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Remarks at a Luncheon for Senatorial Candidate Suzanne Haik Terrell in New Orleans, Louisiana

December 3, 2002

Nice to be back in New Orleans, home of a new basketball team, home of a winning football team, and in the State of the next United States Senator, Suzie Terrell.

I'm thrilled to be here amongst a lot of our friends. It seems I've been coming to New Orleans for a long time. [*Laughter*] What a fabulous town. I'm honored to be here on behalf of a great candidate, somebody who represents the values of Louisiana, somebody who has got a record of accomplishment, somebody who is not afraid to speak her mind to the President of the United States—[*laughter*]—but somebody who I know will do a great job on behalf of all of Louisiana.

I'm here to thank you for your support. I'm here to remind the good folks of Louisiana they have a duty to go to the polls on Saturday. In the land of the free, you have an obligation to defend freedom by being a part of our democracy. I don't care whether you're Republican or Democrat or don't give a hoot about a political party; you have an obligation in this country to vote. But I've got a suggestion. [*Laughter*] For the good of Louisiana and for the good of America, Suzie Terrell needs to be the next United States Senator.

She's got a lot going for her. First of all, she's a mother of three fabulous young girls. There they are: Julie, Bebe, and Chrissy. Anybody who can raise three teenage girls—[*laughter*]—you know what I mean. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate her willingness to serve the people, willingness to take the path that a lot of people won't take, and that is offer herself up for office. And she's done a great job in the office that she held. After all, you might remember that the election commissioner's office needed a little housecleaning, needed to have the integrity restored, and Suzie Terrell did it. She saves the taxpayers money.

I need an ally up there who understands, when it comes to spending what they call the Government's money, the Government doesn't own that money. It's not the Government's money that we spend. It's the people's money.

And she's going to have some good hands to work with in the United States Congress from the great State of Louisiana, starting with the chairman, Billy Tauzin. I love working with Billy. He brings good common sense to the Halls of the United States Congress. And I like working with David Vitter from right here in the New Orleans area. David, thank you for being here. And Jim McCrery is with us today, and I appreciate your hard work, Jim. Thanks for coming. And Richard Baker is with us. Where are you, Richard? Baton Rouge. Good to see you, Richard.

I so very much appreciate being here with your Governor. He too gives the President an earful. [*Laughter*] He's not the prettiest Governor in America. [*Laughter*] But he's one of the most effective. He's done a heck of a job for the people of Louisiana.

And I know we've got another Governor here with us—celebrating the Louisiana Purchase, which I'm sure the people of Louisiana agree with me, is a heck of a deal. [*Laughter*] But Frank Keating from Oklahoma is here today as well. Frank, I appreciate you coming. Yes, sir. He probably wants to talk about the OU-Texas game. [*Laughter*]

I'm honored to be up here with Pat Brister and Boysie Bollinger, both of whom are good friends, and both of whom represent the grassroots activists in the State of Louisiana. I'm here to remind you all that—I want to thank you for what you

have done and what you are going to do over the next couple of days, and that is to gather up your buddies and get them to vote, is to man the phones and put up the signs and grab people by the wrists and say, "You owe it to Louisiana to vote for Suzie Terrell for the United States Senate."

I like Suzie's attitude and her tone, the way she wants to go to Washington to get some things done. And we need more of that in Washington, DC. Sometimes, Washington is one of these towns where the person—people who think they've got the sharp elbow is the most effective person, kind of zero-sum politics in Washington: "I win. You lose." That's not the right attitude for the American people. We need a United States Senator from Louisiana whose mission it is to improve the lives, as best we can, of all our citizens.

And we're making some progress in Washington. Slowly but surely, we're changing the tone and getting things done on behalf of the American people. This week, last couple of weeks, I signed some important legislation. I signed the Department of Homeland Security, which will better enable our Federal Government to plan and to protect the American people from further attack. And I want to thank the Members of the Senate and the House who finally came together to get that legislation done.

And I signed a bill on terrorism insurance. It's a bill that will get our hardhats back to working again, a bill that should make it easier for big construction projects to get started so that a lot of hard-working Americans can find work—by the way, a bill which is more favorable to the hardhats than to the trial lawyers in America. It's a good piece of legislation that shows what can happen when people come together to get the people's business done.

