1688, 1695, 1704, 1716, 1721, 1733, 1740, 1748, 1756, 1768, 1776, 1795, 1802, 1811, 1815, 1819, 1824, 1827, 1828, 1833, 1835, 1840, 1848, 1855, 1863, 1870, 1871, 1877, 1883, 1901, 1907, 1913, 1919, 1927, 1934, 1949, 1953, 1963, 1971, 1978, 1986, 1991, 1998, 2007, 2016, 2017, 2031, 2038, 2047, 2060, 2062, 2063, 2065, 2073, 2086, 2093, 2101, 2116, 2135, 2151, 2152, 2159, 2163, 2166, 2175, 2189, 2200, 2213, 2223, 2236, 2271, 2283, 2284
Bush, Marvin—1535
Bush, William H.T. "Bucky"—1934, 1953
Byers, Bob—1963, 1968
Byers, Joyce—1963

Byrd, Chris—1927
Byrd, Robert C.—1357

Cablik, Anna R.—2281
Cabral, Anna Escobedo—2277, 2292
Cabrera, Cesar B.—2282
Calvert, Ken—1629
Camp, Dave—1516, 1674
Campasano, Nicholas—1816, 1817
Campbell, Ben Nighthorse—1741, 2047, 2175
Campbell, Jane L.—1435
Campbell, Linda—1741, 2175
Campbell, Wayne—1580, 1581
Capito, Shelley Moore—1236, 1355, 1688, 1802, 1913, 1978
Card, Andrew H., Jr.—2277, 2278, 2280
Carew, Rodney C.—2282
Carlson, Lawrence—1401
Carson, Kit—1422
Carter, John R.—1346
Casey, Albert—2292
Casey, George W., Jr.—1533, 1730
Casini, Richard—1802
Castillo, John—1452
Castillo, Ruben—2291
Castle, Michael N.—1681
Castro Ruz, Fidel—1353, 1761, 2002
Catlett, Gale—1688
Cayton, Dawn—1375, 1376
Cayton, Marlin—1376
Ceurvels, Jackie—1820, 1821
Ceurvels, Jim—1820, 1821
Chabot, Steve—2236
Chaffin, Valerie—2274
Chao, Elaine L.—1394, 1530, 2061
Chaput, Charles J.—2288
Cheley, Jeff—2050
Cheney, Dick—1241, 1244, 1253, 1268, 1275, 1280, 1294, 1295, 1302, 1308, 1340, 1354, 1355, 1383, 1390, 1395, 1420, 1427, 1438, 1445, 1453, 1475, 1485, 1497, 1515, 1536, 1546, 1566, 1589, 1612, 1629, 1639, 1653, 1659, 1674, 1681, 1688, 1695, 1704, 1709, 1721, 1722, 1729, 1730, 1733, 1734, 1741, 1748, 1757, 1768, 1769, 1776, 1778, 1795, 1802, 1811, 1829, 1841, 1848, 1855, 1863, 1864, 1871, 1877, 1901, 1907, 1913, 1914, 1920, 1927, 1934, 1935, 1950, 1953, 1963, 1964, 1971, 1986, 2007, 2016, 2031, 2038, 2047, 2065, 2073, 2074, 2086, 2094, 2101, 2116, 2129, 2152, 2153, 2166, 2189, 2200, 2201, 2203, 2212, 2213, 2223, 2225, 2236, 2275, 2277, 2278, 2280, 2282
Cheney, Lynne—1536
Chesnutt, Mark—1864
Child, Julia—1657
Cianchette, Peter E.—2189
Cisneros, Gustavo—2062
Clinton, William J.—1265, 1393, 1514, 1611, 1859, 1867, 1870, 1919
Clodumar, Vinci N.—2287
Clough, Gerald W.—2288, 2295
Coar, Mary—1866
Cochran, William "Thad"—1390
Colburn, Lisa Kirk—2286
Cole, Kenneth W.—1248
Cole, Tom—2175
Coleman, Claudia—2274
Coleman, Joan M.—2273
Coleman, Norm—1482, 1485, 1722, 2065, 2086
Coleman, William T., Jr.—1222
Collins, Charles M.—1406
Collins, Michael—2276
Collins, Susan M.—2190
Colombo, Jimmy—1913
Colvin, Olivia—2274
Colwin, Dawn—1316
Colwin, Joe—1316, 1322, 1323, 1327, 1328, 1332
Comstock, Bryan—1482, 2279
Connolly, John—1907
Conover, Rod—1747, 2283
Conrad, Robert J.—1243
Cooper, Jim—1836
Coors, Pete—2047
Corbett, Thomas W., Jr.—1963, 2153
Corey, Steve—1636
Cortes, Joaquin—2062
Corton, Jennifer Compton—2280
Corzine, Leon "Len"—1841
Cox, Christopher—1390, 1629
Cox, Mike—1428
Cox, Sean F.—2294
Creighton, Janet W.—1438
Crist, Charlie—1590
Critelli, Michael J.—1406
Crocker, Ryan C.—2288, 2294, 2295
Cromartie, Michael L.—2288
Crotty, Paul A.—2292
Crown Prince Abdullah—2278
Cummings, Peter—2280
Cunningham, Frances—2105, 2106
Curry, Peggy—1434

Dahlberg, Ken—2285
Daley, Richard M.—1401, 2277
Danforth, John C.—1221, 2151, 2265
Danforth, Sally—1221, 2151

Davidson, Donetta—2274
Davis, Neal—1866
Dayish, Frank, Jr.—1740
Dayish, Virginia—1740
De La Rosa-Aponte, Berthy—2285
Dean, Billy—2039
Dean, Howard—1932, 1958, 1984, 2012, 2045, 2053
DeBraska, Bradley—1871
Dechant, Virgil—1469
DeFrancisco, John—1680
DeLay, Tom—1394
Delgado-Jenkins, Jesus H.—2287, 2295
Dellanos, Myrka—2062
Dellinger, Don—1688
Denogean, Guadalupe—1250
Dent, Charles W.—1252, 1267, 1280
Dermer, David—1757
Derrow, Phil—1509, 1510
Derwinski, Edward J.—2277
Deters, Joseph T.—2223, 2236
Dever, James C., III—1243
DeVos, Elisabeth D.—1428, 1674, 2031, 2039, 2285
DeWine, Alice—1884, 1901
DeWine, Anna—1768
DeWine, Fran—
DeWine, Frances—1445, 1768, 1884, 2223, 2235
DeWine, Mike—1435, 1438, 1445, 1768, 1776, 1777, 1795, 1848, 1884, 1901, 1978, 1985, 1987, 2007, 2223, 2235, 2236
DeWine, Patrick—1978
Diabate, Daouda—2275
Diaz-Balart, Mario—1757
DiGirolamo, Joseph—1963
Ditmore, Michael—1956
Dobriansky, Paula J.—1350
Doetch, Tami—2201
Dole, Elizabeth Hanford—2102
Domenici, Nancy—1734, 1741
Domenici, Pete V.—1596, 1604, 1605, 1733, 1741, 1748, 2175
Dotson, Carl—1892
Dotson, Julie—1892
Droegemeier, Kelvin Kay—2288, 2295
Dube, Julie—2283
DuBois, Raymond F.—2277, 2293
Dudas, Jonathan W.—2278, 2293
Dudley, Chris—1640, 1641, 2281
Dudley, Christine—1641
Dugan, Bill—1935
Dunn, Ronnie—1748
Dzebisov, Azamat—2143
Dzebisov, Svetlana—2143
Dzurinda, Mikulas—2283

