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make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you are 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 a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved yourself.

I understand the strength of this country is in the hearts and souls of our citizens. I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion so that we can help and heal and change America, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those time. It's a time we need firm resolve and clear vision. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I remember the guys in hardhats screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember working the ropeline and looking in the eyes of a man who had just come out of the rubble searching for a buddy. He said, "Do not let me down."

He took that day personally. All the people at that site took it personally. You took it personally, and I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day trying to figure out how best to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. We're moving our country forward. During the next 4 years, we will spread opportunity and ownership through every corner of this country. During the next 4 years, we'll pass the enduring values of our Nation to another generation. During the next 4 years, we will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled this great State and this great country asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans, if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, we will carry Florida, we will carry America, and I will continue—I will continue to honor my high office.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at the Panama City Marina. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings, and State Attorney General Charlie Crist of Florida; former Representative J.C. Watts, Jr., of Oklahoma; Speaker-designate Allan Bense of the Florida House of Representatives; Bev Kilmer, candidate for Florida's Second Congressional District; entertainer Aaron Tippin; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya.

Remarks in a Discussion at Eclipse Aviation in Albuquerque, New Mexico
August 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm glad you all are here. Thank you all for coming. It's good to be back. Please be seated. Yes, thanks for being here today. It's good to be back——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] It's good to be back in country where people wear cowboy hats.

Thanks for your hospitality. I'm traveling our country asking for the vote. I think you have to go out and ask people for their help and ask people for their support. I've got a reason for running again—I'm going to share some of that with you today. We're going to do it in a little different way. We're going to talk about small businesses. We'll talk about homeownership. We're going to talk about jobs and education, all aimed to let the people know that I have a desire to make sure this country is a stronger country and a better country for everybody—*por todos.*

I want to thank my friend Pete Domenici. You got a good one in Pete Domenici. He's a United States Senator—he's a strong leader for New Mexico. When you're with Pete, all he talks about is New Mexico—[*laughter*]—occasionally works in the United States. [*Laughter*] He loves this State, ever since he was a fire-balling right-hander. [*Laughter*] He's a wonderful man. I'm proud you're here, Pete. Thanks for taking on a leadership role in my campaign.

I'm also proud to be traveling with John McCain. Nothing better than waking up in the country and getting a cup of coffee and getting in the pickup truck and driving around and looking at the cows. That's what John and I did this morning. It's a good way to clear your mind and keep your perspective.

Yesterday, we were in the Panhandle of Florida. We ended our day in Panama City, Florida. There was 22,000 people that came out to say hello. It's—listen, I'm going to tell you what I'm seeing. I'm seeing big crowds; the enthusiasm is high. We're on our way to victory.

There's two people I wish who were here who aren't. One is Heather Wilson. I know she's out working. She's a fantastic lady. You need to put her back in Congress. People of this district are lucky that Heather is your Congresswoman. She's very competent, very smart, very able person who has got a lot of respect—who has earned a lot of respect in Washington.

And the other person who I regret is not here is Laura. [*Applause*] Yes, you do too. You know, she was born and raised right around the corner. I was raised right around the corner; she was born and raised right around the corner. We're right on the other side of the New Mexico border. We've spent a lot of time in this State. This is a State where we don't have to have a tour guide to figure out how to get around. And we don't need to have somebody explain to us how the people of New Mexico think. She's a great First Lady, a great mother, and a wonderful wife. And she sends her best to Pete and all our friends here in New Mexico.

I also want to thank the sheriff—the high sheriff is here, Darren White. It's good to see you, Sheriff. I appreciate you being here. He's sitting next to my friend John Sanchez. John, thanks for taking a leadership role. I want to thank Pat Lyons and Manny Lujan, friends of mine. I appreciate so very much Allen Weh, the chairman of this—the chairman of the party.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. [*Applause*] Yes, there you go. You're the people who are going to get people registered to vote. That's what we're really here to talk about in many ways, is to get people to show up to the polls. I'm confident if we can get a lot of people to vote, we'll carry New Mexico this time—wasn't but about 300 votes last time. [*Laughter*] Too many of our people got the head cold right before the election. This time, we're going to get them out to vote. And I want your help. And remember, there are a lot of Democrats here who like what's going on in Washington, DC—make sure you get those people to the polls. Make sure you get the independents. They understand that this administration is dedicated to keep this country safer and stronger and a better country for everybody.

I met Tom Hesch today. Where are you, Tom? There he is, right there. He's a doc; he's a dentist. Guess what he does? He provides free dental care for people who need help; that's what he does. One of the reasons—I call him a soldier in the army of compassion. You know why I mention Tom, is because the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of citizens like Tom who are willing to reach out to somebody who needs help and says, "Can I help you, brother or sister? What can I do to help your life?" I'm running for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally and encourage the soldiers in that vast army of compassion, so that America can change one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

I understand the limitations of Government. I understand that Government is not a loving organization. [*Laughter*] But Government can stand side by side with loving organizations to help improve the lives of people from all walks of life.

Tom, I want to thank you for being here. Thank you for the example you set.

I'm also running because I want this country of ours to be a stronger country, and by that I mean a country in which people can realize their dreams. And people can better realize their dreams when our economy is strong. Now, we've been through a lot. We've been through a lot in this country. If you really think about what we've been through, it's amazing to say that we're strong and getting stronger. We've been through a recession; that's when things are going backwards.

We've been through an attack. That's when things really shook up the country. It shook our conscience. The attacks of September the 11th affected our economy. Remember, airplanes weren't flying; Wall Street was shut down; banks were closed. I mean, it was a terrible time for our Nation.

We went through corporate scandals. Make no mistake about it, when you've got a system that relies upon trust—in other words, somebody opening up the books, and you trust in what you read—and that trust has been violated by a corporate officer, it affected our economy. It shook our confidence in the system. But we acted. We acted to overcome all these obstacles. We passed tough new corporate reforms. The message ought to be clear to everybody now that if you don't tell the truth, we're coming after you, to keep the trust.