Yesterday at the Pentagon, I signed the defense authorization bill, fulfilling a promise that I made—Dick Cheney and I made—that said that we're going to do everything we can to make sure we've got the strongest military in the world. A strong military makes it more likely the world is going to be peaceful. We not only had pay raises for our folks; I can say to those whose families serve in the service, "You're going to have the best training and the best possible equipment when you put on the uniform of the U.S. military."

We're making good progress, but there's a lot of work to be done. And I look forward to working with Senator Terrell. We did some good things in education, but there's more to do. So long as any child can't read, we've got a problem in America. As a matter of fact, the new civil right is to make sure every child can read in America. I look forward to working with a Senator Terrell to make sure we maintain the highest of high standards, to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations.

I look forward to working with Senator Terrell to make sure that we continually pass power out of Washington, DC, because we believe in local control of schools. I look forward to working with Senator Terrell to make sure that in return for Federal money, that we know whether or not our children can read and write and add and subtract. In order to make sure no child gets left behind, we must challenge schools which will not teach and will not change. And I'm confident I have an ally in Senator Suzie Terrell.

We need a Senator who can help break logjams in the United States Senate, particularly when it comes to getting us a good energy bill. I see Billy nodding his head. He's been working on an energy bill. He agrees with me, in this world we need an energy strategy. I mean, face it; we import a lot of energy from overseas. Some of the people we import from don't exactly like us. [*Laughter*] We need an energy plan that encourages conservation and new technologies. We need an energy plan that encourages the development of safe nuclear

power. We need an energy plan that encourages clean-coal technologies. We need an energy plan that encourages environmentally safe exploration for hydrocarbons in the United States of America.

I look forward to working with Senator Terrell to modernize Medicare. Medicare is an aged system which is not adapting to the times. Medicine has changed, but Medicare hasn't. Medicine is modern. There's all kinds of new technologies and prescription drugs which can save lives. But Medicare is stuck in the past. I want to work with Senator Terrell to see to it that we modernize Medicare, making sure we fulfill our promises to our seniors. And a modern Medicare system means prescription drug coverage for our seniors.

I look forward to working with Senator Terrell to make sure the environment for the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We understand the role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish, in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses. And one way the Federal Government can affect job growth is to let people keep more of their own money, is through tax relief.

Tax relief is not a political slogan; it's good economic policy. If a person has more of their own money, they're likely to demand an additional good or a service. And in the marketplace, when somebody demands a good or a service, somebody is likely to produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces the good or a service, somebody in Louisiana or elsewhere in America is going to be able to find work. We passed tax relief at the right time in American economic history, and now I need a Senator to join me in making sure that tax relief is permanent. And there is no question where Suzie Terrell stands on tax relief.

And I need somebody to work with me to make sure that we've got a good judiciary. It's amazing what an election will do. [*Laughter*] For a long period of time, I couldn't get my judges even to have hearings. There's a vacancy gap on our Federal bench—benches—and that's a problem. It's a problem for people who need to have a hearing. It's a problem for people who want justice. And I couldn't get my judges through the Senate because they were playing politics with the people I put up, good, honorable, decent people, people whose job it is not to try to write legislation from the bench, people whose job it is to strictly interpret the United States Constitution. Those are the kind of people I put on the bench.

And Louisiana needs a Senator who will vote for Louisiana values when it comes to the judiciary. And there's no question in my mind that when it comes to having a good, sound judiciary, the right United States Senator is Suzie Terrell from the State of Louisiana.

No, there's a lot of issues we'll be working on, but there's no bigger issue than to win this war against the terrorists. I talked about the homeland security bill I signed, and you just need to know there's a lot of good folks working overtime to protect the American homeland. But the best way to secure the homeland is to chase the killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice. And that's what we're going to do.

It's a different kind of war. In the old days, you could destroy tanks and ships and airplanes, and say you're making progress. This is a different kind of enemy. It's an enemy that hides in caves and sends youngsters to their suicidal deaths. These people do not value innocent life. In America, we say every life is precious; everybody has value; everybody counts. Our enemy we face today murders in the name of a great religion, and they could care less who dies. They're nothing but coldblooded killers, and we're going to treat them that way. It doesn't matter how long it takes; it doesn't matter how deep the cave, the United States of America and our friends

and allies will hunt them down one by one, in the name of freedom.

