

Remarks at the Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex in Orlando
June 21, 2002

Thank you all very much. So here's what they say about Marks Street Senior Center: It's one of the most happening places in all of central Florida. [Laughter] I believe that. I've just come from a spinning class. [Laughter] I just came from a strong exercise class. Thankfully, I didn't have to join. [Laughter] I was most impressed by the spirit of the participants and the idea of encouraging exercise. That's what I'm here to talk about.

Before I do so, of course, I want to say how proud I am of my little brother—[laughter]—my big little brother. I love him a lot. I love him a lot. He's a great man. I'm glad to be with him here in Florida.

Today I came down with some distinguished citizens as well. I picked a man from central Florida, from Orlando, to be my Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and that's Mr. Mel Martinez. I appreciate you coming, Mel. Mel told me he volunteered here. He and his wife, Kitty, used to come by to help people here, and it was kind of old home week for him. But he's doing a fabulous job. And it's hard to take a young family out of such a beautiful part of the world and sacrifice and move to Washington. But Mel made that decision, and the country's better off for it.

I want to thank the two United States Senators for traveling with me today, Senator Bob Graham and Senator Bill Nelson. I want to thank them for their—[applause]. I particularly want to thank Senator Graham for his leadership on the Intelligence Committee. During this time where America is at war, intelligence is—gathering of intelligence is incredibly important, and I appreciate the way he has led that committee. It gives me great confidence to know that Bob Graham is there making sure we do everything we can to collect as much intelligence as possible to protect

Americans. And so Senator, I want to thank you for your leadership on that issue.

I want to thank Congressman Ric Keller for traveling with us as well. Ric's one of the bright stars in the United States Congress. I appreciate you, Rick. Mike Bilirakis flew down with us, but he probably thought he had to hear me give a speech, so he went somewhere else. [Laughter] But Mike's a good friend and a good man.

I'm honored that your mayor, Glenda Hood, came by to say hello. Madam Mayor, I'm pleased—appreciate you being here. And with her as well is Orange County Chairman Rich Crotty. Rich has been a friend of mine for a long time. And I want to thank Julie for—Julie Graf for inviting us here. I'm here to talk about—[applause]. Thank you, Julie.

I want to give you a quick update about how I see the world, and then I want to talk a little bit about the health initiative that we're here to herald. You know, we love freedom in America, and we hold freedom dear. And obviously that has irritated some people who hate freedom. And that is why they've made the decision in the past to attack us and why they're probably trying to figure out a way to do it again.

They must have thought we were weak. They must have thought we were really a feeble country. But they're learning differently. You see, when it comes to the defense of freedom, we're strong and we're plenty tough. And when it comes to the defense of our homeland, we're plenty tough. I just want to assure you that the country's united and determined. And I'm determined to do everything in my power to keep America safe.

I appreciate the spirit in Washington, DC, of both Republicans and Democrats. When we talk about the homeland security, it's not a Republican issue. It is not a Democrat issue. It is an American issue.

I am sure you—certain that you've heard about this Homeland Security Department I intend to create. It is to streamline decisionmaking so everybody is on the same page when it comes to protecting the homeland. We've got to change cultures of agencies which, before September the 11th weren't that focused on homeland security. And you can understand why; we hadn't been attacked for a long time. And now it's time to reorganize and readjust and set the most important priority of all, which is to keep America safe. And I look forward to working with the Congress and the Senate on what is a difficult task, but a task that I'm confident that, when we keep the—keep the American people in mind, we can get done.

But the best defense for America is to chase the killers down one by one and bring them to justice, which is precisely what America will do. It's a different kind of war. I'm confident there are some World War II veterans or Korean war veterans here, and I want to thank you for your service. It's a war for freedom, but it's a different kind of war.

Today—in the last 24 hours, the Philippine Government, which had made a concerted effort to find terrorists in their country—the terrorists who, by the way, kidnaped two Americans, the Burnhams—today announced that the head of the group, this extreme group of killers, met his fate. And I want to congratulate the President of the Philippines. I appreciate her leadership and her strength. It goes to show that by assembling a vast coalition of freedom-loving countries, that when we work together and are strong and are diligent, we can succeed, and that's what's going to happen.

I not only work to make sure that America is a safer place, I want to work to make sure that America is a better place as well. One of the initiatives that we talked about the last time I was in Florida, one of the last times, was called the USA Freedom Corps. I encourage people to serve their

neighbor by volunteering, by becoming involved in their communities. We talked about a Senior Corps that can make a huge difference in people's lives all across Florida and all across the country. I believe serving somebody in need is an integral part of the American experience.

Today I had the honor of meeting Marie Wieland. She came—where are you, Marie? There she is. Thank you for coming. She came out to the airport today. She stood underneath the great seal of the Air Force One to have her picture with me, because she has been an extraordinary volunteer in your community. She's heard the call to help a neighbor in need. She's involved with the community care for the elderly. She's been involved with the Children Home Society of Florida. All her life, she has set an example by serving in the army of compassion. You see, our society can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. And for those of you like Marie, who are volunteering and helping make America a better place, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. And thank you, Marie, for being here.

Generally, when we come to Florida to talk to senior citizens, we're talking about Medicare. I look forward to working with the Congress to get a Medicare plan that is modern, up to date, with prescription drugs. But I want to talk about another way, another way to encourage a healthy America.

