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frontlines that our troops are strong. Morale is high, and our military is confident we will prevail.

Many members of our Armed Forces, Guard, and Reserve observed Thanksgiving in places far from home. In Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, our military is confronting the terrorist enemy so we don't meet that enemy in our own country. They're serving the cause of freedom. They're helping millions of people in newly liberated countries to build lives of dignity and hope. They are protecting the lives and security of the American people. All of us can be grateful to live in a country that has produced such brave men and women who stand between us and the dangers of the world.

This holiday weekend is also a time when many proud military families are also feeling separation and worry. Long deployments in dangerous places have added hardships in military communities across the country. Many parents are dealing with the burdens of raising families while praying for the safe return of a loved one. Our whole Nation respects and appreciates the commitment and sacrifice of our military families.

Americans are also thinking of the military families that must face this holiday with sorrow of recent loss. It is the nature of terrorism that a small number of people can inflict such terrible grief. Every person who dies in the line of duty commands the special gratitude of the American people. And the military families that mourn can know this: Our Nation will not forget their loved ones and the sacrifice they made to protect us all.

The courage of our soldiers and their families show the spirit of this country in great adversity. And many citizens are showing their appreciation by helping military families here at home. Members of the VFW have started an Adopt-A-Unit program, so veterans and their families can support military units in Iraq and Afghanistan. Volunteers from a group called Rebuilding Together have repaired homes for military families while their spouses are deployed.

Citizens interested in finding volunteer opportunities to support our military should visit the USA Freedom Corps web site at usafreedomcorps.gov.

Our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to every member of the United States military and to their families. It was a privilege to offer that gratitude in person to some of our troops serving in Iraq. May God bless them all, and may He continue to bless the United States of America.

Happy Thanksgiving, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:55 a.m. on November 28 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 28 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 a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Dearborn, Michigan
December 1, 2003

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you joining our campaign. You know what this means? It means we're laying the foundation for what is going to be a victory in Michigan and a nationwide victory in '04.

I want to thank you for your help, and I want to thank you for your support. I'm

getting ready, and I'm loosening up. [*Laughter*] But the political season will come in its own time. There will be plenty of time for politics, plenty of time for all the balloon drops and political speeches. See, I've got a job to do. I've got a job to do for everybody who lives in this country. So when you go to your coffee shops and your community centers, you tell them, "The politics will come, but right now the President is working hard to make sure America is secure and strong and prosperous and free."

Laura sends her best. I know, you wish she were here instead of me. I understand. [*Laughter*] She's a fabulous First Lady. I really am a lucky man that she agreed to marry me, and the country, I think, is lucky that she is the First Lady.

I appreciate State campaign chair Candice Miller. I thank her for her introduction. I thank her for her service to this State. I look forward to working with her to carry Michigan. I want to thank Michael, Michael Kojaian, for his leadership as the State finance chairman for Bush-Cheney. I'm honored that Michael has taken on this responsibility.

I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress other than Candice Miller who have shown up today, Congressmen Upton, Camp, Knollenberg, Smith, Rogers, and McCotter. I'm honored they are here. I want to thank you all for coming.

I appreciate Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land for joining us today, as well as Attorney General Mike Cox. I know the speaker is here, Rick Johnson. Mr. Speaker, thank you for coming. And I appreciate all the members of the house and the State senate who have joined us. Go back to your districts and work hard—[*laughter*]—for Bush-Cheney '04.

I want to thank Betsy DeVos and Sharon Wise for taking a leadership position. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the national finance chairman. Mostly I want to thank the activists who are here. You see, you win a campaign not only by helping to raise money; you win a campaign by putting up the signs and licking the envelopes and making the phone calls to turn out the vote. I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch in 2004.

And as you do so, I want you to remind people that during the last 3 years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. You see, I came to this office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. My administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and today they live in freedom.

Three years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. So we increased the defense budgets to prepare for the threat of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill, the strength, and the spirit of the United States military.

Three years ago, the economy was in trouble and a recession was just beginning. And then our country was attacked, and we had corporate scandals and war—all affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and someone is more likely to find a job. So we're returning more money to the people

to help them raise their families, reduce taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment, giving small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions—with all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so that every single citizen has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Figures for the third quarter were recently revised upward to an annual growth rate of 8.2 percent. That's the fastest growth rate in nearly 20 years. Today the purchasing manager's index came out, which shows that our manufacturing sector is getting stronger. It's the highest numbers in nearly 20 years. Productivity is high. Business investment is getting strong. Housing construction is strong. The tax relief we passed is working.

Three years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform; there wasn't much action at the Federal Government. So I acted. I called for and Congress passed, with a solid bipartisan majority, the No Child Left Behind Act. This was the most dramatic education reform in a generation. It said we will spend money at the Federal level, particularly on Title I students, but for the first time, the Federal Government is demanding results, high standards and results. You see, we believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math. We expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. In return for Federal money, we now expect results in every single classroom in America so not one single child is left behind.

During this period, we reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to better protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Michigan's farmers and entrepreneurs and manufacturers. We passed budget agreements to help maintain spending discipline in Washington. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The Congress shares in these achievements. We've done a lot because we've worked together. I appreciate Speaker Hastert and Leader Frist. Again, I want to thank the Members of the U.S. Congress who are here today. See, we're working hard to get rid of the needless politics that tends to dominate the political landscape in Washington, DC, the backbiting and name calling. The best way to do that is to focus on results for the American people, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're delivering for the American people.

