

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:44 p.m. at Barkley Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Glenna A. Fletcher, wife of gubernatorial candidate Ernie Fletcher.

Remarks in London, Kentucky November 1, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here. I'm honored to be here. Thanks for so many people showing up today. It's a beautiful day to talk about the next Governor of the State of Kentucky.

My only regret is I wasn't here a month ago for the fried chicken festival. [*Laughter*] I appreciate so many folks showing up. It's a good sign, Ernie. It's a good sign people care about their government. It's a good sign that people know they have got a responsibility to vote. I'm here to say as clearly I can, the right person to become the next Governor of the State of Kentucky is Ernie Fletcher.

I want to thank you all for bringing your families. I also want to thank the Bush Volunteer Fire Department for coming. That's a heck of a name you chose. [*Laughter*] I'm proud to share it with you, and thanks for what you do.

I can say without any uncertainty at all that Ernie is the right man to be the Governor. Listen to this: He's a fighter pilot. That says something. And he's a healer. He's a doctor. He's an engineer. He did a fine job in the United States Congress. He's had good experience. He married well—[*laughter*]—just like me. I appreciate Glenna. I appreciate the sacrifices she's making for the people of this great State.

The people of this State must be assured that when they elect somebody to high office, that person will uphold the dignity of that office. You want your kids looking at somebody who—for whom you can be proud. Ernie Fletcher values his faith. He values his family. He understands the responsibilities that you must assume when

you get elected to high office. The right man for the job is Ernie Fletcher.

It's one thing to be listening to the speeches; it's another thing to be doing the work. I'm asking you to go out and turn out the vote. I'm asking you to go to your coffee shops, your farm implement dealers, your community centers, your houses of worship, and remind people they have a duty to vote. In this free land you have a duty to exercise your responsibility. And you might also remind them when they're heading to the polls, he's the right man for the job.

And don't overlook those disgruntled Democrats, either. [*Laughter*] They want good, clean government in Frankfort. There's plenty of independents you can encourage to go vote. This is voter turnout time now. The good people of this part of the State understand what I'm talking about. You go find your neighbors and get them to the polls, and you'll be proud of the job he does on behalf of everybody in this State.

Make sure that you also get them to vote for the Lieutenant Governor. [*Laughter*] It's kind of natural, isn't it? I'm proud of the fact that Ernie picked Steve Pence. He's a good, solid man. See, I picked him first. I don't know if you know this or not, but I named him to be the U.S. Attorney for western Kentucky. I looked long and hard to get the right person to do this important job. Steve Pence was the man. He's not only the man to be the U.S. Attorney; he's the man to become your Lieutenant Governor.

Laura sends her love to the people of eastern Kentucky. She's a fabulous First

Lady. I'm really proud of her. You drew the short straw. You got me. [*Laughter*]

I'm so proud to be on the same platform with two great United States Senators. First, Senator Mitch McConnell—he represents Kentucky really well. He also married well. [*Laughter*] He married so well, I put Elaine, his wife, into the Cabinet. [*Laughter*] I'm proud of the job she's doing for the working people of this country. I'm also proud to be here with Jim and Mary Bunning, two great citizens of this State. It is really important you send him back to the United States Senate in '04.

The truth of the matter is, I'm here because a great friend of my family's said, "Listen, if you want to help Ernie, you make sure you come to London." He said, "If you really want to do some good for this good man, you make sure you come to the heart of my district." I think you know who I'm talking about.

Audience members. [*Applause*]

The President. Yes. A great American, a great friend, a wonderful Congressman from this part of the world, one of the real powers in the Halls of Congress, a man who thinks constantly about the people in this district, and that would be Hal Rogers. It's been a real pleasure to get to know Cynthia as well. I like a man who married a younger woman. [*Laughter*]

I'm also proud to be here with the former Governor, Governor Louie Nunn. I appreciate Governor Nunn being here today as well. Thank you, Louie. Adam Koenig is with us. He's running for the State treasurer, and he wants your vote. You talk about a man who picked a good name running for the commissioner of agriculture—[*laughter*]—Richie Farmer is throwing his hat in the ring, and he wants your help.

I'm proud to be here with my friend David Williams, the president of the State senate. Ellen Williams runs the party here, and Mike Duncan is the national committeeman. And all of you all involved in the grassroots—that means fixing to turn

out the vote; that's what that means to me—thanks for coming. It's been a real joy to be here.

I also want to thank Rebecca Lynn Howard for singing so beautifully for you all.

What's important for a Governor candidate is to have a good agenda, a good platform; you've got to run for a reason. And Ernie is running for the right reason. First of all, he and I share a concern: Anytime any of our citizens who wants to work and can't find a job, it says we've got a problem, and you better get you a Governor here in Kentucky who understands what it means to create the environment so jobs can grow.

You know, when I came into office, the country was in a recession. And then the enemy hit us. And then we found out some of our citizens forgot what it means to be responsible. They didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and their employees. By the way, some of them are finding out what it means to be held accountable.

So I went to the Congress and said, "We've got to be concerned about the fact that people aren't working." But I went with this principle—and Ernie understands this; that's why I'm bringing it up; it's important you have a Governor who understands how to create that environment for job growth and job creation. When a person has more money in his or her pocket, he or she is likely to demand a good or a service. And when you demand a good or a service, somebody is going to produce that good or a service. And when somebody produces that good or a service, somebody is more likely to find a job. The tax relief that Ernie supported strongly came at the right time for the American economy and the American people. When you have more money in your pockets, somebody is more likely to find a job.