We acted after the enemy attacked us. I'll talk about that a little later. We also acted to help cure the ills of a recession. I believe that when somebody has got more money in their pocket to save or spend or invest, it causes there to be an increase in demand for goods and services, and when there's an increase in demand for goods and services, somebody is going to produce the good or a service. If somebody produces that good or a service, somebody is more likely to find a job.

My whole focus on getting out of this recession was to help the economy grow so people can find work, and we're making progress. We've added 1.5—nearly 1.5 million new jobs since last August. We're a strong economy. If you look at all the major industrialized nations in the world, we're the strongest. That's where we should be.

There's more to do—there's more to do. We're going to talk about the entrepreneurial spirit. See, I don't think the role of Government is to create wealth. I believe the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can soar and is strong, where the strong businesses—you know what that means? You see, in order to keep jobs here at home, that means we better have the best environment for job creation in the world. We want jobs to be here in New Mexico and in Texas and all around the country, like we all do. That means this has got to be the best place to be an employer, which means good tax policy; it means we've got to do something about all these lawsuits, which are threatening the job creators.

We've got to do something on health care costs. I'll tell you what we can do on health care costs. We can take care of our seniors with good Medicare law, which we've done. We can have more community health centers in urban New Mexico and rural New Mexico and the tribal areas of New Mexico to help poor citizens get primary care and take the pressure off our emergency rooms. We can have associated health care—I mean associated health plans, which will allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can have the same purchasing power as large companies do and, therefore, better afford insurance for their employees.

We can continue to promote health savings accounts, which allow individuals and small businesses to put money aside for workers and/or yourself on a tax-free basis, which will help control costs. We can spread new technologies, electronic records for patients, to help wring out the inefficiencies which now exist in the medical system.

And you know what else we need to do in order to make sure health care is available and affordable? Medical liability reform. These lawsuits are making—I'm telling you, the frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and they're driving doctors out of business, and they're hurting our hospitals. And I don't think you can be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We're standing with the patients and the doctors and the small-business owners.

In order to make sure jobs stay here and the economy is strong, we need good trade policy. Let me tell you something about trade. Our economy has been open for goods from overseas. You know why? If you're a customer and you have more choices, you're going to get a better product at a better price. That's how the economy works. The more choices you have as a customer, the more likely it is you're going to get a product that you want at higher quality and better price.

And so Presidents before me from both parties have said let's help the customers of America—the consumers—you. In return, though, other countries have not opened their markets to our products like we have opened our markets to theirs. Good public policy and good trade policy says to places like China and elsewhere, "Open up your markets. Ours are open. You open up yours." We can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace, so long as the rules are fair.

I'm going to talk—I'm going to ask Rudy Gonzalez to stand up. Rudy is a small-business owner. One of the things that—one of the things I love to do is talk to small-business owners, people who have started their own business. Isn't that a fantastic thing to be able to say? Rudy owns his own business. And he started it himself, which is really good. It means that something is going right in the society where people are willing to risk capital to start their own business.

Part of our tax relief plan was aimed directly at the Rudys, the small businesses of the world, because 90 percent of the small businesses are Subchapter S or sole proprietorships. That's legalese for they pay tax at the individual income-tax rate, not corporate tax rate. And so when you hear us saying we're—reduce the income tax, the individual income taxes, think about Rudy. Think about his business.

Rudy, when did you start your company?

Rudy Gonzalez. Well, Mr. President, first of all, thank you for inviting me. I started my company back in 1997. And I'm a first-generation Hispanic. My parents were born in Mexico. They came over to this country because, just like you, Mr. President, they have three fundamental values: a belief in a higher power; a belief in the family as the best institution to secure our future; and a belief that if you work hard and

you apply yourself, in the United States you can get anywhere you want to be.

The President. That's great. *Fe, familia, y esperanza—fe, familia, y esperanza.* Exactly right. What does your business do? In case somebody might be listening. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, Mr. Gonzalez made brief remarks.*]

The President. Actually, let me stop you for a minute. I appreciate the credit. No, you did it, see. They wouldn't be giving you a contract if you couldn't do the job. You've got to be able to do the job. And if you can't do the job, then you shouldn't be given the contract. But you can do the job. You're good at what you do. Thanks for the credit. I don't deserve it, you do.

Let me ask you this question: How many people have you hired this year?

Mr. Gonzalez. Well, I'd like to go back a little bit. When I started off—you were right, I started by myself in 1997. Today, we have approximately 65 employees. This year—we've grown every single year since 2001. This year, we added 20 new employees.

The President. That's good. Let me stop you there. Let me stop you. A lot of the job growth is happening because companies like Rudy are expanding their job base. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. It's important for the American people to understand that. And so you're seeing Rudy hires 20 here, and somebody else hires 20 there, and it begins to add up. People are working in the small-business sector. That's why we've got to make sure small businesses have got affordable health care. And that's why we've got to make sure tax policy does not harm small businesses.

Are you making investments this year?

Mr. Gonzalez. Yes, sir, I sure am.

The President. What will you be buying? [*Laughter*] Just in case there's a seller here. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Gonzalez. You can talk to my friend Ken over there because this year, he sold us four vehicles.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] The only reason I ask is that people have got to understand when you hear the tax relief encouraged investment, investment means you're purchasing something, and somebody has to make that which you purchase and sell that which you purchase. And that's how the economy works. There's a million decisionmakers, or more than that, like Rudy who are out saying the Tax Code encourages me to buy something, and as that purchasing takes place, it adds economic vitality and growth.

Rudy is an S corp. That means he pays tax at the individual income-tax rate. And so when you hear my opponent talking about taxing the rich—that means running up the rate, the high rates—he's really taxing small businesses. See, they put out $2.2 trillion of new spending promises. He hasn't even got to September yet, by the way. [*Laughter*] And he says he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That means that S corps that are doing okay are going to pay higher taxes. We don't need to be taking money out of the small-business coffers as this economy is beginning to grow. If most new jobs are created by small businesses, and most small businesses are Subchapter S or sole proprietorships, it makes no sense to run up the taxes on these people as this economy is beginning to grow.