I cannot imagine what was going through their mind when they hit America. They must have thought we were so soft, so weak, so fragile that after 9/11/ 2001, we might file a lawsuit or two. [*Laughter*] But they're learning something about America that I know, that when it comes to our freedoms, when it comes to the values we hold dear, this United States of America is plenty tough. And that's the way we got to be in this new war of the 21st century.

And we're making progress. You just need to know we're making good progress. After all, this great Nation and our friends liberated a country from one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind by routing the Taliban. We went into Afghanistan not to conquer anybody but to liberate people. And now, thanks to our great country and our great soldiers and our wonderful friends, young girls—many young girls go to school for the first time in a country that has been liberated by the American people.

And we've got more work to do there. And we'll stay there until we rout them out. See, they think they can kind of hide in the countryside there in Afghanistan, and they may be able to hide for a day or two. They may be able to hide for a year. But it doesn't matter how long. See, that's what you just have to know. It just doesn't matter how long; we're going to stay on the hunt. These people are scattered in 60 different countries. They're scattered around, and slowly but surely, we're dismantling their terrorist network—slowly but surely.

The guy who led the U.S.S.—the bombing mastermind, the bombing on the U.S.S. *Cole*, he was the Al Qaida general for the Gulf states. He's not a problem anymore. [*Laughter*] One by one, we're bringing them to justice. That's what we've been called to do. History has put this big spotlight on us, and we're not going to let future generations of Americans down.

And that's why I was so proud to sign this defense appropriation authorization bill. The big increases in defense spending sent a clear message to the world: We're in this deal for the long pull.

And we've also got to recognize here in America times have changed. See, when a lot of us were growing up, we could feel pretty secure by the fact that we had two oceans surrounding us and protecting us from dangers that might be gathering abroad. September the 11th, 2001, completely changed the strategic calculations of this country. The battlefield is here. And therefore, it's incumbent upon the President and the Congress to work together to anticipate gathering dangers before they become acute, before the situation becomes so dire that drastic measures might be needed.

It's very important for us to recognize threats when we see them and deal with them appropriately. After all, the threat gathering in a distant land turns out to be a threat directly on the American people. We've got to be wise about how we view the world and make sure that the new arrangements, the new alliances, aren't allowed to develop, an alliance, for example, where a nation that has weapons of mass destruction uses a shadowy terrorist network as a forward army, perhaps encouraging them to attack America without leaving any fingerprints. You've got to worry about disrupting training facilities.

And that's why I started talking about Iraq and Saddam Hussein, not only starting a debate in the Halls of the United States Congress, which overwhelmingly supported any means necessary to deal with the threat to the United States, but also took the debate to the United Nations and a couple of weeks ago to NATO.

It's important for our fellow Americans to understand that, when we're talking about Saddam Hussein, we're talking about a man who said he has had no weapons of mass destruction, yet we believe has weapons of mass destruction; a man who

has not only had weapons of mass destruction, but he's used weapons of mass destruction. He used weapons of mass destruction on his neighbors, and he used weapons of mass destruction on his own citizens. He's a man who has professed hate to America as well as our friends and allies. He's a man who has got terrorist ties, a man who helps train terrorists. He's a threat, and he's a danger.

I went to the United Nations because I felt like, in a world that required cooperation in this new war of the 21st century, that it was important the United Nations show some backbone, that the United Nations be something other than an empty debating society, that when they issue a resolution, they mean it. And on a 15–0 vote, the United Nations recognized the threat of Saddam Hussein and demanded that he disarm.

I then went to our close Allies in NATO and said the same thing. I said, "This man's a threat. He's a threat to us. He's a threat to you. He too must disarm." And now, as you've seen in your newspapers, inspectors are inside of Iraq. Inspectors are there not to play hide-and-seek with Mr. Saddam Hussein. Inspectors are there to verify the will of the world. And the will of the world says clearly, "Disarm." Saddam Hussein, for the sake of peace, must disarm. And if he refuses to disarm, if he tries to deceive his way out of disarmament, this Nation, along with other willing nations, will disarm Saddam Hussein.