Earll, Jane M.—1907
Earnhardt, Teresa—2102
Eder, Michele Longo—2285
Edwards, John—1241, 1245, 1281, 1282, 1284, 1296, 1299, 1302, 1303, 1306, 1309, 1311, 1314, 1341, 1344, 1356, 1357, 1359, 1377, 1384, 1385, 1387, 1395–1398, 1424, 1427, 1432, 1433, 1437, 1442, 1443, 1450, 1451, 1455, 1457–1459, 1476, 1479, 1487, 1490, 1500, 1503, 1515, 1517, 1519, 1540, 1554, 1567, 1570, 1577, 1579, 1591, 1593, 1598, 1614, 1616, 1624, 1630, 1633, 1642, 1648, 1660, 1663, 1672, 1675, 1678, 1683, 1686, 1692, 1696, 1698, 1700, 1707, 1715, 1723, 1726, 1735, 1737, 1742, 1745, 1749, 1752, 1758, 1760, 1770, 1772, 1791, 1796, 1799, 1804, 1806, 1807, 1815, 1820, 1830, 1833, 1842, 1845, 1850, 1852, 1860, 1866, 1869, 1873, 1875, 1880, 1882, 1886, 1893, 1903, 1905, 1909, 1911, 1915, 1917, 1923, 1925, 1930, 1932, 1943, 1945, 1958, 1967, 1973, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1990, 1997, 2010, 2012, 2021, 2029, 2034, 2036, 2042, 2044, 2050, 2053, 2057, 2058, 2068, 2071, 2077, 2084, 2088, 2091, 2100, 2108, 2111, 2112, 2123, 2127, 2140, 2162, 2169, 2171, 2193, 2196, 2202, 2210, 2216, 2218, 2225, 2233, 2239, 2242
Egan, Edward Cardinal—1469
Ehlers, Vernon J.—1428
Eisenberg, Lewis M.—2135
El Kerim, Tijani Ould Mohamed—2275
Elam, John W.—1985, 1986
Elway, John—2047
Emerson, Jo Ann—1420, 1920
English, Phil—1907
Ensign, Chris—1552, 1553
Ensign, John—1623
Ensign, Susie—1552, 1553
Estefan, Emilio, Jr.—2062
Estrada, Miguel A.—1559, 1652
Etcheverry, Marco—2062
Evans, Donald L.—1226, 1233, 1467, 2061
Evans, John R.—1907
Evans, Marsha J.—1962, 2199
Evans, Sara—1395
Evans, W. Ronald—2282
Evert, Chris—2275

Faga, Martin—2286
Farooqi, Amjad Hussain—2231
Faulkenberry, John—1927

Feinstein, Dianne—1346
Ferguson, Roger W., Jr.—1413
Fernandez Reyna, Leonel—2281
Ferrell, Ernest—1407
Ferris, Dave—1659
Finley, Julie—2094
Finzimer, Sharen—2159
Fischer, Joschka—1557, 2263, 2264
Fitzpatrick, Michael G.—1963
Flake, Jeff—1613
Flores, Elizabeth G.—2274
Flores, Hector M.—1248
Foglesong, Robert H. "Doc"—1236
Foley, Mark—1757
Ford, Gerald R., Jr.—1427, 1673
Ford, Tammy—1581
Fortenberry, Jeff—1659
Fortunato, Katherine—1803
Fossella, Vito J.—2135
Franks, Tommy R.—2256, 2271
Franks, Trent—1613
Freeman, Brad—1629
Freeman, Judith Waite—2280
Freemire, Michael J.—1475
Frink, Albert A., Jr.—2278, 2293
Frist, Bill—1292, 1390, 1394, 1561
Fry, J. Hayden—2274
Furgess, Alma—1669
Furgess, John—1669

Gable, Lisa Guillermin—2280
Gagliardi, John—2065
Gaines, Charles—1414
Gallagher, Michael D.—2273, 2291
Gard, John—1871
Gardner, Randy—1795
Garfinkel, Steven—2286
Garrick, B. John—2281
Garza, Jesse—1711
Garza, Kate—1711
Garza, Page—1711
Garza, Reynaldo—2062
Gatlin, Josh—2003
Gatlin, Larry—1475, 1516, 2003
Gatlin, Rudy—1516
Gatlin, Steve—1516
Geiger, Judy—1873
George, Francis Eugene Cardinal—1469
Gerlach, Jim—1252
Gesme, Dean H., Sr.—2276
Ghafari, Yousif B.—2277, 2292
Ghaffari, Matt—1435
Gibbons, James A.—1619
Gibbons, Michael R.—1383
Gibney, Lisa—2284
Gibson, James B.—1623
Gilbert, David E.—1435
Gipp, Chuck—1368, 1475, 1877
Giuliani, Judith—2135
Giuliani, Rudolph W.—1733, 1739, 1740, 1747, 1748, 1754, 1762, 1811, 2135, 2271
Glenn, John H., Jr.—1331
Glupker, Jim—2025
Godfrey, John, III—2039
Goletz, Joe—1891, 1892
Gonzales, Alberto R.—2061, 2277
Gonzalez, Christine—1613
Gonzalez, Luis—1613
Gonzalez, Rudy—1598–1600
Goodwin, Glenn R.—1884
Gordon, Stewart—2104, 2105
Gordon, William L.—1280
Goss, Porter J.—1564, 1571, 1594, 1634, 2174, 2280, 2288, 2292
Graas, Charlie—1421, 2278
Graber, Richard W.—2213
Gracz, Gregory—1871
Grant, Susan Johnson—2278, 2293
Grassley, Charles E.—1372, 1382, 1476, 1660, 1840, 1842, 1877
Gravatt, Wil—1971, 1978
Graves, Sam—1927
Greco, Richard, Jr.—2286, 2294
Green, Mark—1339, 1695, 1704, 1706, 1707, 1871, 2213
Green, Sue—1339
Greenspan, Alan—1413, 2292
Greenwood, James C.—1681, 1963, 1967
Gregg, Judd—1390, 1535, 1538, 1543, 1810, 1811, 1816, 1821, 2116, 2127
Griesemer, Debbie—1258, 1259
Griesemer, Jim—1258, 1259
Griffin, Richard A.—1246, 1405, 1679
Griffin, Ruth L.—1535
Griffith, Kathy—1507, 1508
Griffith, Russ—1507, 1508
Grim, Charles W.—2175
Grizzard, W. Roy, Jr.—2285
Gross, Stanislav—2284
Grossman, Marc I.—2294
Guevara, Amado—2062
Guinn, Kenny C.—1619, 1622, 1623, 2055
Gutknecht, Gilbert W.—1482, 1485, 1722,2086