You know what else I think? You know what else I think when they say "tax the rich"? Most rich people are able to avoid taxes, and if you can't raise enough money from taxing the rich, guess who pays the taxes?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, you do. But we're not going to let him. That's what this campaign is about, to make sure we've got good tax policy.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. All right, Rudy. Go ahead.

[*Mr. Gonzalez made further remarks.*]

The President. Fabulous. See, that's what he's talking about. The tax relief encouraged him to make this investment.

Good job, Rudy. Thanks for coming. Appreciate it. Thanks. Good job.

We've got another entrepreneur with us, Vern Raburn. He is the—so here's a guy who said, "I can build a better airplane." That's what you call a grand vision. [*Laughter*]

Why don't you tell the folks about your company.

[*Vern Raburn made brief remarks.*]

The President. McCain and I will fly the first one. [*Laughter*] So how's it going? I mean, this is—this is——

Mr. Raburn. Things are going great.

The President. You've hired since I saw you last, 4 years ago, how many?

Mr. Raburn. Well, 4 years ago, at this time, we had about 18 employees. We have 342 employees now.

The President. That's good. And like what skill level is required—skill level of the worker?

Mr. Raburn. Skill levels—we have very high skill level. Most of our workforce today are engineers, manufacturing folks, white-collar workers. In fact, our average salary of each of our employees is about twice that of the average family income in New Mexico.

The President. Yes, let me stop you there. One of the real challenges we have in our country to make sure jobs stay here is to educate people, is to make sure the education system works. You just heard what—it's a new business, new business. He says that we pay twice as much as the average income, but we require high-level skills. You know what that says to me? It says to me that we've got to make sure No Child Left Behind works. We've got to make sure we keep raising the bar, make sure the young kids can read and write and add and subtract early, before it's too late. We've got to make sure our community colleges are able to train workers for the jobs of the 21st century, so that Eclipse can find a workforce necessary to make this company fly.

So when are we going to see the first unit take off?

Mr. Raburn. Well, we'll be flying again late this year, and we expect to have the aircraft certified in early '06, March of '06. Today we've got orders for about 2,200 airplanes, about $2.5 billion in back—[*applause*].

The President. That's good.

Mr. Raburn. Good problem.

The President. Yes. Well, Vern's pulling to make sure this economy stays strong. Any of them overseas?

Mr. Raburn. A lot of those are overseas.

The President. Let me tell you something. See, if we get into a mode where we become economic isolationists, he won't be able to sell these airplanes overseas. We don't need trade wars. He wants to be able to sell this product overseas without having to compete with government bureaucracies and unnecessary tariffs and restrictions. That's why we believe in fair trade and open trade.

You got workers here who are going to be working because you've got planes being sold overseas. So when you hear them talk about trade, you need to be thinking about jobs. Jobs exist when you're able to trade overseas. You've got some farmers in this State, don't you? [*Laughter*] Yes, the farm economy is strong around the country. You know why? Because not only are we feeding our own people, we're feeding other people. Other people are eating our corn and our soybeans and our wheat, because we're opening up markets—still working to get that New Mexico cattle around the world. Open up markets for the Mexican cattlemen—and Texas cattlemen too, I want you to know. [*Laughter*]

So what else? What else is on your mind, Vern? You get the chance to tell the President something. [*Laughter*] By the way, I guarantee he's a big believer in tort reform.

[*Laughter*] A lot of airline companies, a lot of manufacturers in the past got shut down because of all kinds of lawsuits. And these lawsuits—we want good justice in America, but when the trial bar converts the law into a legal lottery, it begins to affect jobs. You just got to know that. It's one thing to have justice; it's another thing to go overboard with justice, because people start to lose work. I don't know what your opinion is——

Mr. Raburn. I agree. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. See, you'd think I was a lawyer. I'm not.

[*Mr. Raburn made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, that's strong. See, this is a vibrant company. And I'm excited to be here. I want to thank you for inviting us. He's got a newly-hired employee named Vernon Oliver. Where's Vern? There he is. Hi, Vern. Welcome. So what happens to you? So how do you end up here in the airplane manufacturing world?

[*Vernon Oliver made brief remarks.*]

The President. What Vernon is telling you is, is that since 9/11, things have changed. People are getting their confidence; jobs are coming back; and in his case, he had the skill levels necessary to fill the jobs.

Yesterday, we were in Florida, and we talked to some people that needed to go back to community colleges, but we were happy to help them go back to community colleges. There's all kinds of plans, trade adjustment assistance, and NAFTA-related job loss. People who then can get a scholarship or get direct grants to go back and retrain for the jobs which actually exist. This fellow didn't need to be retrained. He just showed up, and they wanted him. And he saved $3,000 in taxes last year. And he's going to save $3,000 this year.

Remember, we not only reduced income taxes on everybody who pays taxes, but we helped people with children by raising the child credit to $1,000; and we reduced the marriage penalty; we created a 10-percent bracket. In other words, we said we're going to help families. And this family right here has got $3,000 in relief—I think that's right—you probably can say, "Mind your own business, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Oliver. No, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. But if the tax relief is not made permanent, his taxes go up by $1,200. See, I believe Government can set priorities and fund our priorities and that after the priorities are funded the people can spend that money better than the Government can spend it. That's what I believe. And I like the fact that Vernon's got $3,000 additional of his own money in his pocket. It's his money to begin with, of course, and so he has it.

Well, thanks for coming, Vernon.

And Guy is with you as well, Guy Hoisington. All right. He's a newly hired guy. Tell us, Guy.

[*Guy Hoisington made brief remarks.*]

The President. Here's a guy who tried out the promised land for a while—that would be Texas—[*laughter*]—changed his mind, came home to the other—to the enchanted land, and is working because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. He's able to more realize his dream, which is to raise your family here. So the job of government is to help when needed. The tax relief helps his family. I suspect it helped him move. I think it—I know it helps him raise his family.

