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scores from 7 percent to 80 percent in places like St. Louis, Missouri, and elsewhere. I want to congratulate you for setting the standard. And keep raising the bar. Make sure that other 20 percent gets up to grade level at third grade—I know you will—and you will have done your duty as educators and Americans to make sure that our children, the very future of the country, have got the capacity to succeed in the greatest land on the face of the Earth.

Thank you all for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Yolanda Moss, principal, and Regina Davis, parent and volunteer, Pierre Laclede Elementary School; Joyce Roberts, executive director, Middle School and Priority School Education, St. Louis Public Schools, and former principal, Pierre Laclede Elementary School; Catherine Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; and Peter Kinder, president pro tempore, Missouri State Senate. He also referred to Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103–382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89–10).

## Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in St. Louis
*January 5, 2004*

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for your warm welcome. I appreciate such a warm response. I appreciate such a huge crowd. It's great to be back here in St. Louis. I don't know if you know this or not, but my grandmother was raised right here in St. Louis. And I've got a lot of relatives here. By the way, if you're looking for a great uncle, model somebody after Bucky Bush.

This record-setting event really means we're laying the foundation for what is going to be a victory in the State of Missouri in November of 2004 and a nationwide victory in 2004. I want to thank all the event organizers. I want to thank those of you who are in the grassroots. I want to thank you for working hard. I want to thank you for what you're going to do.

The political season is going to come in its own time. I admit I'm loosening up—[*laughter*]—and I'm getting ready. But right now, I'm focused on the people's business. See, I have a lot on the agenda. I want you to remind your fellow citizens that I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of all Americans by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

My one regret tonight is that Laura isn't here. She is a fabulous lady. She's a great First Lady for our country. She is a wonderful wife, a great mother, and she's doing a heck of a job on behalf of the American people.

I appreciate so very much Senator Kit Bond's leadership in the United States Senate. I also appreciate a short introduction. [*Laughter*] I also want to thank my friend Senator Jim Talent as well for doing a great job for the people of Missouri. I'm pleased that Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson is with us tonight as well as Kenny Hulshof, two fine Members of the United States Congress from Missouri.

I know the secretary of state is with us, Matt Blunt. Thank you for coming, Matt. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate the speaker coming, Catherine Hanaway, as well as Senate Majority Leader Peter Kinder. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank all the members of the statehouse

for being here and the local officials. I'm so honored you take time to come.

I particularly want to thank my friend Sam Fox, who is the State finance chairman for Bush-Cheney. I'm honored that Sam has taken on such a big role, and I appreciate the hard work of Sam and the team he has put together to make this such a strong and successful event. I call him Foxie. Foxie, thanks for your friendship.

I also appreciate Ann Wagner from the great State of Missouri. She's the cochairman of the Republican National Committee. I'm proud to have her friendship and proud to have her support here as the chairman of the party in Missouri.

I want to thank Ambassador Steve Brauer and his wife, Kimmy. By the way, they did a fabulous job representing our country overseas, and I want to thank them for their hard work at this event.

I know my friend former Senator Jack Danforth is here. I named him to a special mission, to be the envoy to the Sudan, and he has done incredibly good work in that war-ravaged country. I appreciate your service, Jack, and your friendship.

But most of all, I thank you all for coming. It lifts my spirits to see so many people here. It is—it gives me great confidence that we're on the path to victory, to know that I've got such broad support in this important State of Missouri.

In the last 3 years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems instead of passing 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 in 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 now 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 threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Three years ago, the economy was in trouble and a recession was beginning. And then our country was attacked, and we had scandals in corporate America and the march to war, all of which affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

We understand that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows and people are likely to find a job. We are returning more money to the people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We've given small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we are laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so every single person in this country has the chance to realize the American Dream.

Today, the American economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The figures for the third quarter of 2003 show the economy grew at an annual rate of 8.2 percent, the fastest pace in nearly 20 years. Productivity is high. Business investment is rising. Housing construction is expanding. Manufacturing activity is increasing. And we've added 300,000 new jobs over the last 4 months. The tax relief we passed is working.

Three years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't

much action. So I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. See, we believe every child—every child—can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excusemaking are over. We expect results so that not one single child is left behind in America.

We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Missouri's farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs and manufacturers. We passed budget agreements that is helping to maintain much needed spending discipline in Washington, DC.

And last month, we completed the greatest advance in health care coverage for America's seniors since the founding of Medicare. The new Medicare law will give older Americans the option of a prescription drug benefit and more control over their health care so they receive the modern medical care they deserve.

On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people. The United States Congress deserves a lot of credit. I enjoy my relationship with Speaker Denny Hastert and Leader Bill Frist. These are two strong, fine leaders.

I appreciate working with the Members, the Senators from the State of Missouri and the Members of the House of Representatives. We're working hard to change the tone in Washington, DC. There's too much needless politics and endless backbiting, and the best way to change the tone is to focus on results, to be results-oriented people, to deliver progress on behalf of all Americans. And those are the kind of people I've attracted to my administration.