Haas, Lucia—2281
Hadley, Stephen J.—2277
Hagel, Chuck—2148
Hahn, David—1920

Hall, Floyd—2273, 2291
Hamel, Abbie—2190
Hamel, Brian—2190
Hamel, Gail—2190
Hamel, Molly—2190
Hamel, Natalie—2190
Hamilton, Lee H.—1393, 1400, 2276
Hamm, Morgan—1695
Hamm, Paul—1695
Hanaway, Catherine L.—1383, 1420, 1920, 1953
Hanington, Steve—2190
Hannigan, William J.—2285
Hansen, Michael J.—2274
Harbert, Karen Alderman—2276, 2292
Hardiman, Bill—1428
Hargett, Gus L., Jr.—2055
Hargett, Kathleen—2274
Hargrove, D. Michael—1884
Harris, Robert Oberndoerfer—2280
Harrison, Michael J.—2286, 2295
Harrison, Ronald O.—2055
Hart, Melissa A.—1453, 2166
Hartman, Marcie—1259, 1260
Harvey, Francis J.—2287, 2295
Hastert, J. Dennis—1390, 1394, 1561
Hatch, Orrin G.—1346, 1467
Hatfield, Antoinette—1636
Hatfield, Mark O.—1636
Hawkins, Kathy—2284
Hawkins, Larry—2279
Hayes, Robin—2102
Hayworth, J.D.—1613, 2175
Heck, Ron—1841
Height, Dorothy I.—1222
Heller, Dean—2055
Helm, Kathy—2119, 2120
Helm, Lauren—2119
Helm, Steven—2119
Helm, Thomas, Jr.—2119
Helm, Thomas, Sr.—2119, 2120
Hendren, Janet—2280
Henry, Patricia—1470
Hensley, Jack—2234
Hepner, Caroline—2288
Hertell, Hans H.—2061, 2281
Hesch, Tom—1597, 2281
Heydt, Kristin—1423
Hickey, Shannon—2153, 2288
Hickok, Gene—2157, 2158
Hier, Marvin—1629
Hindman, Sam—1236
Hinojosa, Ricardo H.—2278, 2293
Hobson, David L.—2223, 2235, 2236
Hobson, Marina—1581, 1582
Hoekstra, Diane—2031
Hoekstra, Peter—1428, 2016, 2017, 2021, 2026, 2029, 2031
Hoffman, Al—2135
Hogan, Nadine—2279, 2293
Hoisington, Guy—1601
Holmes, Ken—2123, 2124
Hornberger, George M.—2281
Horton, Vail—1646, 1655
Howard, John—1467, 1468, 1604, 1861, 1947
Howell, Beryl A.—2295
Hribar, Carol—2284
Huddle, Sue—2199
Huffman, Bonny—1994, 1995
Hug, Lois—2094
Hug, Richard E.—2094
Hughes, Christine—2280
Hughes, Holly—1428
Hull, Jane D.—2277, 2292
Hulshof, Kenny C.—1420, 1953
Hunt, Bill—1681
Hunt, Lorraine T.—2055
Hurley, Jerry—1507
Hussein, Saddam—1241, 1253, 1254, 1262, 1275–1277, 1283, 1289, 1290, 1297, 1298, 1304, 1312, 1313, 1318, 1319, 1334, 1342–1344, 1357–1359, 1369, 1370, 1385, 1386, 1397, 1418, 1419, 1423, 1424, 1431, 1441, 1449, 1456, 1466, 1478, 1488, 1489, 1499–1501, 1518, 1519, 1527, 1533, 1539, 1548, 1562, 1563, 1569, 1570, 1575, 1576, 1592, 1604, 1615, 1616, 1624, 1625, 1627, 1632, 1633, 1647, 1648, 1650, 1662, 1663, 1670, 1671, 1676, 1677, 1684, 1685, 1691, 1698, 1713, 1714, 1717, 1724, 1725, 1732, 1736, 1737, 1743, 1744, 1751, 1759, 1760, 1771, 1772, 1788–1790, 1797, 1798, 1806, 1818, 1819, 1822, 1831, 1832, 1838, 1844, 1851, 1852, 1859–1861, 1868, 1874, 1875, 1881, 1893, 1894, 1904, 1910, 1911, 1916, 1917, 1924, 1925, 1931, 1932, 1944–1946, 1957, 1958, 1969, 1974–1976, 1982, 1984, 1996, 1997, 2011, 2012, 2028, 2029, 2035, 2037, 2043–2045, 2052, 2053, 2057, 2058, 2070–2072, 2083, 2090, 2091, 2098–2100, 2110, 2111, 2125, 2126, 2130, 2138–2140, 2148, 2149, 2161–2163, 2170–2172, 2184, 2188, 2194–2196, 2209–2211, 2217, 2219, 2232–2234, 2240, 2241, 2249–2251, 2256, 2258, 2259, 2261, 2262, 2269
Hutchinson, Asa—1350, 1353
Hutton, Mark B.—2280

Ingraham, Laura—1722

Iverson, Stewart E., Jr.—1841

Jackson, Alphonso R.—1413, 1530, 2005
Jackson, Jesse L., Sr.—1407, 1414
Jackson, Keith J.—2274
James, Daniel, III—2055
James, Kay Coles—1413
Jaminet, Emily—1505, 1506
Jaminet, John—1505, 1506
Jenkins, Kema—2105–2107
Jenner, Gregory F.—2276, 2292
Jennings, Toni—1590
Jepson, Robert—2295
Jerabek, Ken—1344
Jerabek, Rita—1344
Jerabek, Ryan—1344
Jiang Zemin—2263
Jimenez-Calderon, Antonia—1352
Jimenez-Calderon, Librada—1352
Johnson, Bryan—2258
Johnson, Clay, III—1560
Johnson, Luci Baines—1223
Johnson, Mary "Missy"—2258
Johnson, Rick—1428
Johnson, Stephen L.—2278, 2293
Jones, A. Elizabeth—2294
Jones, A.J.—2041
Jones, Bill—1629
Jones, Danny—1236
Jones, Paul—2278, 2293
Joshi, Nirmala—2288
Jundt, Mary Joann—2280

Kaczala, Larry A.—1795
Kadak, Andrew C.—2281
Kaigler, Annie—1835, 2283
Kalb, James—1987
Kamins, Lynne B.—2094
Kamins, Sheldon B.—2094
Kamrath, Marj—2281
Kanell, Danny—2048
Karamanlis, Konstandinos—2284
Karzai, Hamid—1239, 1387, 1501, 1540, 1715, 1752, 1772, 1832, 2160, 2288
Kassinger, Theodore W.—2273, 2291
Katzenmeyer, Karen—1482
Katzenmeyer, Mark—1482, 1484, 2279
Katzenmeyer, Shirley—1482, 1484, 2279
Kay, David—1289
Kean, Thomas H.—1393, 1400, 1416, 2276
Keeler, William H. Cardinal—1469
Kell, John—1695
Kell, Tom—1695
Kells, Bob—2058
Kelly, Daniel J.—2080, 2081
Kelly, Kathy—2280
Kelly, Randy—1721, 2074
Kelly, Raymond W.—1463, 2151
Kelly, Veronica—2151
Kennedy, Debbie—2074
Kennedy, Edward M.—1390
Kennedy, Mark R.—1722, 2065, 2074
Keppy, Glen—1840
Kerry, Alexandra—2265
Kerry, John F.—1244, 1245, 1280–1282, 1284, 1295, 1296, 1299, 1302, 1303, 1306, 1309–1311, 1314, 1340, 1341, 1344, 1355–1357, 1359, 1360, 1368, 1374, 1377, 1380, 1383–1385, 1387, 1395–1398, 1424, 1425, 1427, 1432, 1433, 1437, 1442, 1443, 1445, 1447–1451, 1454–1459, 1476, 1478, 1479, 1487, 1489, 1490, 1499, 1500, 1503, 1515, 1517, 1519, 1520, 1538–1541, 1548, 1554, 1557, 1567, 1569–1571, 1575, 1577, 1579, 1591–1593, 1598, 1599, 1604, 1614–1617, 1623, 1625, 1630, 1632–1634, 1639, 1642, 1646, 1648, 1653, 1660, 1662–1664, 1671, 1672, 1675–1679, 1683, 1684, 1686, 1690–1693, 1696–1700, 1707, 1708, 1714–1716, 1721, 1723–1726, 1730, 1735–1737, 1740, 1742–1745, 1749–1752, 1758–1761, 1770–1773, 1786, 1788, 1791, 1796–1799, 1802, 1804–1807, 1815, 1816, 1818, 1820, 1828, 1830–1833, 1839, 1842–1845, 1850–1853, 1858–1861, 1865–1870, 1872, 1873, 1875, 1879–1882, 1885, 1886, 1893, 1902–1905, 1909–1911, 1915–1918, 1922–1925, 1929–1932, 1939, 1943–1945, 1947, 1954–1958, 1967–1969, 1973–1976, 1980–1984, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1995–2000, 2009–2012, 2020, 2021, 2025, 2028, 2029, 2033–2037, 2040–2045, 2049–2053, 2057, 2058, 2067–2071, 2075, 2077, 2079, 2080, 2083, 2084, 2087–2091, 2095–2098, 2100, 2104, 2107, 2108, 2110–2112, 2118, 2120, 2123, 2125–2127, 2137, 2140, 2148, 2154, 2155, 2157, 2160–2162, 2168–2172, 2192–2194, 2196, 2202, 2204, 2210, 2211, 2215–2219, 2224–2228, 2230, 2232, 2233, 2238–2242, 2248–2270, 2272
Kerry, John M.—2193
Kerry, Vanessa—2265
Khan, Abdul Qadeer—1290, 1334, 1359, 1387, 1401, 1947, 2249, 2267
Kildee, Dale E.—2175
Kilgore, Jerry W.—1547
Kilmer, Bev—1574, 1590
Kilpatrick, Kwame M.—1406

