

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican City State

June 4, 2004

The President. Your Holiness, thank you very much for receiving Laura and me and our delegation. I bring greetings from our country, where you are respected, admired, and greatly loved.

I also bring a message from my Government that says to you, sir, we will work for human liberty and human dignity, in order to spread peace and compassion, that we appreciate the strong symbol of freedom that you have stood for, and we recognize the power of freedom to change societies and to change the world.

And so, sir, we're honored to be here. Perhaps the best way I can express my country's gratitude to you and our respect to you is to present to you the Medal of Freedom from America. And if you might allow, I'd like to read the citation attached to that honor:

"A devoted servant of God, His Holiness Pope John Paul II has championed the cause of the poor, the weak, the hungry, and the outcast. He has defended the unique dignity of every life and the goodness of all life. Through his faith and moral

conviction, he has given courage to others to be not afraid in overcoming injustice and oppression. His principled stand for peace and freedom has inspired millions and helped to topple communism and tyranny. The United States honors this son of Poland who became the Bishop of Rome and a hero of our time."

And so, on behalf of the American people, Your Holiness, I would be honored if you would accept our Medal of Freedom.

[*The President and the First Lady presented the medal and congratulated Pope John Paul II.*]

Pope John Paul II. I am very grateful, Mr. President, for this thoughtful gesture. May the desire for freedom, peace, a more humane world symbolized by this medal inspire men and women of good will in every time and place.

God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:58 p.m. at the Epistolic Palace. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Worker Reemployment Accounts Legislation

June 4, 2004

I commend the House for passing the "Worker Reemployment Accounts Act," which establishes a pilot program for Personal Reemployment Accounts.

Personal Reemployment Accounts are an important reform in Federal job training, because workers decide how to use the funds to maximize their likelihood of securing a job. A Personal Reemployment

Account gives unemployed Americans additional choices and flexibility to help them return to work more quickly. They can use funds from their account to pay for what they need most to help find a job—special training, childcare, transportation, relocation assistance, or a combination of these. Finally, there is a reemployment bonus that lets workers who return