In order to make sure that you've got an economy that's strong here in Kentucky, you better make sure you've got a Governor who is wise with the people's money. And

that starts with understanding this principle: In government, we don't spend the government's money; that's your money. We spend the people's money. And Ernie is not going to play politics with your money. He's going to set priorities. He's going to be wise about how to spend the taxpayers' money.

In order to make sure you've got an economy that grows, you better have a legal system that is fair and balanced. Junk lawsuits make it hard to have a State that creates jobs. You need a Governor who's willing to stand up to the plaintiff's bar, somebody who will stand strong and say, "If you need your day in court, you'll have a day in court, but frivolous and junk lawsuits make it hard for people to find work." And frivolous and junk lawsuits make it hard for people to get good, affordable health care. You need medical liability reform in this State.

I used to say in Texas that education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. The top priority of any State is to make sure every child gets a good education. And that's Ernie Fletcher's top priority. Ernie is going to stand with the teachers. Ernie is going to stand with the parents. Most importantly, Ernie is going to stand with the children. He'll challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. He believes every child can learn. He'll raise the standards and insist that our children learn to read and write and add and subtract. You need a Governor who will make sure no child is left behind in the State of Kentucky.

He's right on a lot of the issues. He's running on a good, solid platform. This is a platform, by the way, that's good for Republicans and Democrats and independents. This is a Kentucky platform.

One of the things I like most about his platform is his understanding of the role of faith in our society. The state should never fund the church, and the church should never try to be the state. But in order to heal broken hearts, in order to

address some of the deepest needs of our fellow citizens, whether they be the homeless or the addict or the child who needs special love, we must welcome faith in our society. We must rally the armies of compassion.

I look forward to working with Ernie to make sure the Federal efforts and the State efforts and the local efforts here in Kentucky are well-coordinated when it comes to protecting the homeland. I look forward to working with him to make sure that our first-responders, the brave police and firefighters and emergency management teams, get resources necessary to do the job you expect them to do.

But I also want you to know, and he understands this, that the best way to protect the homeland is to chase the killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice. We must never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. We must understand we have a duty and responsibility to provide security for the people of this country. Therapy is not going to work with that bunch. [*Laughter*] We must be smart. We must be tough. We will not tire. We will not rest until this danger to civilization is removed.

When I came into office, morale in the U.S. military was beginning to suffer, so we increased the defense budget. Ernie Fletcher stood right by my side, making sure our troops, our brave troops, got the best training, the best pay, and the best possible equipment.

But I want you to know, the best way to safeguard America is to work to spread freedom, is to make sure that freedom can take hold around the world. See, free societies don't attack their neighbors. Free societies do not develop weapons of mass terror to blackmail or threaten the world. We understand this—it's very important—that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Lord Almighty's gift to each person in the world.

I'm proud that Ernie stood strong on these tough issues. I'm proud I could count

on him. And you can count on him when he's your Governor. He's a good, honest man. He's a decent man. He's an honorable man. And I'm here to ask you to turn out the vote here, in this important part of the State, and send this man to the statehouse, who will do you a great job.

Thanks for coming. May God bless, and may God bless America.

Remarks in Gulfport, Mississippi November 1, 2003

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I'm proud to be here in southern Mississippi. Thanks for your time. It's a beautiful night to be with the next Governor of the State of Mississippi.

I'm here to say it as plainly as I can say it. The right man to be the Governor of Mississippi is Haley Barbour. We've known each other a long time. Even when he was in high cotton—[laughter]—running with the big shots—[laughter]—he always talked about Mississippi. He loves this State, and he loves the people of Mississippi. I think he's going to be a great Governor because he's going to be the Governor of everybody. He's not going to be the Governor of one political party or another. He's going to represent every single person who's fortunate enough to live in the great State of Mississippi.

He's going to be a fine Governor because he's an optimist. He's got a clear and optimistic and positive vision for this great State. He believes in the potential of the State because he believes in the people of Mississippi. Haley Barbour is a family man, a man of faith. There is no doubt in my mind he is going to be a great Governor of this big State.

Plus, he married well. [Laughter] Marsha is going to be a great first lady. And speaking about great First Ladies, I'm sorry Laura is not with me today. I know it;

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at London-Corbin Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Glenna A. Fletcher, wife of gubernatorial candidate Ernie Fletcher; Cynthia Rogers, wife of Representative Harold "Hal" Rogers; Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao; and country music entertainer Rebecca Lynn Howard.

you got the short straw. [Laughter] But after I shake enough hands, I'm going to head back to Crawford, and I'm going to tell her that there's no doubt in my mind that the people of this great State support Haley Barbour to be the next Governor.

And the definition of support means not only coming out to a big rally like this; it means doing your duty to vote. In our free society, you have a duty and an obligation to go to the polls. I'm asking you to ask your friends and neighbors to go to the polls as well. Don't be afraid to talk to that disenchanted Democrat—[laughter]—or the discerning independent. They want good government too. And Haley Barbour is going to give them good government. Turn out that vote. Work hard to get this man into office.

I'm proud to be onstage as well with your Lieutenant Governor, Amy Tuck. She's a woman of conscience. She made a tough decision. She decided she wanted to be a principled politician. [Laughter] That's what you need. That's what you want in your statehouse. You want a principled Governor, and you want a principled Lieutenant Governor, and you'll have a principled Lieutenant Governor in Amy Tuck.

I appreciate so very much Tricia Lott being here. She's a great friend of mine and Laura's. She married well—[laughter]—Senator Lott, who does a fantastic job