Kim Chong-il—1330, 1501, 1558, 1586, 1626, 1716, 1789, 1882, 2030, 2263, 2264, 2268
Kinder, Peter—1383, 1920, 1953
King Mohamed VI—2273, 2274
King, Steve—1659
King, Tim—1271
Kirchman, Deanna—2280
Kirk, Mark S.—1401
Kirkwood, Myrah—1516
Klauser, James R.—1308, 1871
Klemek, Darren—2275
Klemme, Ralph—1659
Klestil, Thomas—1251, 2274
Kline, John—1482, 1485, 1722
Kline, Vicky—1482
Knight, Bill—2196, 2288
Koch, David H.—2275
Koizumi, Junichiro—1276, 1329, 1379, 1387, 1501, 1558, 1586, 1605, 1626, 1633, 1650, 1664, 1678, 1685, 1716, 1789, 1799, 1807, 1819, 1833, 1845, 1869, 1876, 1882, 1894, 1906, 1912, 1918, 1933, 1945, 1946, 1959, 1970, 1976, 1984, 1998, 2013, 2030, 2037, 2045, 2053, 2054, 2059, 2072, 2084, 2092, 2100, 2112, 2127, 2141, 2163, 2172, 2197, 2211, 2212, 2219, 2220, 2234, 2243, 2256, 2288
Kosar, Bernie—1497
Kostenski, Ed—1227, 1228, 1232
Kreykes, Jon A.—1287
Krongard, Howard J.—2285, 2293
Kruse, Charles E.—1934
Kunder, James R.—2278, 2293
Kwasniewski, Aleksander—1604, 1861, 2256
Kyl, Jon—1346, 1613, 1614

LaCompte, Kathy—1644, 1645
LaFleur, Christopher J.—2273, 2291
Lagos, Ricardo—1364
Lahey, Robert T.—1401
Lakhani, Hemant—1402
Lamb, Wayne—1938–1940
Lamb, William—2280
Land, Terri Lynn—1428, 1516, 2039
Landis, Susan—1355, 2275
Lane, J. Thomas—1236
Lang, Craig—1841
Langdon, James C., Jr.—2094
Lanzerotti, Louis J.—2288, 2295
Lapp, Flossie—1268
Lapp, Greg—1268–1271
Lapp, Manny—1268
Lapp, Tim—1268–1270
Larson, Alan P.—2294
Larson, Eric A.—2205–2208
Lashutka, Nicholas—2230
Latham, Tom—1475, 1476
LaTourette, Steven C.—1901
Latta, Robert E.—1795
Lauder, Ronald S.—2277
Lauer, Matt—2283
Lazich, Mary—1308
Leach, James A.—1475, 1476, 1877
Leahy, Patrick J.—2286, 2294
Leavitt, Michael O.—1418, 1926
Lee, Ernie—1953
Lehman, Christine—1613
Lehman, Thomas E.—1613
Lehr, Jack—1497, 2279
Lehrer, Jim—2248–2270
Leibowitz, Jon D.—2279, 2293
Leno, Jay—1619
Leshner, Alan I.—2288, 2295
Lessard, Robert—1301
Levin, Daniel B.—2275
Levinson, Daniel R.—2275, 2285, 2291
Limbaugh, Rush—2283
Lindley, Gail—2050
Lockhart, Joe—2260
Lohff, Kenneth E.—2274
Lohn, D. Robert—1636
Long, Dale—1223, 1224
Long, Mike—2135
Loop, Floyd D.—1435
Lord, Suzanne—2094
Ludington, Thomas L.—1246
Lufkin, Thomas—2022
Lugar, Richard G.—1292, 2062
Lujan, Manuel, Jr.—1596, 1748
Lunde, Brian—1871
Lynch, John—2048
Lynn, Tony—1748
Lyon, G. Reid—1556
Lyons, Jan—1841
Lyons, Patrick H.—1596

Machaskee, Alexander—1435
Maconochie, Scotty—2274
Madden, Mark—1680
Magnum, Dave—2201
Maida, Adam J. Cardinal—2277
Majoras, Deborah P.—2279, 2293
Mambruno, Edward—2274
Mariucci, Steve—1294
Markie, Jerry—2077, 2079, 2080
Marshall, Thurgood, Jr.—1222
Martin, Andrea—2283
Martin, Dawn—1271

Martin, Ian—1271
Martin, Nathaniel—1271
Martin, Tim—1271
Martinez, Kathryn "Kitty"—2271
Martinez, Mel R.—1530, 2271, 2284
Matthews, Loyd—1920
Mattiace, William M.—1734
Maupin, Carolyn—1669
Maupin, Keith—1669
Maupin, Keith "Matthew"—1669
Maxwell, Joan—1228, 1229
Maxwell, Owen—1228, 1229
May, Theresa—2092
Mayfield, Max—1961, 1962
Maynard, Elliott E. "Spike"—1236
Mbeki, Thabo Mvuyelwa—2286
McCain, Cindy—1612
McCain, John—1566, 1571, 1574, 1583, 1584, 1587, 1589, 1594, 1596, 1600, 1604, 1605, 1610, 1612, 1614, 1617, 1629, 1811, 1836, 1840, 2148, 2280, 2283
McCarrick, Theodore E. Cardinal—1469
McCarron, Douglas J.—1619, 1621, 1622
McCarron, Mike—1619
McCarthy, Grace—2275
McClain, Tim S.—2285
McCollough, Shawn—2063
McConnell, John H.—1848
McConnell, Addison M. "Mitch"—1335
McCormick, Tim—1709, 1710
McCrory, Patrick L.—2102
McCune, Don—1669
McCune, Evelyn—1669
McGeehan, Albert H.—2031
McGraw, Phillip C. "Dr. Phil"—2230, 2278
McGregor, Jack E.—2273, 2291
McGuinness, Cheryl—1535, 1811
McKeague, David W.—1246, 1405
McKenna, Marty—2245, 2246
McKenna, Pat—2245, 2246
McLaughlin, John E.—1365, 1462, 1565, 2277
McLaurin, Donald K.—1769
McLean, Donna—2280
Meier, Alexander—1403
Meier, Gerhard—1403
Meier, Katrina—1403
Meier, Nicholas—1403
Meier, Nicolette—1403, 2276
Menarchik, Douglas—2285, 2293
Mendez, Gonzalo—2062
Mendez, Jerome—2062
Mendez, Sandra—2062
Mendez, Sylvia—2062
Merrill, Nancy—1536
Messerli, Karen R.—1927
Metzer, Peggy—2078, 2079
Meyers, Sandra K.—2280
Michael, Gary—2280
Michels, Steven—1331, 1332
Michels, Tim—2201, 2213
Miers, Harriet E.—2277
Miller, Candice S.—1516
Miller, Dennis—1340
Miller, Jeff—1566, 1574, 1583, 2114
Miller, Thomas—2275
Miller, Zell—1756, 1757, 1864, 1871, 1877, 1896, 1901, 1907, 1913, 1920, 1927, 1935, 1953, 1971, 1978, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1997, 2006, 2031, 2038, 2047, 2065, 2073, 2074, 2085, 2101, 2116, 2166, 2189, 2201, 2212, 2223, 2236
Millerick, Jayne—1536
Mills, Howard—2135
Mineta, Norman Y.—1530
Minnis, Karen—1636
Minor, Charles A.—2275
Mochary, Mary—2285
Mohammed, Khalid Sheik—1289, 1334, 2251
Mohs, Mary—2280
Molnau, Carol—1301
Montgomery, Betty—1795, 2236
Montgomery, John M.—2166
Moore, Daffney—2276
Moore, Susan L.—2288, 2295
Moorman, William A.—2295
Morales, Hector E.—2276, 2292
Moreno Mejia, Luis Alberto—2062
Morgan, Fay—1459
Morial, Marc H.—1222, 1406–1409
Morris, John L.—1421
Morris, Katherine—1836
Morris, Rita Rice—1987
Mosleh, Ali—2281
Mounger, William D.—2280
Moy, Peter—1401
Mueller, Robert S., III—1462, 1464, 2253, 2277
Mueller, Scott—1309, 1310
Mueller, Shelly—1309, 1310
Munoz, Anthony—1987, 2007, 2236
Munoz, Michelle—1987
Murphy, Tim—1453, 2166
Murray, Patty—1636
Museveni, Yoweri Kaguta—1293
Musharraf, Pervez—1289, 1499, 1825, 2174, 2175, 2288
Myers, Richard B.—1492, 1729, 2282
Myers, Rob—1890
Myers, William G.—1389