And those are the kind of people I've attracted to my administration. A mark of the administration is the capacity of fine, good, honorable people from all walks of life to serve America, and I have done just that. I put together a great group of Americans to serve. This country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother has a second opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 3 years, we have come far. We've done a lot, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of this great Nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society that is prosperous and compassionate so that every citizen has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the tremendous promise of our country. It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

The war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed. We are confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam

holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw the country into chaos by attacking coalition forces and aid workers and innocent Iraqi citizens. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq, in the heart of the Middle East, would be a major defeat for the cause of terror. The coalition of killers—the collection of killers is trying to shake the will of America. America will not be intimidated by a bunch of thugs and assassins. We are aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq. We will defeat them there so we do not have to face them in our own country.

Other nations are helping. They're helping to build a free country in Iraq because they know a free Iraq will make us all more secure. We're standing with the Iraqi people, the brave Iraqi people, as they assume more of their own defense and more of their own self-government. These are not easy tasks, but they are essential tasks. And the United States of America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not develop weapons of mass terror to threaten the world. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. We believe that freedom is the future of every nation. And we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman living in this world.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. And that's why, on the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men, women, and children now suffering with AIDS.

We face challenges here at home. Our actions will prove that we're equal to those challenges. I'm leaving here to go to a small business to talk about the entrepreneurial spirit in America, about the need to create—continue to create a progrowth environment so their businesses, large and small, can remain vibrant and can grow, so that people can find a job.

We're keeping our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. See, for years, seniors have called for a modern Medicare system, one that provides coverage for prescription drugs and a system that gives seniors more choices. Washington listened. Washington didn't do anything. Finally, Washington has acted. I want to thank the House and the Senate for passing a bill I will shortly sign that will modernize the Medicare system and keep a promise to this country's seniors.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care. They therefore affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. I proposed a good bill for the Congress to look at. The House of Representatives passed the bill. The bill is stuck in the United States Senate. The Senators from this State must act on behalf of the American people and support medical liability reform. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need reform now.

I have the responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I've nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. A small group of Senators is willfully obstructing the process. Some appeals court nominees, including four from the great State of Michigan,

four outstanding jurists from this State, are being forced to wait months or even years for an up-or-down vote. The needless delays in the system are harming the administration of justice. They're deeply unfair to the nominees themselves. It is time for some Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

This country needs an energy policy. We need a policy that encourages more conservation and energy efficiency. We need an energy policy which will help modernize the infrastructure, the capacity to deliver much needed power to homes and businesses. We need to explore in environmentally friendly ways for more energy. What we really need is, for the sake of economic security and national security, to become less dependent on foreign sources of power.

A strong and prosperous nation must be a compassionate nation as well. I'm going to continue to advance our agenda of what I call compassionate conservatism, which means we'll apply the most effective, the best, the most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. We'll promote social entrepreneurship all across our country. There's still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform by training and help, so more of our fellow citizens can find work and dignity.

Congress should pass what's called the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their communities and their countries. Both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative. Government can hand out money, can write checks, but it cannot put hope in people's hearts or a sense of purpose in people's lives. Many of the seemingly intractable problems of our society can only be solved through love. And we find love in our houses of worship. We find love where there's faith, faith of all walks of life, faith of all religions. Our Government should not fear faith. We ought to welcome faith in the helping to heal the broken hearts of America.

A compassionate society is one that promotes opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. See, we want more people owning their own home. We have a minority homeownership gap in this country. I've submitted a plan to Congress to help close that gap. We want people owning and controlling their own health care plans, their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning their own small business. You see, we understand that when a person owns something in America, he or she has a vital stake in the future of this country.

A compassionate society is one in which people respect one another, respect their points of view, respect their opinions, respect their religion, and also a society in which people take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture is changing in America from one that 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're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're concerned 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.

The culture of service is strong in America. People are accepting responsibility for the decisions they make. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps. It was a

chance for people to extend a compassionate hand to people in need, and the response has been strong. Our neighborhood healers are vibrant and strong. The armies of compassion are growing all across America. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself in life. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

And in these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 3 years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading 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 country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all. Thank you for coming. Glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land and State Attorney General Mike Cox of Michigan; Rick Johnson, speaker of the Michigan State House of Representatives; Betsy DeVos, Michigan State chairman, and Sharon A. Wise, Michigan national committeewoman, Republican National Committee; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in a Discussion With Employers and Employees at Dynamic Metal Treating, Inc., in Canton, Michigan
December 1, 2003

The President. Loren, thanks for having us. Let me say a couple things before we get started here. First, thanks for coming out to say hello. We're here, obviously, to talk about one of the great strengths of America, which is the entrepreneurial spirit of our country, the small-business men and women who create the new jobs. And we're talking about jobs. And I want to thank you all for being here today to talk about your businesses and/or your personal lives.

Just a couple of things I want to remind our fellow citizens about. We've done a lot; we've overcome a lot, when you think about what this country has been through in a short period of time. First of all, as Loren mentioned, things starting going bad in 2000 for this business. In other words, we were headed into a recession. And that's tough, when there's a recession. That means negative growth. It means businesses, in order to survive, sometimes lay people off, which, worse, means that some of our fellow citizens are looking for work and are having trouble feeding their family.

And then the enemy hit us. Just as things were getting a little better, we got attacked. And let me take a step back. I'm never going to forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. The only way to deal with these coldblooded killers is to stay on the offensive and bring them to justice, which is precisely what America will do.

And then we had some CEOs in corporate America forget what it means to be a responsible citizen. You might remember, right after the attacks, when the great resiliency of America came forth and the country began to recover from this unbelievable period of time, it turned out that we