I say that because I believe in peace. I believe this is how you achieve peace, by being strong and resolute, by fighting terrorism and all forms of terror, by not allowing those who hate to try to dictate to those of us who love freedom. See, I believe out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good. Part of the good done to this—part of the evil done to this country is going to help lead the world to peace.

Oh, I know some don't believe that, but I do. I believe that if we remain steadfast and strong, if we remain true to our values, we'll achieve peace, not only peace for ourselves but because we believe every life is precious, everybody matters, everybody has worth. We can achieve peace in parts of the world where they've quit on peace, where people have given up hope.

I also believe here at home we can be a more compassionate country. See, there's people who are hurting in America. Amongst our plenty, there are pockets of despair, of loneliness and hopelessness. There are people when you say, "American Dream," they wonder what the heck does that mean, American Dream? They have no idea about the promise of this country. And my attitude is, so long as some hurt, we all hurt.

And I also recognize the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, and frankly, we do a pretty good job of it sometimes. But what it can't do is put hope in people's hearts or a sense of purpose in people's lives. That's done when a neighbor puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you. What can I do to help?" See, I strongly believe that America is going to change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, because the spirit of this country, a selfless spirit, is alive and well.

There are thousands of people all across New Orleans and Louisiana and all across America who understand the responsibility of being an American. It's more than just making a living. The responsibility of a true patriot is somebody who's willing to serve something greater than themselves, serve their country. And one way to best serve your country is to love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

No, there was tremendous evil done to America, but out of the evil is a new spirit, a vitality of the American spirit, perhaps best represented by the folks on Flight 93. The story, in my judgment, is going to be one of the profound stories of the September the 11th, 2001, tragedy. It captures what I know is the strength of our country.

People were flying across the land, and they heard the airplane they were on was going to be a weapon. Imagine what went through their minds. They eventually got their thoughts together. They called their loved ones and said goodbye and "I love you." History will show that a prayer was said. One guy said, "Let's roll." These citizens took the plane into the ground to save lives, to serve something greater than themselves.

That spirit of America is so strong and so alive, it allows me to boldly predict that out of the evil done to this country is going to come incredible good, not only a peaceful world but a more compassionate and hopeful and decent America for every citizen who's lucky enough to live in this country.

And I can make that prediction with absolute certainty, because I know America. This is the greatest country, full of the most decent people on the face of this Earth. I'm honored you're here. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. M.J. "Mike" Foster of Louisiana; Pat Brister, chairman, Republican Party of Louisiana; Donald "Boysie" Bollinger, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Bollinger Shipyards, Inc.; Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, Al Qaida's chief of operations for the Persian Gulf; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks on Signing the Dot Kids Implementation and Efficiency Act of 2002 and an Exchange With Reporters

December 4, 2002

The President. Good morning. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you for coming.

Legislation I sign today will create a new place on the Internet that is safe for our children to learn and to play and to explore. Dot Kids will be part of the U.S. country domain on the Internet. It will function much like the children's section of a library, where parents feel comfortable allowing their children to browse. It will be a safe place for children to go.

This bill is a wise and necessary step to safeguard our children while they use computers and discover the great possibilities of the Internet. Every site designated ".kids" will be a safe zone for children. The sites will be monitored for content, for safety, and all objectionable material will be removed. Online chat rooms and instant messaging will be prohibited, unless they can be certified as safe. The web sites under this new domain will not connect a child to other online sites outside the child-friendly zone.

I want to thank the supporters of this good piece of legislation. I want to thank them for their hard work: Representatives Shimkus, Upton, and Markey, as well as Senators Ensign, Dorgan and Fitzgerald. I want to thank them for coming. I am going to ask them to come up in just a second as I sign this piece of legislation.

All of us here today share the same goals: We must give our Nation's children every opportunity to grow in knowledge without undermining their character. We must give parents effective tools to help their children learn. And we must be on the side of our parents as they work hard to raise their children. We must give our parents the peace of mind knowing their children are learning in safety. This act of Congress helps us meet these goals.