Myrick, Sue Wilkins—2102

Nalen, Tom—2048
Nastase, Adrian—1391, 2276
Needham, Paul—2116
Negroponte, John D.—1221, 1533, 1562, 2254
Neil, Dan—2048
Neilson, Susan B.—1246
Nethercutt, George R., Jr.—1636, 1639, 1652
Newton, Wayne—1340
Ney, Robert W.—1394, 1446, 2006, 2007
Ngaithe, Leonard Njogu—2275
Nicklaus, Barbara—1848
Nicklaus, Gary—1848
Nicklaus, Jack—1848
Nielsen, Norm—1368
Noble, Brian—1340
Noriega, Roger F.—2061
Norton, Gale A.—1623, 2047, 2175
Norton, Jane E.—2047
Novak, Alan—1280
Nussle, Jim—1475, 1476, 1840
Nussle, Karen—1840

Oberle, Bob—1482, 1485
Obiozor, George A.—2275
O'Connor, Pat—1781, 1782
Oddsson, David—1240
Olhaye Oudine, Roble—1292
Olivarez, Juan R.—1428
Oliver, Joel—1677
Oliver, Vernon—1601
O'Marra, Kelsey—2199
O'Neill, Jan D.—1263
O'Neill, Joseph I., III—1263, 2223
Onorato, Dan—2164
Ontiveros, Frank—2283
O'Reilly, Bill—2288
O'Scannlain, Diarmuid F.—2274
Ott, JoAnne—1669
Ourisman, Mary M.—2285
Owens, Bill—2047
Owens, Frances—2047
Oxley, Karel—1776
Oxley, Michael G.—1776, 1777, 1795

Paige, Roderick R.—1413, 1530, 1776, 2005
Palmer, Arnold—2165
Palmer, Jessica—2206–2208
Panzer, Mary E.—1308, 1871
Pappert, Gerald J.—1280
Parker, Elizabeth Rindskopf—2286
Parsky, Gerald L.—1629
Parsky, Robin—1629
Partyka, Chester—2277
Pascoe, B. Lynn—2275, 2291
Pataki, Elizabeth—2135, 2151
Pataki, Emily—2135
Pataki, George E.—1999, 2135, 2151
Pate, Paul D.—1368
Patenaude, Pamela Hughes—2286, 2295
Paterno, Joe—1279
Paterno, Scott—1252, 1267, 1279
Patterson, Jeanne—1927
Paulsen, Erik—1722
Pawlenty, Timothy—1301, 1482, 1485, 2065, 2074, 2086
Payne, Donald M.—1292
Pearce, Cynthia—1734
Pearce, Stevan—1734, 2062
Penn, Buddie J.—2288, 2295
Pepper, Jean Craige—1907, 2153
Perdue, George E. "Sonny," III—2274, 2291
Perez, Paul I.—1350
Perry, Casey—2213
Perry, Stephen A.—1413
Persons, Oscar—2280
Pertuset, Carl—1992, 1993
Pertuset, Vera—1992
Perzel, John M.—1681
Peschl, Mike—1619, 2281
Petersen, Marshall—1879
Peterson, Carl D.—1703
Peterson, David A.—1613
Peterson, John E.—1907
Petri, Thomas E.—1871
Petro, James—2007
Petroski, Henry—2282
Pham, Lan—1350, 2275
Phillips, Kay—2280
Piccola, Jeffrey E.—1280
Pierson, Lloyd O.—2276, 2292
Pinero, Edwin—2288
Ping, Jean—2142, 2150
Pino, Sergio—2281
Piromya, Kasit—2275
Pitts, Joseph R.—1267
Piunno, Frank—1887, 1888, 1890
Platt, Steve—1940, 1941
Platts, Todd R.—1252, 1279
Poku, Fritz Kwabena—2287
Pombo, Richard—2175
Pope John Paul II—1469
Popper, John—1395
Porter, Jon C.—1619
Portman, Robert J.—1669, 1987, 1999, 2002, 2007, 2236

Powell, Colin L.—1263, 1292, 1413, 1467, 1530, 1977, 2005, 2151, 2256, 2265, 2275–2279, 2282, 2286
Powell, Michael K.—1413
Pray, David J.—2022, 2023
Preisse, Doug—1497
Principi, Anthony J.—1669, 1823, 1836, 1837
Pryce, Deborah—1497, 1848
Puentes, George—1642, 1643
Purcell, William—1836
Putin, Vladimir—1731, 2016, 2061, 2268, 2282, 2284
Putnam, Adam H.—2245

Qadhafi, Muammar Abu Minyar al- —1320, 1397, 1423, 1431, 1441, 1448, 1456, 1478, 1488, 1518, 1539, 1569, 1592, 1615, 1632, 1662, 1670, 1676, 1690, 1698, 1724, 1732, 1736, 1743, 1751, 1759, 1771, 1797, 1806, 1825, 1831, 1838, 1844, 1947
Queen, William F.—1688
Quintanilla, Eliseo—2062