Mr. Oliver. Yes, Vern helped me move, too.

The President. He helped? That's good. [*Laughter*] You must be good at what you do.

Mr. Oliver. Yes, sir.

The President. That's good. That's real good. [*Laughter*] But the point is—that what I'm trying to tell you is, is that when the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, when people like Vern feel comfortable about taking a risk and expanding and growing, people can find work. That's what we want

in America. We want people to find work. We want people to be comfortable with their lives as best as they can.

You know, we can't make you decide to be somebody, but we can help you. We can help educate your children, to make sure they're educated. We can provide tax relief so that you're more comfortable and confident in tough times and also to help this economy grow. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about the proper role of Government. We're talking about how to make sure Government stands side by side with moms and dads and entrepreneurs and workers.

One of the—one of my goals is to continue to push an ownership society in America. First-generation American says, "I own my own business." I just think those are wonderful words. I like the idea of health accounts where people own them and manage them so that the principal decisionmakers for health care are doctors and patients, not bureaucrats.

I see some younger faces here, and Social Security—the solvency of Social Security is an issue for future generations. McCain, Domenici, and I are in good shape—[*laughter*]—at least our age group. But when you start looking at younger workers, down there in the thirties and twenties, there's a question of whether or not Social Security is going to be around. And therefore, we need to explore with Congress the idea of personal savings accounts for younger workers—their option—so Social Security exists.

And finally, one of the great promises of this country is homeownership. There's something—the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. More minorities are owning their homes than ever before. In other words, we got more people opening their door and saying, "Welcome to my home." Those are magical words, aren't they? I think a healthy society is one in which people own something. If you own something, you have a stake in the future of your country.

Today we've got Debra and Arnold Reano. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here. First of all, I want you to know Debra's birthday is today. Happy birthday. Arnold whispered in my ear when we were coming out. Secondly, see the beautiful jewelry she's wearing and he's wearing—they made it. They're artisans. That's a tradition of New Mexico, where people are really skilled at making beautiful jewelry. Thanks for mine. I told Debra that I'm going to play like I bought it for Laura. [*Laughter*] No, I'm not. No, I wouldn't do that. Because she's probably watching on C–SPAN. [*Laughter*]

You all just bought a home.

[*Mr. Reano made brief remarks.*]

The President. What he's talking about is the Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program, which is a way to encourage homeownership in tribal areas. And it's working. That's what we want, isn't it? Doesn't it make sense to have public policy aimed at helping people own their own home? I can't think of a better use of resources. It's working.

[*Mr. Reano made further remarks.*]

The President. By the way, this couple saved $3,200 in Federal income taxes last year. Tax relief helps all kinds of people.

Good. Listen, I appreciate you coming. I asked them to come—we asked them to come because homeownership is valid for everybody. We want people owning their own home all across the country—every corner of America, we want people to put out that welcome mat, "Welcome to my home." And it's happening. I think one of the most positive things that's happening in the country is there's more minority small-business owners in America and more people from all walks of life owning their own home.

Thank you all for coming. It's good to see your girls too—beautiful girls.

One way to make sure the economy continues to grow is to keep the country safe.

That's a charge we've been given. Nobody wants to be a war President, but an enemy which had been planning for a long time struck us. And we must never forget the lessons of that day. I'm going to give you three quick lessons. As fellow citizens, it's important to know—for you to know that I know the stakes and that I know the realities of the world in which we live.

Lesson one is there's an enemy out there which hates us because of what we believe. And you cannot negotiate with them. You cannot talk sense into them. It's hard for the American conscience to understand the nature of these people, but they behead people because they know we've got hearts and we know we weep. They know we value human life and human dignity. And they're trying to shake our will. And the only way to deal with these folks is to bring them to justice.

Second lesson, which we'll do this year and we'll do over the next 4 years—we must bring them to justice in places where they hide and plot so we do not have to face them here at home. That's the reality of the world, is that this is a different kind of enemy—a different kind of enemy. These are people that will hide in caves, and they will seek safe haven. Their ideal situation is where they can find a weak government that fears them or likes them and lets them hide and lets them burrow in the—in their countryside or in their cities.

And so, the second lesson is that we need to send clear messages, strong messages to countries around the world that say if you harbor a terrorist—in other words, if you provide safe haven for these people, if you allow them to arm up and plot and plan and train, you will be held to account just like the terrorists will be.

And that explains our Afghanistan policy. And that explains why we took action we did in Afghanistan. We said to the Taliban, "Get rid of these people. Turn them over, or face consequences." And by the way, if America says something, it must be easy to understand, and you must mean it. In order—if we're uncertain or if we doublespeak, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's the reality of the world in which we live. It's a lesson that we must remember.

By the way, on Afghanistan, it is—there's still hard work there. But think about what's happened in a very quick period of time. Think about this. There is going to be a Presidential election in a country that was ruled by this barbaric regime, so barbaric that many young girls never got to go to school and their mothers were publicly whipped. That's barbaric. And now they're going to have a Presidential election. Over 8 million people are registered to vote. And here I'm going around the country saying, "Please register to vote, and vote"—these people, when given a chance, are showing up in big numbers, in spite of the fact that some of these thugs are trying to stop them from going to the ballot box.

I was in Cleveland, Ohio, kicking off the International Children's Game, and standing in front of me was the Afghan girls soccer team. I'm telling you, I wish—it was—there wasn't a dry eye in my house. It's unbelievable to think that in a very short period of time, people are liberated. Free countries are peaceful countries. The world is better off, and America is more safe. The third lesson of—because Afghanistan is free.

The third lesson is, when we see a threat, we must take it seriously before it fully materializes. That's a serious lesson of September the 11th. You see, it's a different kind of war—it's a different kind of war. We cannot hope for the best anymore. In the old days, we could, because we thought oceans would protect us. It wasn't all that long ago that we thought we were safe from harm's way. And all of a sudden, on that fateful day, the world changed. And these lessons are serious lessons, because we're talking about the most solemn duty

of a government, and it's to protect the people. We must take threats seriously.

