

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Anne M. Northup in Louisville September 5, 2002

I want to thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm really honored to have been invited back to Louisville by Anne to help in her reelection effort. She is an incredibly—she is a breath of fresh air in Washington, let me put it to you that way. She's honest. She's open. The thing I love about Anne is her heart. It is as big as Texas. [*Laughter*] She cares deeply about her fellow citizens.

You see, what we need in the political process is people who put the people ahead of partisanship. They put people's concerns and hopes and aspirations ahead of personal success—their own personal success.

See, I love the idea that this is a soul who is willing to work in neighborhoods where somebody might not have ever voted for her. She's not the kind of citizen who said, "Did you vote for me," and therefore, "I'm going to help you." She's the kind of citizen who says, "I'm honored to be in the position I'm in, and what can I do to make Kentucky, and Louisville, Kentucky, as hopeful a place for every citizen?" Anne Northup deserves to be reelected to the United States Congress.

I value her advice. I value her friendship. I value being able to work with her to do what's right for America. I also like the fact that she loves her family. She's got her priorities straight. She loves Woody, and she loves her kids. I love the fact that Anne is an adopted mom. It shows something special about her heart and her willingness to love. I enjoyed meeting her mother and dad. She probably listens to her mother about as much as I do—listen to mine. [*Laughter*] But she is—she's got her priorities straight, her faith and her family and the people of Louisville, Kentucky.

So I want to thank you all for coming to help this good lady. I want to thank you for contributing, and I urge you to

contribute your time. It's—this fundraiser is going to be history in about 30 minutes, or if I keep it shorter than that, about 20 minutes. But now you've got more work to do. And for those of you who are the grassroots activists here in this community, for those of you who help lead our party, I want to thank you for what you have done; I want to thank you for what you are going to do. You need to go to your coffee shops, churches, and community centers and synagogues and pass the word that when you've got a good soul like Anne Northup, citizens need to go out and support her. So, thanks for helping her, and thanks for coming.

I also want to thank a member of my Cabinet, Elaine Chao, for being here. I appreciate her leadership. She's doing a fantastic job, and I'm sure she would like me to mention the fact that she married old Mitch. [*Laughter*] And when you're remembering Anne, don't forget Mitch. He's a good—he's a great United States Senator. We need Mitch McConnell back in the Senate. He's doing a really, really good job for the State of Kentucky. I value his advice as well.

And we were just traveling today from Washington to here earlier with another fine United States Senator, and that's, of course, Jim Bunning. And I appreciate his leadership and his support. I want to thank Ellen Williams. I want to thank State Senate President David Williams. I want to thank the members of the statehouse who are here. I appreciate the fact that Geoff Davis, candidate for the U.S. Kentucky Fourth District, is with us. And Geoff, I appreciate you putting your hat in the ring.

I appreciate all my fellow citizens. We've got some issues we've got to confront here in America, and I want to share some of them with you. A lot of these issues are

going to require having the steady hand of Anne Northup in the Congress.

My job is to make America secure, to strengthen the country, and make it a better place. And starting with making America a better place means we better make sure every child is educated. I don't mean a handful or some in the suburban districts. Every child—I mean every child in America—must be educated in order for America to be a better place. And I want to tell you how—what an influence Anne Northup had in a significant piece of legislation that we passed. It's called the No Child Left Behind legislation.

That bill means what it says: No child, not one child in America left behind. The philosophy of the bill should speak volumes to the people of this district about Anne's mentality. It first starts with understanding that every child can learn. You see, it challenges low expectations or the soft bigotry of low expectations. When you lower the bar, when you expect mediocrity, you tend to get mediocrity. And that's not good enough for our children.

No, this bill says every child can learn. It also says the people who care more about the children in Louisville, Kentucky, are the citizens of Louisville, Kentucky. We believe strongly in local control of schools. We expect the local people to chart the path to excellence for every child—every child—who lives here in Louisville, Kentucky.