Raburn, Vern—1600, 1601
Raia, Victor—1971
Rainey, Sharon—1550–1552, 1554
Ramos, Luis A.—2158
Ramstad, Jim—2074
Raney, Bill—1236
Rangel, Charles B.—1292
Rank, Kathy—2229
Rants, Christopher—1659
Rappoport, D. Michael—2282, 2292
Rapuano, Kenneth—2277
Rasmussen, Eric—2277
Rath, Thomas D.—1536, 2116
Ray, Robert D.—1841
Reagan, Nancy—1628, 1824
Reano, Arnold—1602
Reano, Debra—1602
Regan, Crystal—2287
Regula, Mary—1438
Regula, Ralph—1438, 1884, 1901
Reiner, Joshua—2229, 2230
Reiner, Tracy—2229, 2230
Reintjes, Stephen L.—1930
Rell, M. Jodi—2273
Renzi, Rick—1613
Repya, Joseph, Jr.—1301, 1722, 2065
Reynolds, Gabrielle B.—2285
Reynolds, Mercer—1629, 2094, 2135
Reynolds, Thomas M.—1394
Rice, Buddy—2276
Rice, Condoleezza—1413, 1530, 1729, 2005, 2277, 2282
Rice, Tim—1324, 1325
Richardson, Doug—1709, 1710
Richardson, Jim—2274
Richburg, James R.—1574
Ridge, Tom—1252, 1274, 1390, 1401, 1458, 1462–1465, 1564, 1867, 1907, 2152, 2166, 2245, 2277
Ries, Marcie Berman—2288, 2296
Rigali, Justin Cardinal—1469
Rigoni, Albert—1401
Riley, Bob—2061, 2114, 2286
Riley, Don T.—1636, 2275, 2292
Riordan, Richard J.—1629
Ripplinger, Roger—1710, 1711
Robb, Charles S.—1462
Roberts, Pat—1241, 1732
Robertson, Jeanne—2281
Roche, James G.—1492
Rodriguez, Anna—1353, 1354
Roederer, David—1475, 1659, 1877
Rohrabacher, Dana—1629
Rolles, Jean—2280
Romero, Raul R.—2094, 2281
Romney, Ann—1811
Romney, Mitt—1811, 1813
Rood, John D.—2278, 2293
Rooney, Francis—2282
Roper, Richard B., III—2292
Rosacco, Claire—1888–1890
Roth, Bob—1429
Royce, Edward R.—1292, 1629
Royer, Thomas C.—2285
Rubenstein, David—2285
Rubin, Robert—1968, 1999
Rudolph, Rich—1782, 1783
Rumsfeld, Donald H.—1463, 1492, 1729, 1730, 1732, 2275–2277, 2282, 2288
Russell, Tim—2114
Russo, Steve—2114
Ruth, Marge—2282
Ryan, Daniel P.—1246
Ryan, Janna—2200
Ryan, Paul—2200, 2213

Saad, Henry W.—1246, 1405
Saca Gonzalez, Elias A.—2275
Salupo, Samuel A.—1446
Sanchez, Eunice—1964, 2285
Sanchez, John—1596, 1748
Sanchez, Ricardo S.—1248
Sande, Bernard—2275
Sandoval, Brian—1623, 2055, 2062
Sands, Fred—2280
Sandvick, Doug—1695

Sanford, Chris—1993, 1994
Sanko, David M.—2164
Santana Lopes, Pedro—2279
Santorum, Rick—1252, 1267, 1279, 1453, 1864, 1907, 2153, 2164, 2166
Saraga, John—2235
Scaccia, Steve—2207, 2208
Scamman, Stella—1535
Scamman, W. Douglas—1535
Scanlon, Ted—1734
Scarborough, Charles J. "Joe"—1566
Scarborough, Kate—1566
Scarborough, Susan—1566
Schaefer, Peggy—2279
Scheidemantel, Bob—2288
Schembechler, Glenn E. "Bo"—1828
Schlotterback, Kathie—1374, 1375
Schlotterback, Mike—1374, 1375
Schmidt, Megan—2159, 2160
Schmidt, Roger—1256, 1257
Schrock, Edward L.—1546, 1547
Schultz, Dale—1695, 1704
Schultz, Roger C.—2055
Schwarz, Joe—2039
Schwarzenegger, Arnold A.—1629, 1630, 1862, 2274
Scranton, William—1864
Schwarzman, Stephen A.—2285
Seabright, J. Michael—2295
Secchia, Peter F.—1428
Sen, Ranendra—2287
Sensenbrenner, Cheryl—1308
Sensenbrenner, F. James, Jr.—1308, 1346, 1871
Sessions, Pete—2114
Shadegg, John—1613
Shaffer, Tom—1687, 2282
Sharon, Ariel—1825, 1826
Sharpe, Nancy—2048
Sharpton, Al—1407
Shaver, Mike—1708, 1709
Shaw, John S.—2277, 2292
Shelby, Richard C.—2114
Sherwood, Don—1864
Shinn, Masako H.—2280
Shirley, Gordon—2275
Shoemaker, Dale—1619
Shoupe, David—1991
Shoupe, Jennifer—1991
Shrestha, Kedar Bhakta—2287
Shuster, Bill—1971
Sigman, Stan—2285
Sikkema, Ken—1428
Silberman, Laurence H.—1462
Silins, Andris J.—1619
Simons, Susan W.—2280
Simpson, James S.—2277, 2292
Singer, Julia—2278
Singh, Manmohan—2142
Skaggs, Ricky—1566, 1722
Skinner, Thomas V.—2285, 2293
Slocombe, Walter B.—2275
Smith, Gordon H.—1636, 1639, 1650
Smith, Nick H.—1674, 2039
Smith, Richard N.—2286
Smith, Sharon—1639
Smits, Jimmy—2062
Snider, L. Britt—2286
Snow, John W.—1346
Snowe, Olympia J.—2190
Soles, Sarah—1430
Solis, Alfonso—1734
Soloman, Lon—2274
Sosa, Enrique J.—2278, 2294
Sotomayor, Ernest R.—1522
Spanogle, Robert W.—1836
Spanos, Alex—2275, 2285
Spanos, Faye—2275
Specter, Arlen—1252, 1267, 1453, 1681, 1863, 1907, 1963, 2153, 2164, 2166
Spielman, Chris—1438, 1849
Staley, Karen—2274
Stansberry, Tony L.—1927
Starrett, Keith—2291
Steele, Cal—2278
Steele, Michael S.—1222
Steelman, Sarah—1953
Sterban, Richard—1280
Stevens, Theodore F.—2175
Stoehr, Kyle—1310
Stone, John—2007, 2065
Stonecipher, Harry C.—1681
Stout, Karen A.—2153
Strauss, Jon C.—2288, 2296
Straw, Jack—1557, 2263, 2264
Streeter, Bernard A.—1811
Strock, James M.—2291
Stump, Dale—1257, 1258
Stump, Sharon—1257, 1258
Sullivan, Kathryn D.—2288, 2296
Sullivan, Louis W.—1222
Summers, Charlie—2190
Sununu, John E., Jr.—1535, 2116, 2127, 2286, 2294
Swann, Lynn C.—1453, 1757, 2166
Sykes, Charlie—2213

Tacket, Allen E.—1236
Taft, Bob—1435, 1438, 1445, 1497, 1511, 1669, 1768, 1776, 2005, 2007

Talent, James M.—1420, 1920, 1927
Talis, Annette—2274
Tauzin, W.J. "Billy"—1390
Taylor, Charles—1415
Taylor, Jana—1643, 1644
Teachout, Terence A.—2274, 2291
Tedoev, Zaur—2143
Templin, Robert G., Jr.—1546
Tenet, George J.—1565
Thawley, Michael—1467
Thomas, Clarence—1221, 1222
Thomas, Virginia—1221
Thomas, William M.—1292
Thompson, Joan C.—1230, 1231
Thompson, Kelli—1308
Thompson, Stan—1841
Thompson, Sue Ann—1308
Thompson, Tommy G.—1248, 1307, 1308, 1311, 1316, 1332, 1339, 1390, 1394, 1871, 2078, 2213
Thornton, Shawn R.—1237
Thune, John R.—1659
Tiberi, Patrick J.—1497
Tidmarsh, David—2274
Tippin, Aaron—1237, 1590
Tobin, Jim—2190
Tombaugh, George—2228
Tony, Blair—1861
Toomey, Patrick J.—1963
Torrijos Espino, Martin—2282
Torsone, Andrea—2108, 2109
Towey, Harry J. "Jim"—1473, 1511
Townsend, Frances Fragos—2277
Treadwell, Alexander F. "Sandy"—2135, 2285
Tredick, Peter W.—2280
Trent, Steve—1295
Trimbell, Wayne—1699
Turner, Michael R.—2223, 2236