Yesterday I unveiled, right there on the South Lawn, what we call a HealthierUS. It is an initiative to encourage young and old alike to live healthier and longer lives by paying attention to four guideposts. First, people should be physically active every day. Secondly, people should develop good eating habits. Let me put it another way. You need to eat your vegetables—[laughter]—and your fruits. We've been working on Dad for a while on the broccoli issue. [Laughter]

People need to be conscious of their diet. They need to be careful not to be

loading up with fatty foods all the time. If you want to have a healthy life, you've got to be careful of what you eat. People need to take advantage of preventative screenings to detect early whether or not there's a likelihood of disease, so you can do something about it. And finally, in order to have a healthy life, you shouldn't smoke, drink excessively, or do drugs. In other words, those are choices you can make to make sure you've got a healthy life.

The amazing thing about America is that we're doing a good job on chronic diseases, and people are living longer and longer lives. And that's incredibly positive. But we've all got to work to improve. We can all do better.

And age need not be an indicator of health, as I witnessed in the spinning class. [Laughter] There are a lot of youth that couldn't spin like those spinners were spinning. [Laughter]

We need to make healthy choices no matter how old we are. And a simple and effective way to do this is to really focus on exercise.

Jeb mentioned I'm in pretty good condition because I exercise nearly every day. Laura exercises nearly every day. And I feel better for it. I sleep better. I eat better. I'm a lot more pleasant fellow to be around after I exercise. [Laughter] And I encourage all Americans to do so.

Not enough older Americans are exercising, however. I want to share this statistic with you: In fact, nearly 70 percent of individuals in our country age 65 to 74 do not engage in regular physical activity. And that can be changed pretty quickly. Listen, just a stroll in the park for a reasonable period of time is exercise, and it's good for you. If people just walked 20 to 30 minutes a day, it would change life expectancy, your life expectancy. It would improve your healthy conditions. The Department of Health and Human Services has been reporting on the health of America, and they confirm that older Americans have

more to gain from regular exercise than younger Americans do. That makes sense.

And so, today I want to continue on my message of encouraging America to make healthy choices by encouraging our seniors to exercise on a regular basis—exercise just like we saw here in this fabulous center; listen to people or seek advice as to how to keep up your heart rate and increase your breathing; work on your flexibility. It will make a tremendous difference, and it doesn't take much. It doesn't take much.

We can make a significant difference in the cumulative health costs all around America by encouraging young and old alike to exercise. If we can get people exercising and pushing away from lousy diets, we'll decrease the amount of incidents of heart disease by a significant number. If we can get some of our young to stop watching TV as much as they do and get outside and enjoy, it will promote the habits for a healthy life for a long time coming. I urge moms and dads to exercise with their kids, to go out in the backyard and kick a soccer ball or throw a baseball. It will be good for your family; it will also be good for setting good habits for your children. Physical exercise, whether it be walking or gardening, walking up and down the stairs, can have a significant impact all across America.

I say societies can change one soul, one person at a time. If each person makes a dedicated effort to exercise more, you'll be serving your Nation. The accumulative effect will be incredibly positive for America.

And what a nation you'll be serving. I want you to tell your grandchildren or your children, the young of America, that this great Nation stands for peace; that this Nation, as we defend our freedom, we do so to keep the peace; that we're a nation that is compassionate and decent. When we unleash our military, we do so not as conquerors but to liberate people from the clutches of a barbaric regime such as the Taliban, that was so repressive they

wouldn't even let young girls go to school. That when they hear their President talking about chasing this person down or that, he does so because he wants the children to grow up in a peaceful world and to realize the freedoms that we've realized. He does so because we defend civilization itself, and we have the obligation to do so.

We're making progress in the war against terror. It's going to take a while, but America understands that it's going to take a while. And for that, I'm grateful. And as importantly, we're making progress in showing the world the compassionate face of America as well. Hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens are loving a neighbor just like they'd be liked—just like they'd

like to be loved themselves. And that's good. Out of the evil done to America is going to come incredible good, because we're such a good nation.

Thank you for coming today. And may God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the ballroom. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Julie Graf, site supervisor, Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex; Abu Sabaya, a leader of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group who was killed June 21 by Philippine military forces; and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines.

Remarks at the Republican Party of Florida Majority Dinner in Orlando June 21, 2002

Gosh, thanks for that warm welcome. It's an honor to be back here in the great State of Florida. I want to—I appreciate all of you who have come tonight. I'm here to help support the Republican Party of this State and make sure your unbelievably great Governor gets reelected.

It was a real treat for me to be able to see *mi cuñada*, my sister-in-law, Columba. Jeb and I both married above ourselves. [Laughter] I know you're proud of the job that Columba's doing as the first lady of Florida. And I'm really proud of the job Laura's doing as the First Lady of America.

I'm pleased to report that our mother is still telling both of us what to do. [Laughter] And we're both listening—most of the time. But it's great to be here with my family. As you know, we love our—we've got a great family; we love each other a lot. And anything I can do to help Jeb stay in the Governor's office I'll do, even if that means keeping Brogan as the Lieu-

tenant Governor. [Laughter] I appreciate you, Frank. Frank Brogan is a very good man, and you're doing a great job, Frank. I appreciate you.

I want to thank an Orlando product who traveled with me today for his service to the country. Mel Martinez is doing a great job in my Cabinet. I want to thank former Senator Connie Mack for staying involved with the Republican Party and for helping a lot.

I appreciate so very much Congressman Ric Keller, who's doing a fine job in the United States Congress. Ric, thank you very much. Mike Bilirakis is here, and Mike is a great Congressman from up the coast. I appreciate you being here, Mike. They tell me Congressmen Miller and Foley and Weldon may be here. If you're not here, I can understand—I'm going to give a long speech. [Laughter] If you are here, thank you for your service to the State of Florida and to the country. And finally, they've been a little lax on the immigration laws