And so, that begins to explain to you why I made the decision I made. Senators McCain and Domenici came to the same conclusion I did, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And I want you to remember, he was a threat because he behaved like a threat. He had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He had terrorist ties. There was terrorist organizations in and out of Iraq over time. He had defied the world, I think 17 resolutions. In other words, imagine a world saying, "Okay, we're only going to tell you one more time." [*Laughter*] "This is the 16th time we're going to tell you. Cough them up, get rid of your ability to make weapons, get rid of what you even have, or face serious consequences." And if you say it 17 times and nothing happens, pretty soon you embolden somebody whose instincts were dark and dim.

This is a person who tortured his own people. There were mass graves. He invaded his neighbors. We had been to war with him before. He was shooting at our pilots that were enforcing—he was a threat. And so I went to the Congress and said to the Congress, "Gosh, we've got a threat here, and the world has changed." By far the vast majority of Members of Congress—from both political parties—they took a good look at the intelligence. They looked at what I was looking at. We all came to the same conclusion, including my opponent. He looked at that intelligence—[*applause*].

And then the U.N. looked at it and said, again, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." And they said, but—the world said we work in diplomacy then, which is wise to do. And they said, "Gosh, let's let the inspectors work." So, okay. It seems to make sense, doesn't it, let the inspectors in. But guess what? They were being deceived, systematically deceived by Saddam Hussein. He wasn't—he was doing all kinds of things to prevent them from finding out the truth.

So I had a choice; Tony Blair had a choice; Silvio Berlusconi had a choice; Aleksander Kwasniewski had a choice; John Howard had a choice. And that is, hope for the best, forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman, or take action to defend our country. You've just got to know, folks, given that choice, I will defend us every time.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. A couple other points I want to make—let me make a couple of points, and I'll answer some questions if you have some.

First, when we put troops in harm's way, they will have our Government's support. A lot of folks in this town—you got relatives in the military; you've been in the military yourself. This is a—this is what I believe. This is what Pete believes. This is what John believes. We believe—and a lot of others in Washington do too. That's why I asked for an $87 billion supplemental last September to make sure our troops had what they needed: spare parts, body armor, fuel, support. A difference in this campaign is that my opponent voted against the supplemental funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He has said on the TV shows, before the vote came up, there's no excuse for not supporting the troops. And then when he was asked why he didn't ask for it, he said, well, he actually did vote for it, right before he voted against it. [*Laughter*] It's—and then he said it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat. They need—the troops need our support.

I want to make two other points, and then I'll answer questions. The other day, he was asked on a—by a TV reporter or a newspaper reporter, what about the troops? And he said he's going to substantially reduce the number of troops six

months after he's the President. Now, let me—listen, we all want the mission to be completed as quickly as possible. But we want the mission to be completed.

Secondly, the mission is not going to be completed as quickly as possible if the enemy thinks that we're going to be removing a substantial number of troops in six months. Thirdly, the person—the people that should be making the recommendations as to whether or not the mission is nearly completed so that we can relieve troops are the commanders on the ground. That's who ought to be making the recommendations. I know what I'm doing when it comes to winning this war. And I'm not going to be sending mixed signals.

Now, the other thing I want to tell you about is, when people say, "What is—what are you trying to accomplish, what is America trying to accomplish," what we're going to accomplish is a free society in the heart of a part of the world where people are desperate for freedom. See, this is a historic moment in world history, I think, because freedom has got the capacity to change people's lives in a positive way. America stands for peace, and we understand that the best way to achieve peace is to spread freedom, because free societies listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. The best way to defeat resentment is to spread freedom and hope. You can't have a hopeful society if you've got tyranny looming over you. You can't have a hopeful society if you're not allowed to express your opinion or worship freely.

So that's what you're seeing. We're seeing the short-term actions of our Government are to protect us. That's why we're using force, to protect us. The long-term solution is to spread liberty.

I was having dinner with Koizumi, who is the Prime Minister of Japan, and we were talking about how to keep the peace in North Korea. Think about what—think about that for a second, the American President and the Prime Minister of Japan, former enemies—countries were former enemies. Maybe some of you here in the audience were fighting the Japanese in World War II. His dad was, and my dad was, and I bet a lot of other dads were as well. And here we are now, sitting down at the same table, talking about peace with a former—and you know why I was able to do so and other Presidents were able to do so, is because after World War II, we believed so strongly in liberty that we worked with the Japanese to develop a society that was self-governing, that believed that—based upon the principles of human dignity and human rights and human freedom.

Now, there were skeptics who said, "No, it's too hard to work. We've been at it for too long. This country can't self-govern." But fortunately, predecessors believed so strongly in the ability of liberty to change the habits of citizens for the good that they stuck to their guns, and now I'm talking to Koizumi about the peace. Someday, an American President is going to sit down with an elected Iraqi leader and they're going to say, "Thank God old Bush, McCain, and Domenici believed in freedom. Thank God the American people listen to the skeptics, rejected pessimistic thought, and said, 'Let's complete the mission.' "

Freedom is going to change the world. Freedom—and you know what else freedom does? It validates what we believe in our hearts. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Let me—[*applause*]—thank you all. Let me answer some questions while we've got time. Thanks for giving me a chance to talk. Now, I'll give you a chance to answer some questions. We're here for a little bit, and then John and I are heading west. We're going out to Phoenix, and then I'm off to Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Iowa. I want to win. I'm willing to work.

All right, who's got a question? You've got one?

Support for the President/Stem Cell Research

Q. First I want to make a prediction.

The President. Okay, thank you.

Q. President Bush is going to win by a landslide.

The President. Okay, we can leave it there if you like.