Untermeyer, Charles Graves—2278, 2294
Uribe Velez, Alvaro—1513
Urshan, Daniel J.—1301
Ushakov, Yuriy Viktorovich—2016, 2200

Valenti, Jack—1222
Van Dusen, George—1401
van Haren, Audra—1430
van Haren, Brian—1430
Vargas, Elizabeth—2062
Vasques, Victoria—2175
Vasquez, Gaddi H.—2061
Vaudt, David A.—1475, 1659
Vaughn, Jack—2279, 2294
Venema, Matthew J.—2023, 2024
Veneman, Ann M.—1394, 1467, 1484, 1843, 2245, 2246, 2281
Vermeil, Dick—1703
Visscher, Gary L.—2278, 2294
Voight, Jack C.—1339, 1695
Voinovich, George V.—1435, 1438, 1445, 1768, 1776, 1795, 1848, 1884, 1886, 1896, 1898, 1901, 1987, 2007, 2236
Voinovich, Janet—1884
Volcker, Paul A.—2129

Wadsworth, Jeffrey—1287
Wagner, Linda—1506, 1507
Wagner, Richard K.—2278, 2294
Wagoner, G. Richard, Jr.—1406
Walden, Greg—1636, 1639, 1650
Walker, Kris—1711, 1712
Walker, Scott K.—1871, 2213, 2279, 2294
Wallace, Roger W.—2279, 2294
Wallau, Alex—2062
Wargel, Charlie—2279
Warner, John W.—1492
Wasson, Robert—1934
Watson, Dorothy L.—2285
Watt, Linda—2282
Watts, J.C., Jr.—1589
Waxman, Henry A.—1390
Weber, John V. "Vin"—2074
Weeks, Nancy—1809
Weh, Allen E.—1596
Weldon, Curt—1681
Weller, Jerry—2062
Wells, Roger—1554, 1555
Wenger, Noah W.—1267
Wenzel, David—1864
Wesley, David J.—1636
West, W. Richard—2176
Westendorp y Cabeza, Carlos—2062, 2287
Wetherill, Cortright, Jr.—2285
White, Darren—1596
White, Doug—1987, 2007
White, Jill—1580
White, Joe—1421
Wieczorek, Raymond J.—1535
Will, Madeleine—2274
Williams, Anthony A.—1411, 1515, 1523
Williams, Scott—1784, 1785
Wills, Mark—1927, 1953, 2190
Wilson, Ellyn—1941, 1942
Wilson, Heather—1596, 1748
Wilson, Joseph C., IV—1380
Winterhack, Deb—1325–1327
Witt, Marcos—2062
Wolf, Frank R.—1546

Wolf Guts, Clarence—2176
Wolfowitz, Paul D.—1492
Womack, Lee Ann—1453, 1795
Wong, Leslie E.—1295
Wong, Phyliss—1295
Wood, Lisa Godbey—2292
Woodley, John P.—1636
Woodson, Robert L., Sr.—1222
Worley, Darryl—2236
Wos, Aldona—2279, 2294
Wright, Joseph R.—2285
Wyden, Ron—1636

Yawr, Ghazi al-Ujayl al- —1221
Yob, Charles "Chuck"—1428
Young, Bernice—1754, 2283
Young, C.W. Bill—1755–1757, 2276, 2283
Young, Johnny—2294

Zahir, Zahira—1825
Zarqawi, Abu Musab Al—1241, 1253, 1275, 1318, 1334, 1369, 1499, 1575, 1624, 1632, 1647, 1713, 1788, 1818, 1874, 1904, 1924, 1944, 1996, 2043, 2057, 2083, 2098, 2110, 2125, 2129, 2138, 2161, 2170, 2182, 2184, 2185, 2209, 2217, 2232, 2234, 2240, 2243, 2251
Zbogar, Samuel—2287
Zieglar, Steve—1310
Zimmerman, Kevin—1687
Zimmerman, Paula—1687
Zindler, Marvin—1277, 1319, 1370, 1501, 1527, 1549, 1576, 1627, 1651, 1717, 1790
Zoellick, Robert B.—1233, 1293, 1467, 1657
Zucco, Donato B.—1971

Document Categories List

Addresses and Remarks

See also Appointments and Nominations; Bill Signings; Interviews With the News Media; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials
Albuquerque, NM—1747
American Legion convention in Nashville, TN—1835
Army Reservists and National Guard troops departing for Iraq, in Bangor, ME—2198
Ashwaubenon, WI—1339
Bangor, ME—2189
Battle Creek, MI—2038
Beckley, WV—1354
Beslan, Russia, relief efforts—2199
Boeing Company employees in Ridley Park, PA—1680
Broadview Heights, OH, discussion—1883
Cabela's Retail Store in Tridelphia, WV—1452
Cambridge, OH—1445
Canton, OH—1437
Cedar Rapids, IA—1877
Chillicothe, OH—2006
Chippewa Falls, WI—1695
Civil Rights Act of 1964, 40th anniversary—1222
Colmar, PA—1962
Columbia, MO—1953
Columbia River Channel Deepening Project in Portland, OR—1636
Columbus, OH
  Discussion—1496
  Remarks—1848
Conservation Reserve Program in Le Sueur, MN—1482
Davenport, IA—1474
Derry, NH, question-and-answer session—2115
Disaster relief officials and volunteers, meeting in Stuart, FL—2246
Duluth, MN—1301
Eclipse Aviation in Albuquerque, NM, discussion—1595
Education, discussions
  Janesville, WI—2200
  King of Prussia, PA—2152

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
Education, discussions—Continued
  Springfield, OH—2222
Erie, PA—1907
Farm Progress Show in Alleman, IA—1840
Farmington, NM—1740
First-responders in Orange Beach, AL—2114
Florida, hurricane damage and recovery efforts
  Lake Wales—2245
  Miami—1755
  Punta Gorda—1667
  Stuart—2246
Grand Rapids, MI—1427
Greenwood Village, CO—2047
Health care, discussions
  Blaine, MN—2073
  Muskegon, MI—2016
Hedgesville, WV—1688
Hispanic Heritage Month reception—2061
Holland, MI—2031
Hudson, WI, discussion—1703
Huntington, WV—1978
Independence Day in Charleston, WV—1235
Intelligence reform—1460, 1960
International Children's Games and Cultural Festival in Cleveland, OH—1435
Ironton, OH—1985
Johnstown, PA—1970
Judicial nominees, meetings
  Raleigh, NC—1243
  Waterford, MI—1245
Kansas City Chiefs training camp in River Falls, WI—1703
Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, IA—1368
Kirtland, OH—1900
Knights of Columbus convention in Dallas, TX—1469
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown, PA—1251
Lancaster, PA—1267
Las Cruces, NM—1733
Latrobe, PA—2165
League of United Latin American Citizens convention, satellite remarks—1248
Lee's Summit, MO—1927