But inherent in this bill are two other features that I want to explain to you: One that says, if you believe every child can learn, therefore you want to know if every child is learning. And therefore, in return for a lot of Federal money, we expect every school district in America to teach our children how to read and write and add and subtract, and so we measure. We want to know. We expect there to be accountability. We're willing to ask the question, "Have you succeeded?" And we're also willing to say, "If you haven't, we expect to see something different." We don't want our chil-

dren trapped in schools—we won't be satisfied if our children are trapped in schools that won't teach and won't change.

But Anne's biggest contribution—and I mean, a significant contribution—was to fight for and get funding for a Reading First Initiative. It is a Federal initiative that recognizes all this talk about structuring our schools, all the talk about making sure the public education system is reformed doesn't matter a whit if our children can't read. And so, Anne, working with some of the best experts in the country, calling together the best minds, put in this bill a significant reading program, one that's not only funded for a billion dollars but one that recognizes reading is a science, not an art. We know what works, and we expect the curriculum around America to be in place that teaches every child how to read.

We've got work to do in our economy. There are some people in our country that can't find work, and they want to work, and that means we've got a problem. The foundations for growth are good. Inflation is down. Interest rates are down. Listen, we're the most productive workers in the world. We're really good at what we do in a lot of places. And even though there are some progress, I'm not satisfied. And one of the things I appreciate about Anne is that when we needed to let people have more of their own money to make sure that the economy didn't completely crater—and a matter of fact, to make sure that the growth started—that she joined me in fighting for tax cuts for the American people.

And we need her back up there, because there are some in Washington, DC, who want to take those tax relief plans away, see? There are some who can't stand the thought of letting the people have their money. They get confused about whose money we're talking about. We're not talking about the Government's money. We're talking about the people's money. And the best way to make sure there are jobs available for people who work is to understand,

if you let a person keep more of their own money, they're likely to demand a good or a service. And when they demand a good or a service, somebody is likely to produce a good or a service. And when somebody produces a good or a service, somebody is more likely to find work.

We need to make the tax cuts permanent. We need to make the repeal of the death tax permanent. And Anne understands that. She understands that. That's the kind of mentality we need in Washington.

Washington is a tough and ugly town at times. We saw that today in the United States Senate. I named a really, really fine woman from Texas to one of the appellate benches. This woman was ranked highly qualified by the American Bar Association. She ran statewide in my State of Texas and got over 80 percent of the vote. She's highly respected by Republicans and Democrats. And I named her to a higher bench. And today her nomination was rejected by the United States Senate. A handful of Senators distorted her record. A handful of Senators, acting out of pure politics, did not let this good woman's name go forward. The United States Senate must act in better stead. This is a—treating a fine woman this way is bad for the country; it's bad for our bench. And I don't appreciate it one bit, and neither do the American people.

I also appreciate the fact that Anne understands that the stakes are high for our future, that our country has entered into a new era, that our homeland is a battlefield, and that our most important job as a Government is to protect the American people, is to do everything in our power to keep America safe, is to prevent the enemy from hitting us again. The enemy is still out there. They're people who just hate America; you know, they just do. They hate us because we love—we love freedom. We love our values. We love the fact that our citizens can worship an almighty God freely in America. That's what we love. We

love—we love free speech. We love a free press. We love all aspects of our freedom. And the more we love our freedom, the more they hate us.

And you've got to understand something about these people. They do not value life. In America, every life matters. Every life is important. Every individual counts. The enemy is willing to take innocent life because they hate, and they have no compunction in doing so. These people are people who have hijacked a great religion, distorted its tenets, and they're still out there. And so, therefore, we've got to do a lot here in America to protect our country.

And we're making good progress; we really are. There's a lot of really fine people that are communicating like they've never communicated before, that are sharing information. See, now that we're on alert, now that we know they're there, we're much better about responding. We've got people at all levels of government working overtime to chase down any lead, to make sure that any hint that somebody might do something to us is followed up on.