Q. Number two——

The President. How about we work as if it's going to be close. [*Laughter*]

Q. Number two, I respect your position on human life and your demand for abortion. I respect it.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And I thank you every moment. You're the top President when it comes to us speaking out for life. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Yes, sir—thank you, sir. I hope you're a good prognosticator. [*Laughter*]

Q. First, I agree with him. I hope we see you in a landslide.

The President. Let's just win the thing. [*Laughter*] Let's just win it. Thank you, though.

Q. First of all, let me say it's an honor to speak to you. It's an honor every day when I get to pray for you as President.

The President. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Q. I just—I wanted to say that. I wanted to agree with him—your stand for life, for stem cells. We do not need to be doing research with fetal stem cells. And I appreciate that. Could I ask you two more questions?

The President. Sure, go ahead. Ask them.

Q. Real short.

The President. Okay. You haven't asked one yet. But go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. Can I introduce my mother and mother-in-law who are new citizens to this country?

The President. That's a very interesting move by the guy. [*Laughter*] He's got the President standing here, and he wants me to meet the mother-in-law. [*Laughter*] Strong move. Absolutely. And the mother—yes. Fantastic. Is this the mom-in-law?

Q. This is my mother-in-law.

The President. Where are you from, mom-in-law?

Q. Okinawa.

The President. Fantastic. New citizen?

Q. Yes.

The President. This year?

Q. Two years.

The President. Two years ago. So this is your first Presidential election?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. Welcome—welcome. There's a long tradition in America that you only vote for the person who looks you in the eye and asks. Just kidding. And where's mom? Oh, hi, mom. Strong move. That's very good, yes. Are you listening to your mother?

Q. I do.

The President. I listen to mine too. In my case, I don't have much choice. In my case.

Let me talk about stem cells real quick. There had been no research on stem cells prior to my arrival. I said that stem cell lines which had already existed prior to a certain date ought to be allowed to receive Federal money to research, and from that point forward, that we ought to make sure we deal with science and ethics in a very balanced way. And so we're just beginning to understand embryonic stem cell research. We're also, by the way, spending research dollars on adult stem cell research, and we're also spending it on fetal tissue.

And so, what we're—what I'm saying to you is, is that I think my administration has struck a proper balance between science and ethics. I think we have done a very good job about exploring that which is possible without stepping over a line that we may come to regret later on. And so I assembled a panel of experts, ethicists,

to help me better understand this very vital issue.

Listen, we—I'm sure you've heard from folks with juvenile—got a child with juvenile diabetes. I certainly have. And I care deeply about the families who are wondering whether or not we can do more to help solve their child's problems. It's sad, and I know these Senators have heard from those with juvenile diabetes. And the policies I made were, on the one hand, trying to help as best as we can move science forward and, at the same time, keep an ethical balance so that we promote a culture of life. And the decision I made, in my judgment, is the right decision. And it's one that respects the value of life and, on the other hand, is one that says, hopefully science can use these existing stem cell lines, of which I think there's going to be 23 which are viable and vibrant, and they're just beginning to look at them to help come up with cures that we all want to have happen—we all want—we want human—we want these young kids with—that have been affected by juvenile diabetes to better survive. That's what we want. But thank you for bringing up the subject.

Any—yes, sir, here's a man right here. First of all, he's one of my—he's cheering really loud. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

Opportunities for the Disabled

Q. Thank you, President Bush, and I just want to say it's a honor to speak to you today. And you probably already touched on this question, but seeing as I'm a disabled person myself—I'm 20 years old and going to college in the great State of—well, I live in the great State of New Mexico, but I also go to college in the great State of Texas. [*Laughter*] And I'm——

The President. Where you going, by the way? Excuse me for interrupting, but where are you going?

Q. McMurray University in Abilene.

The President. Oh, yes. Abilene, Texas.

Q. Yes, sir. And my current major is political science, and I'm just curious——

The President. I better give you some counseling before it's too late. No, go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. How can we, as a team—and I understand people ask you for help, but how can we, as a team, be ensured that other people that are disabled can be a part of the big business or small business, to help bring jobs for the people of this country?

The President. Yes, absolutely. I appreciate that very much. One of the great advances of our era is technology. There's fantastic technological opportunities for the visually-impaired to be able to have a computer that speaks to them. I don't know if you've been involved with that or not. You have?

Q. Yes, sir, I have a—it's called a braille note, and it has a braille display. And I also have a thing on my computer—it's called Jaws for Windows—that gets on and reads the screen to me whenever I get on the Internet.

The President. See, that's coming. So one thing we can do is help members of our community who need this kind of program. We can help them with financial aid to buy them. I mean, this is equally as important as going to college, is to have the opportunity—listen, the role of Government is to help people help themselves. And we're talking about helping this guy with—we're helping him realize his dreams. There are touch computers where, if you're disabled without the ability—and you can't use your hands, there are new computers and new ability to be able to turn a computer on and log on and surf the Net, and that technology is now more available.

What I'm telling you is, to answer your question, is to make sure technologies are more readily available and we help people afford them as they come on the market. And it's going to change people's lives for the better. Again, we want everybody to be able to participate in this experience called America. And we want people to be able to realize their dreams, no matter their condition, or no matter whether they're

first generation or 800th generation—18th or how ever many generations there have been, and that's what we want.

So I appreciate your question, sir. Thank you.

Q. And I just want to say thank you so much, and I'm really proud of what you're doing and what America's doing, because—and I want to thank my mom and my parents, because I'm the only blind people—or blind person in my family, and I'm excited to graduate and go to college and be part of that small business.

The President. Congratulations.

Let's see, all right, man in a cowboy hat. Yes, we've got to try the cowboy hat. You're next.

Support for the President/Veterans Benefits

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. I'm a retired Navy, 20 years. I flew the S–3, the same that you came aboard in the *Lincoln*.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. Four tours in Vietnam, and all I can say is thank God we finally have a Commander in Chief.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Let me say something. You've got a lot of veterans in this State. People have served their country in this State, and I want to thank you for your service. And I thank you for setting such a good example for the——

Audience member. Hooah!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] For the hooahs of the world. But thank—[*laughter*]—thank you for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniform. I'm going to the VFW Convention on Monday. I'm looking forward to going. I've got something to say. I've got something to say about how we've worked together to make sure we've honored our vets with good, strong health care. I made some promises to the VFW in 2000. I'm going to go back and remind them of the promises I made and remind them of the promises we have kept. And that's what we owe our veterans.