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
Lima, OH, discussion—1775
Mankato, MN—1485
Marquette, MI—1294
Miami, FL—1756
Mid-States Aluminum Corporation in Fond du Lac, WI, discussion —1316
Millvale, PA, recovery efforts—2164
Moosic, PA—1863
Nashua, NH, discussion—1810
National Guard Association general conference in Las Vegas, NV—2055
National Hurricane Center in Miami, FL—1961
National Museum of the American Indian, opening—2175
National Training Conference on Human Trafficking in Tampa, FL—1350
National Urban League conference in Detroit, MI—1406
New York City, NY, rally—2135
Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy in Glenview, IL—1400
Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, VA, discussion—1546
Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, TN—1287
Okaloosa-Walton College in Niceville, FL, discussion—1573
Panama City, FL—1589
Parkersburg, WV—1913
Pensacola, FL—1566
Perrysburg, OH—1794
Phoenix, AZ—1612
Pittsburgh, PA—1453
Poplar Bluff, MO—1919
Portsmouth, OH, discussion—1986
Pottstown, PA—1266
Presidential debate in Coral Gables, FL—2248
Presidential debate watch party in Coral Gables, FL—2271
President's Dinner—1394
Racine, WI—2212
Radio addresses—1234, 1286, 1363, 1416, 1436, 1544, 1657, 1728, 1767,1899, 2014, 2113, 2221
Reagan, Nancy, remarks with, in Bel Air, CA—1628
Republican National Convention in New York, NY, remarks accepting the Presidential nomination—1855
Rochester, MN—2085
Russia, terrorist attacks—2016, 2199

Addresses and Remarks—Continued
Saginaw, MI—1515
St. Charles, MO—1382
St. Cloud, MN—2064
St. Paul, MN—1721
Seattle, WA—1656
Sedalia, MO, discussion—1934
Sioux City, IA—1658
Small-business entrepreneurs, discussion—1224
Southridge High School in Beaverton, OR, discussion—1683
Springfield, MO—1420
Stratham, NH—1534
Taylor, MI—1828
Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, National Commission on, report—1400
Traverse City, MI—1673
Troy, OH—1768
U.S. Representative to the United Nations, swearing-in ceremony—1221
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America in Las Vegas, NV—1619
United Nations
General Assembly in New York City, NY—2142
Heads of state, reception in New York City, NY—2151
UNITY: Journalists of Color convention—1522
Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Cincinnati, OH—1668
Victory 2004 events
Santa Monica, CA—1628
Washington, DC—2093
Waukesha, WI—1307
West Allis, WI—1870
West Chester, OH—2235
Wheeling, WV—1802
Women's issues, discussion in Charlotte, NC—2101
Xenia, OH—2235
York, PA—1279

Appointments and Nominations
See also Digest (Appendix A), Nominations Submitted (Appendix B), Checklist (Appendix C)
Central Intelligence Agency, Director, remarks—1564

Bill Signings
AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004, remarks—1292

Bill Signings—Continued
Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004, statement—1564
Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005
Remarks—1492
Statement—1494
Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act, remarks—1346
Nebraska Avenue Naval Complex, legislation to provide for transfer, statement—1233
Project BioShield Act of 2004, remarks—1389
U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, remarks—1467

Communications to Congress

Australia-U.S. free trade agreement
Legislation to implement, message transmitting—1242
Proposed legislative changes, letter submitting—1234
Barbados-U.S. taxation convention, message transmitting second protocol—2046
China, U.S. export of certain items to, letter—1544
Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the U.S. Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, letter on funding—1361
Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, review of title III, letter—1362
Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005, designation of emergency funds, letter—1496
District of Columbia, fiscal year 2005 budget request, letter transmitting—1515
Export control regulations, letter on continuation of national emergency—1543
Federal budget
Budget amendments, letters transmitting—1346, 1960, 2221
Emergency supplemental requests, letter transmitting—2060
Hurricane response and recovery efforts, supplemental budget requests, letters transmitting
Hurricane Charley—1919
Hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne—2244
Iraq
Executive order terminating U.S. national emergency, letter transmitting—1418
Intent to designate as a beneficiary developing country, message—1960

Communications to Congress—Continued
Liberia, Executive order blocking property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods, letter transmitting—1415
Libya, Executive order terminating U.S. national emergency, message transmitting—2134
Morocco-U.S. free trade agreement, legislation to implement, message transmitting—1349
Netherlands-U.S. taxation convention, message transmitting protocol—1362
Terrorist attacks on the United States, national emergency, message on continuation—2014
Terrorism, persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support, U.S. national emergency, message on continuation—2150

Communications to Federal Agencies

See also Presidential documents published in the Federal Register (Appendix D)
Combined Federal Campaign, memorandum—1926
Environmental Protection Agency, designation of officers, memorandum—1247
Tribal governments, government-to-government relationship, memorandum—2177

Directives

Comprehensive terrorist-related screening procedures—1763
Federal employees and contractors, common identification standard policy—1765

Interviews With the News Media

Exchanges with reporters
New York City, NY—2147
Oshkosh, WI—1338
Punta Gorda, FL—1667
Raleigh, NC—1243
West Bend, WI—1315
White House—1240, 1364, 1391, 1460, 1562
Joint news conferences
Iraq, Interim Prime Minister Allawi—2178
News conferences
August 23—1729
September 23—2178

Joint Statements

Mongolia, President Bagabandi—1348
Pakistan, President Musharraf—2174

Letters and Messages

See also Communications to Congress
Rosh Hashanah, message—2060
Yom Kippur, message—2199

Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials

See also Joint Statements
Afghanistan, President Karzai—2288
Brazil, Ambassador Abdenur—2275
Chile, President Lagos—1364
Cote d'Ivoire, Ambassador Diabate—2275
Croatia, Ambassador Jurica—2286
Czech Republic, Prime Minister Gross—2284
El Salvador, President Saca—2275
Ghana, Ambassador Poku—2287
Greece, Prime Minister Karamanlis—2284
Iceland, Prime Minister Oddsson—1240
India
  Ambassador Sen—2287
  Prime Minister Singh—2142
Iraq, Interim Prime Minister Allawi—2147, 2178, 2276
Italy, Prime Minister Berlusconi—2282
Jamaica, Ambassador Shirley—2275
Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi—2288
Kenya, Ambassador Ngaithe—2275
Liberia, Ambassador Minor—2275
Malawi, Ambassador Sande—2275
Malaysia, Prime Minister Abdullah—1366
Mauritania, Ambassador Kerim—2275
Mongolia, President Bagabandi—1348, 2275
Morocco, King Mohamed VI—2274
Nauru, Ambassador Cledumar—2287
Nepal, Ambassador Shrestha—2287
Nigeria, Ambassador Obiozor—2275
Pakistan, President Musharraf—2174, 2288
Poland, Prime Minister Belka—1562
Portugal, President Santana Lopes—2279
Romania, Prime Minister Natase—1391

Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials—Continued
Russia, President Putin—2282, 2284
Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Abdullah—2278
Slovakia, Prime Minister Dzurinda—2283
Slovenia, Ambassador Zbogar—2287
South Africa, President Mbeki—2286
Spain, Ambassador Westendorp y Cabeza—2287
Thailand, Ambassador Kasit—2275
United Kingdom, Prime Minister Blair—2282
United Nations, Secretary-General Annan—2150

Statements by the President

See also Bill Signings; Joint Statements
Cooperative conservation, facilitation—1755
Deaths
  Brando, Marlon—1234
  Child, Julia—1657
  Klestil, Thomas—1251
Goss, Porter J., Senate confirmation as Director of Central Intelligence—2174
Homeownership, progress—1418
Judicial nominations, Senate action to block votes—1389, 1405
Marriage, proposed constitutional amendment
  House of Representatives action—2247
  Senate action to block—1338
Methane to Markets Partnership—1417
Millennium Challenge Account—2093
"Project BioShield Act of 2004," congressional passage—1339
Sudan situation—1977
Tax relief, legislation to extend, congressional passage—2198
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, final report—2133
U.S. military, legislation to provide funding, congressional passage—1406