I've put together the finest administration of any President in our Nation's history, good, honorable, decent, hard-working people who have come to Washington, DC, to serve a cause greater than their own self-interest. Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a second opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 3 years, we've come far. We have done a lot, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of a 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 to realize the great 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 all people can be certain they will never again have to fear the rule of Saddam Hussein. The Ba'athist holdouts, largely responsible for the current violence, now know there will be no return to the corrupt power and privilege they once held. All Iraqis who have taken the side of freedom have taken the winning side.

We still face terrorists who would rather go on killing the innocent than accept the rise of liberty in the Middle East. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat for the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying

to shake the will of the United States, but America will never be intimidated by a bunch of assassins and thugs.

We are aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq, defeating them there so we will never have to face them in our own country. We're calling on other nations to help build a free Iraq, because a free Iraq will make the whole world more secure. We're standing with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. These aren't easy tasks, but they're essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

We're working hard to oppose proliferation around the world. Last month, after talks with the United States and Great Britain, Libya voluntarily committed to disclose and dismantle all its weapons of mass destruction programs. Leaders around the world now know weapons of mass destruction do not bring influence or prestige; they bring isolation and unwelcome consequences. And nations who abandon the pursuit of these weapons will find an open path to better relations with the United States of America.

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 threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. I believe that freedom is the future of every nation. And we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is God's gift to every man and woman who lives in this world.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in this world, and when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, this great country is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great, compassionate land is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges here at home, and our actions will prove that we're equal to those challenges. My administration will stay focused on a progrowth agenda until everyone who wants to work can find a job.

And 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 get 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. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. Therefore, medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. The House of Representatives passed a good bill to reform the system. The bill is stuck in the United States Senate. I want to thank the two Missouri Senators for supporting this incredibly important piece of legislation. Other Members of the Senate must understand that no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit in America.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy bill and get it to my desk. This Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation. We must work to develop cleaner technology to help us explore for energy in environmentally

sensitive ways. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, applying the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need.

There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on the Government and become independent through hard work. We must continue to build on the successes of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their communities and their country. Both houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative, so we can better support the armies of compassion, people of all faiths who are willing to lead with their heart and help solve the problems that seem intractable in our society. We need to support those soldiers in the armies of compassion who are mentoring the children, caring for the homeless, and offering hope for the addicted. This Nation must not fear the influence of faith in our society. We must welcome the works of faith in our society.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for every one of us, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. My administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. We have a minority homeownership gap in America. I want to thank the Senate for passing the downpayment assistance plan to help more people afford a new home. We want people owning and managing their own retirement accounts and owning and managing their own health care accounts. We want more people to own their own small business. This administration understands that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of this country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another, respect another person's religion and their point of view. And people take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, 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 dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried 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 are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in the responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving a neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We can see the culture of service and responsibility growing around us. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been incredibly strong. People are serving our Nation by helping somebody who hurts.

You know, the great fabric of America exists at the community level, where civic groups are formed to put—reach out a hand to someone in need. It's really one of the great strengths of our country. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform remind us on a daily basis what it means to sacrifice for something greater than ourselves. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America, and I have 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 our strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift up whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. 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.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. at America's Center. In his remarks, he referred to William H.T. "Bucky" Bush, Missouri State chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt; Catherine Hanaway, speaker, Missouri State House of Representatives; Peter Kinder, president pro tempore, Missouri State Senate; Stephen Brauer, former U.S. Ambassador to Belgium, and his wife, Camilla; former Senator John Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Libya

*January 5, 2004*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Libya emergency is to continue in effect beyond January 7, 2004, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 6, 2003 (68 *Fed. Reg.* 661).

On September 12, 2003, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1506 (UNSCR 1506), ending the U.N. sanctions against Libya. These U.N. sanctions were imposed in 1992 and 1993 as a result of Libyan involvement in the terrorist bombings of Pan Am 103 and UTA 772, and included travel restrictions, an arms embargo, and financial sanctions. The UNSCR 1506 lifted these sanctions after Libya addressed the requirements of the relevant UNSC Resolutions, including making arrangements to compensate the families of the victims and accepting responsibility for the acts of its officials in the bombing of Pan Am 103. The United States abstained from voting on the lifting of the U.N. sanctions, and it made clear that it continued to have serious concerns about other Libyan policies and actions, including Libya's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, Libya's role with regard to terrorism, and Libya's poor human rights record.

On December 19, 2003, Prime Minister Blair and I announced separately that Libya's leader, Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, had agreed to eliminate all elements of Libya's chemical and nuclear weapons program, declare all nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), accept international inspections to ensure Libya's complete adherence to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and sign the IAEA Additional Protocol, accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention, eliminate ballistic missiles beyond 300 kilometer range, and immediately and unconditionally allow inspectors from international organizations to enter Libya. Libya's agreement