Yes, ma'am. There you go. No, I said—yes, ma'am. Sorry. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You bet. Crank that thing up.

Domestic Violence

Q. Mr. President, I would like to know what your administration has done to help women and children in domestic violence situations.

The President. Well, we've said to the Justice Department, work with States to make sure that the States have got the resources necessary to bring people to justice. That's what States are supposed to do, supposed to—States are supposed to pass laws that make it easier for law enforcement to be able to do its job when it comes to domestic violence.

And when I was the Governor of Texas, we made it easier for an abused spouse to be able to call her spouse into account without facing retribution. We had notification laws when a spouse was released from jail. In other words, we stood on the side of the abused person. We had the law stand side by side with the person, as opposed to making the environment such that many people were afraid to turn in an abusive spouse and, two, if the abusive spouse had been punished, they were afraid of the consequences after the spouse had been out.

This is—the truth of the matter is most good policy—or policy is made at the State level under State laws. And what the Federal Government can do, the Federal Government can help on grantmaking to help States with those type of laws.

Q. And what about the Family Justice Center Initiative? Didn't you announce that last year?

The President. The family——

Q. The pilot program—$21 million?

The President. Oh, I did, so thanks for reminding me. [*Laughter*] How quickly we forget. It was a loaded question, wasn't it?

Let me ask you something. U.S. Marine Corps mom—is that what that means? You have a son in the Marine Corps? I know you didn't want to ask a question, but——

Support for Troops/All-Volunteer Military

Q. I want to thank you for all the support you have given the military.

The President. Where is he? Hold on for a minute. Where is your son?

Q. He's in Yuma, and he's on his way to be deployed.

The President. Is he?

Q. Yes.

The President. Let me say something to the mom here. First of all, you're going to be nervous, and I know you are, and you should be. But I just want you to know that your son is making an historic contribution to the peace and security of our country.

Q. Thank you.

The President. And you know what—you know the great thing about this country? I'll tell you the great thing about the country. There's a lot of people praying for him. Yes. I appreciate you wearing "USMC mom." That's great. He's going to be just fine, by the way.

Q. He said that he was anxious to go over there and do his job and defend our country.

The President. Yes, that's what he's doing, and it's important for everybody to understand that—it's important for everybody to understand that. It's important to understand the consequences of her son's decision, first, to join an All-Volunteer Army, and secondly, to be in a position to go over and help freedom take hold in Iraq. That's really what we're talking about.

On the one hand, we're defeating people that could come here to hurt us, but we're also spreading freedom. And you know what's going to make it work? It's when the Iraqis and the Afghan step up and say, "I'm now ready to defend my country." And that's what's happening—that's what's happening. And the enemy sees it happening. And that's why they're taking action. See, that's why they're blowing up innocent life. They see what's happening. And that's why we cannot send mixed signals, and that's why we've got to be firm in our resolve. And while we are, that's why we've got to be thankful to the moms who raised a son who says, "I want to serve my country."

I was asked the other day whether or not we ought to—some think we ought to get rid of the All-Volunteer Army. The answer is absolutely not. We need to keep the All-Volunteer Army. And what we need to do is to make sure that people—there's incentive to stay in the All-Volunteer Army, by making sure people are better paid, which we have done over the course of four appropriations bills. Since I've been the President, military pay is up 21 percent. We've got to make sure the housing on the bases are better than adequate. And we've got—in other words, we've got to win the hearts and souls not only of the soldiers but of their families. And we're making good progress toward that. But this All-Volunteer Army is, one, an important concept, and two, it's working.

Let's see. Yes, sir.

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much. I just returned from a 13-month tour, Lieutenant Colonel Jackson.

The President. Thanks. Where were you?

Q. I was the deputy commander of our forces in Kosovo.

The President. Oh, fantastic. Thanks for doing that. Bondsteel?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. I went there.

Q. I know you were there, and in fact, the education center is named after your wife.

The President. Is it? Well, smart move.

Q. Yes, sir. Mr. President, all the forces overseas are thankful that you are such a strong Commander in Chief, and even when I was medevac'd out—I was injured and medevac'd out to Germany, along with

forces from Iraq and Afghanistan—the morale was very high, because we knew that you were in charge and going to take care of us.

The President. Well, thank you. Thank you, sir. Let me say something. Let me say something about medevac'ing troops. It's really important for our citizens to know that if somebody gets hurt, they're going to get really good treatment quickly—I mean quickly. And I know that a lot of us have been to Bethesda—I know John has and Pete has—or Walter Reed. These are the big hospitals in Washington, DC, that take care of those who have been injured. These kids are coming off the battlefield in one or two days' time. I mean, we're taking kids who have been hurt, and we're getting them into incredibly good care quickly.

That's a—what a compassionate Government, when you think about it. You know, there's other governments that might let their troops kind of languish around, you know, maybe get them out of the tent somewhere, sometime. Not America—not America. We value every life. We appreciate the service of our troops. When I see these families in these hospitals, I'm quick to ask them, "Are you getting everything you need?" I need to know. And admittedly, sometimes the President gets the Cook's tour, but the answer is, "Yes, Mr. President, they're taking care of my kid." And that's what families or citizens need to know about our country, is that we are grateful for the service of those who wear our uniform, because the world is going to be better off for it.

A couple of more questions. McCain is getting anxious. He wants to get to Phoenix—[*laughter*]—and so do I.

Who have we got here? Where's the little boy? This little guy? You got all kinds of little boys. Go ahead.

Photo With the President

Q. I was wondering if I could take a picture with you.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] All right, let him through. Crawl on underneath there. Scoot on through. Come on. Got it? Hello, Mom. [*Laughter*] Got it?