And that's why I went to Congress, by the way, because this is our priority, to get them to give us a new type of arrangement about how to deal with the new threat of the 21st century. Listen, I promise you I didn't run—or you know I didn't run on, “Vote for me. I want Government to be bigger.” [Laughter] I ran on, “Vote for me. I'll try to make it work better when it's supposed to work.” And one way to make it work better is to collect the agencies involved with the homeland security and put them under one Department of Homeland Security, so that we can make the number one priority of the people that are working hard in these agencies the protection of the homeland, so that we can do a better job of protecting our borders.

We've got three agencies on our borders, INS and Customs and Border Patrol, and they've got different cultures and different strategies. And they ought to be working

seamlessly, to find out who's coming in our country, what they're bringing in our country, and whether they're leaving the country when they say they're going to be leaving the country.

And yet, if the Senate bill goes through on homeland defense, I won't have the capacity to move the right people in the right place at the right time in order to protect our homeland. We won't have the capacity to make this part of the homeland security work seamlessly. I am not going to accept a bill where the Senate micromanages, where the Senate shows they're more interested in special interest in Washington and not interested in the security of the American people.

But the surest way to secure the homeland, the only way to fully secure our homeland, is to chase the killers down, one person at a time, and bring them to justice. And that's what we're going to do. They hide in caves and send young kids to their suicidal death. They don't have formations and flotillas. They're resourceful killers, is what they are. And so they're kind of slithering around, hiding, and trying to find a dark corner to get in. And we're shining the light on them.

It's going to take a while, see? This isn't something that's going to end anytime soon. In order to secure freedom, we must keep them moving, keep disrupting. And that's why I have submitted a defense bill to the Congress which is the biggest increase in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President, because I understand that this isn't going to be a short-term operation. I want to send the signal to our friends and allies that we're not quitting anytime soon. I want to send the signal to our enemy that you have aroused a compassionate and decent and mighty nation, and we're going to hunt you down.

I also asked for the increase because anytime we send our troops into harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training, and the best possible equipment.

The House passed a defense bill, and the Senate passed a defense bill. But since they're different, they've got to get together and reconcile. And so they need to start meeting today. You see, a lot of times in Washington they like to play politics with the defense bill. They like to hold it up. But I want to remind those who think they can play politics with the defense bill, the American people aren't going to stand for it in a time of war. They need to get the defense bill to my desk as soon as possible, so I can sign it.

And we're making good progress on our war. Sometimes you'll know it, and sometimes you won't. Remember, this is a different kind of war. We're having to adjust to the fact that sometimes we'll catch one of these killers, and everybody will know about it. And sometimes you just won't know about it. [Laughter] That's just the way it is.

Anne was right, we are enforcing the doctrines, however. We're enforcing the doctrines of this first war of the 21st century. One of the doctrines is, if you harbor one of these people, you're just as guilty as they are. If you feed a terrorist, harbor a terrorist, hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as those who murdered thousands of innocent citizens on September the 11th. And the Taliban found out what we meant. See, it's important in the world, when you say something, that you do it.

But what was important about that action was not only did we uphold doctrine, but more importantly, we liberated a country. I want you to tell your kids, if they start questioning about the motives of the United States of America, if they start to get concerned about war—and I can understand why they would—you can remind them that this great country went into Afghanistan not to conquer anybody but to liberate people. And thanks to this Nation and our friends and allies, many young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan.

That's the way we think as a nation. We think about peace for our children and other people's children, and we think about liberating people, because every life matters to us, see. Everybody counts. When I say every life matters, I'm not talking about just American lives. I mean every life around the globe. We believe in the value of human life here in America. That's what we hold—we hold that dear to our hearts.

I also laid out a doctrine that says, either you're with us or with the enemy—either with us or with them. And a lot of times the actions that you're reading about are taking place because of friends and allies. I'll give you one example. Gloria Arroyo, the President of the Philippines, hauled in this guy—or actually, brought the guy to justice who was running the Abu Sayyaf* group, which was a group of Al Qaida-type killers that had kidnaped two Americans called the Burnhams and were holding them hostage. They didn't care about their lives. One guy, the dad, lost his life. But slowly but surely—my point to you is that this coalition of nations, which care for freedom and understand the stakes, are making good progress. We're hauling them in—sometimes they're not as lucky as that—but we're after them, one by one. And we're going to stay after them, one by one, until we win.