Yes, go ahead.

Prayers for the President

Q. First of which, first part of comment, just know that my wife and I are praying for you. We appreciate what you've done the 4 years you've been in office.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for that. A question I have——

The President. I appreciate your prayers. Think about—I mean, work on your question while I say something here. [*Laughter*] It's an amazing country where people from all walks of life pray for the President. It really is. I'm grateful. I am really grateful. Any President would be grateful. It's one of the most sustaining aspects of my life now, to know that people pray for me and Laura and the kids.

Go ahead.

Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

Q. The question I have—one of our concerns is, is the continued erosion of the moral fabric of this country with the—obviously the removal of prayer in schools, the removal of the Ten Commandments, abortion, and now we're faced with the issue of gay marriage. And obviously, there was an attempt to at least get it in the Constitution among the parties in Congress, with no success. What do you plan to do when you're reelected——

The President. Thank you.

Q. ——to abolish that attempt by the left? And my second question is, would you mind if I got your autograph? [*Laughter*]

The President. We've started a bad trend here. Let me talk about marriage, traditional marriage. First of all, I believe our society is better off when marriage is defined as between a man and a woman. It's my belief.

Secondly—hold on a second. Secondly—secondly, this is an issue that ought to be decided by the people, not by a few judges. And that's what's caused the issue. That's what has brought this issue to a head, is because in a particular State, the four judges redefined the definition of marriage. That's what happened. And my worry is, is that that definition will be spread to other States, even though the people of those States do not accept that definition.

And now, there's laws on the books. And what happened was, a lot of the Senators accurately noted there's a current law on the book called the DOMA, Defense of Marriage Act, which specifically defines marriage as between a man or a woman and says that the actions of one State cannot affect the behavior in another State. And I readily concede that law is on the books, signed by my predecessor, by the way.

My worry has been that the courts will overturn that law and that we will end up with a series of activist judges defining marriage. And so the easiest way—not the easiest way, probably the toughest way—but the clearest way to define marriage is to put it in the Constitution like I suggested.

Now, let me also tell you, the constitutional process takes a long time. It—many amendments have taken years to be passed by the Senate and then ratified by the States. I will also explain to the American people that the ratification process of the constitutional amendment is an essential part of including people's opinions as to this very delicate issue.

And finally, let me encourage everybody, as we debate this issue, to do so with the utmost of respect. I mean, this is a issue that requires thoughtful dialog. It's a serious issue. And it's one that—I hope we can have a debate in a way that is uplifting and not tearing people down on either side of the issue. And I will pledge to you, I will do my very best to bring a thoughtful dialog on this vital issue.

And so what I'll do the next 4 years is continue to state what I believe. I'm not going to change my beliefs just because there's been an election. Quite the contrary. I will be telling people what I believe.

Okay, last question. You have been very patient. This is the last one. I hope everybody understands I've got to work. [*Laughter*]

Support for the President/Duty To Vote

Q. President Bush, we want you to know something. This group of ladies right here, we represent an international company—an international AGLOW fellowship. This is women all over the world. There is a woman over there by the name of Bernadette Martinez who is the prayer coordinator for New Mexico. And we want you to know, we are praying for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We are praying for righteous leaders in Washington and throughout our country, because we know that it's time for America to get back to its moral roots that our Founders put in place for us when this country was founded. And it is time for the people in this country to realize and to call out for righteous leaders. That is our right as God's children. And we are doing that.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And you will be in the White House.

The President. I appreciate that. One more? Okay, hold on. Let me tell you what else you can do. Let me tell you what else you can do. Register people to vote. And then, right around election time, start saying to people, we have a duty; we have a duty in a free society, no matter what you believe; we have a duty to vote. So I appreciate your enthusiasm and your drive. Convert it to getting people to the polls too, which I know you will.

Okay, final question. One more, this is it. Then we got to go to Arizona.

Support for the Troops

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes, ma'am. No more hands going up; I'm a man of my word.

Q. And I am a persistent woman. My name is Cassandra Dennis. My husband is Captain Dominic Dennis. He sends his hellos all the ways from Log Base Seitz, Iraq.

The President. Good. Thank you. He's a captain—in the Army?

Q. Army National Guard.

The President. Very good.

Q. I want your prayers for him.

The President. You got it. Thank you very much. Yes. And tell you—I'll tell you what do. You know, one of the interesting possibilities now, because of high-tech, because of the high-tech world, is that you can e-mail your husband, correct?

Q. We e-mail. We do instant-messaging. We've got web cams. We have telephones.

The President. All right, why don't you do this, then? Would you do me a favor?

Q. Yes.

The President. Would you rather e-mail him or instant-message him?

Q. I'm going to instant-message him.

The President. Instant-message him. Instant-message him this: The Commander in Chief is grateful and incredibly proud of his service.

Thank you all. God bless. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at the Eclipse Aviation hangar. In his remarks, he referred to Darren White, sheriff, Bernalillo County, NM; John Sanchez, southwest regional chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Patrick H. Lyons, New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands; former Representative Manuel Lujan, Jr., executive committee member, and Allen Weh, chairman, New Mexico Republican Party; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland; and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. He also referred to Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

Remarks in Phoenix, Arizona
August 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. So yesterday, there we were in a bus in northern Florida, and old John McCain said, "Wait until you get to Phoenix." He's right.

I'm working hard to ask for your vote. I'm here to let you know there is more to do to make America a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place. I'm here to ask for your help. We won Arizona last time; we're going to win it this time. And we're going to win a great national victory.

Thank you all for coming. I only wish that Laura were here to see this crowd. She is a remarkable woman. She is a great wife, a fantastic mother. I'm going to give you some reasons tonight to put me back in, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura has 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Now look, I admit it, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for that reason. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can do the job.

I'm proud to be traveling with a great American and a fine citizen of this State, a person who served his Nation with distinction and honor—John McCain. I want to thank his wife, Cindy, for joining us as well. She's a class act, good lady.