There are other challenges facing us. See, my job is to not only chase down those who have hit but to anticipate. We're a battleground. We've never been a battleground before; therefore, the stakes have changed. See, if you're not a battleground, if you don't have to worry about your people getting attacked because of vast oceans protecting you, then you can think one way. But September the 11th changed thought here in America. It should, because now we realize the enemy is willing to take the battle here. And they're resourceful.

One of my jobs is to think ahead and to think—is to cause debate, and I started

that yesterday, to encourage the American people to listen to and have a dialog about Iraq. And I meant it when I said that I'm going to consult with Congress. I want there to be an open discussion about the threats that face America. Tomorrow I'm calling leaders in Russia, China, and France to talk about the threats that face us all. I will see Tony Blair on Saturday. I will see Jean Chretien Monday. My point to you is, not only will I consult with Congress and talk to Congress—my administration and I will do so—I will also see many of the leaders of the world and remind them of the facts. The facts are, this is a man who gassed his own people, he's invaded two countries, a person who stiffed the international organization time and time again.

I look forward to the debate. I look forward to the American people understanding the threats we face. But one thing is for certain: I'm not going to change my view, and it's this—and my view is, we cannot let the world's worst leaders blackmail America, threaten America, or hurt America with the world's worst weapons.

I believe—I believe—I believe that good is going to come out of the evil done to America, because I know America. I know the strength of our country. I truly believe that we have an opportunity to achieve peace. These killers hit us, and in their hatred they have given us a chance to achieve peace. If we're tough and strong, if we stay focused on how to achieve peace, if we remind the world in clear terms the difference between good and evil and speak clearly about the two, we can achieve peace. We can achieve peace not only for America; we can achieve peace for the people of Israel and Palestinians. We can achieve peace. I believe it. I believe we can achieve peace in South Asia. No, this enemy, these killers hit America. They, in so doing, created an opportunity to achieve peace.

* White House correction.

They hit us at home, and out of that evil will come some incredible good. America is a compassionate country. The irony of the attacks—the irony of the attacks is that America became a more compassionate place. In the face of the evil, thousands of our citizens understood that in order to fight evil, they needed to do so by doing some good, that you can fight evil by loving your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourselves, that it's the gathering momentum of millions of acts of kindness and compassion which define the true character of America.

And that's happening. You see, the definition of patriotism has changed in America for the better. A patriot is not only somebody who puts their hand on their heart. A patriot is somebody who helps somebody in need. A patriot is somebody who mentors a child. A patriot is somebody who goes to their church or synagogue and mosques and organizes a way to feed those who hunger or house those who need shelter. A patriot is somebody who goes to a shut-in and says, "I love you." A patriot is somebody who knows that somebody can't do everything, but somebody can do something to help America change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

And that's happening. No, out of the evil done to America is coming a new culture, a culture which says each of us are responsible for the decisions we make, a culture which stands in stark contrast to, when I first got into politics, when it said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," here in America and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else." No, there's a new day here in this country. It's a day in which

we understand that there's addiction and hopelessness and despair and that Government can hand out money—and we do a pretty good job of it—but what Government can't do is change people's hearts or put a sense of purpose in people's life. That's done when loving, decent, kind Americans hug a neighbor in need.

So the enemy hit us, and instead of re-treating, instead of filing—only filing a lawsuit, we decided not only to get after them, we decided not only to hold them to account, we decided that we're going to love our neighbor, just like we like to be loved ourself. And America will be a better country for it.

On September the 11th, we'll mourn the loss of life. We'll remember what happened to us. And at the same time, I hope our country doubles our effort to make this land the greatest land on the face of the Earth, a hopeful place for every citizen who's fortunate enough to be a citizen.

Thank you for coming. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Medallion Ballroom at the Seelbach Hilton Louisville. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Northup's husband, Robert Wood "Woody" Northup, and her parents, James and Floy Meagher; Ellen C. Williams, chairman, Republican Party of Kentucky; Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Court Judge for the Fifth District; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.