

Mayor John W. Elam. President Bush, it is certainly an honor to have you here. We're looking forward to 4 more years.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Elam. I have a proclamation here that I know will take awhile to read. And I would also like to present you with a key to the city of Ironton.

The President. Oh, yes. Thanks for coming out. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. at the Lawrence County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Portsmouth, Ohio September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you all. Thanks. Be seated. I got some work I got to do here. [*Laughter*] First, thank you all for coming. I've got an interesting way of explaining today why I have made some decisions I made and what I intend to do to lead this country for 4 more years. I've asked some of our fellow citizens to come and share with us some stories that may help people in this part of the world understand about why we do what we do in this administration.

First of all, I want to tell you I'm here to ask for the vote. See, I believe you got to get out among the people and ask for the vote. And I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here. I'm glad you invited me to come here to Portsmouth. The murals are fantastic. They are beautiful. They said, "You got to see the murals." I said, "Okay, take me by them." [*Laughter*] And I'm glad they did. It's beautiful. What a special part of your city. Thanks for sharing them with me.

I want to thank—by the way, I always thought Roy Rogers was from Texas. [*Laughter*] I know, I'm wrong. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. We got on the bus and Zell, who is a wonderful fellow and a great friend, says to me, "You'd be

wise if you took Laura with you." I said, "Well, I know, Zell, but she went to two other States." She's out campaigning. She's a fabulous woman. You're not going to believe this, but—we're about to talk to some schoolteachers here—when I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Public school librarians for Laura here. [*Laughter*] And so, of course, I went through the traditional, "Will you marry me?" And she said, "Yes, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, that's fine with me. You won't have to give any political speeches." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. [*Laughter*] She gave a heck of a speech the other night in New York City. She sends her love and sends her best.

And Zell gave a heck of a speech the other night too. The way I'd like to summarize his speech is that it's okay for a Democrat to support me for President. And if you're interested in a stronger America, a safer America, and a better America, put Dick Cheney and me back into office. And I appreciate you being here. I want to thank my friend for coming.

I know there's a lot of—[*applause*]—thank you all. Remember I've got some

work I got to do, because I want to answer some of your questions too. I appreciate the cheers, but let me do my work. [Laughter] See, I know this part of the world is like parts of Georgia and like parts of Texas, where there's a lot of what we call discerning Democrats who—with whom we share a lot. That's what Zell was saying. He was saying to people in this part of the world, "It's okay if you're a Democrat to pull the Bush-Cheney lever." And we welcome Democrats into this election. We want Democrat votes. And so when you're out registering to vote, register our fellow Democrats. Register them, and turn them out to vote.

And that's another reason I've come today. I'm asking for your help. I hope that you get out and do our duty as citizens and participate in the process, register people, and encourage people to go to the polls. Tell them we've got a duty in this country to vote. And that's what I'm here to ask you to do, and I appreciate your willingness to work and turn out the vote. When you do, we're going to carry Ohio again and win a great victory in November.

I want to thank Rita Rice Morris, the president of Shawnee State, a University of Opportunity. I appreciate you coming, Rita, thank you.

A little later on, you'll hear me talking about how this is a changing America, and Government must recognize that. One of the things that's changing here is that in order to find high-paying, quality jobs, you've got to have a college degree. Most new jobs in America require 2 years of college. One in four of our students gets there, which means Government must do a better job of intervening early in high schools to help at-risk students, emphasizing math and science so people will have the skill base necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century, raising standards, but also expanding Pell grants so low- and middle-income families will be able to send their kids to college and they can start with a college degree—start their career with a

college degree. And I appreciate you coming, Madam President.

What I'm telling you is, we're going to make our job training relevant so we help our workers. We're going to help them in high school. We're going to help in the community college as well to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs that are now growing here in America. And so this is a great place for us to come and talk about jobs and job skills, right here at a place that's training people for the jobs of the 21st century. I'm proud of your leadership. Thank you for having us.

I want to thank my friend Rob Portman, Congressman Rob Portman. He's a—here's typical Portman. He says, "Take credit for the visitors center." I said, "Wait a minute. You did all the hard lifting. All I did was see to it that it happened." I want to thank the Congressman very much for his work. He cares a lot about the people in this city. You're just getting to know him here. You're getting to see a really fine guy. He's really a good, solid American.

I want to thank Mike DeWine, the Senator from the great State of Ohio. Where are you, Mike? Probably making a phone call. [Laughter] I want to thank Voinovich, who is not here, but listen, put him back in office. George Voinovich is a great United States Senator. Proud to work with him.

Doug White is with us from the statehouse. Anybody else from the statehouse here, I want to thank you all for coming. Appreciate you serving the folks here in this part of the world in the statehouse of Ohio.

I want to thank the mayor, Jim Kalb, for being here. Mr. Mayor, I'm honored you're here. Appreciate you taking time.

I want to thank Anthony Munoz, *mi amigo*. Thank you for coming. I met your daughter the other day. Yes, Tennessee basketball star. Anthony is a great guy. He's helping me in the campaign. He's helping to invigorate the grassroots. Those are the people who put up the signs and make

the phone calls and do all the hard work. You're grassroots, I can tell it looking right here. But I appreciate your hard work.

Listen, I had the honor today of meeting with folks from the Piketon plant. We got a management guy; we got the head of the union with us, two other hard workers. Actually, there are going to be three other workers—about to talk to one in a minute. But these four people came on the bus. I stopped the bus in the middle of town; they hopped on. [Laughter] And we talked about—let me tell you something about what I heard.

First of all, I heard that I fulfilled a promise. In the 2000 campaign, I said we'd do everything we can to keep the Piketon jobs available. Not only the jobs there—this is an expanding operation. I'll tell you why it's expanding. It's got enlightened management and enlightened leadership. These are people who work together for the good of the workforce and, as they do so, working for the good of the country. And I appreciate the leadership of the folks at Piketon, and I want to thank you for what you're doing. And welcome.

I'm going to first talk a little bit about our economy in a changing world and how we're going to deal with it. And then I'm going to talk about how to keep the country safe. As you get out and gather up the vote, remind people that this economy has been through a heck of a lot recently. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals, and those corporate scandals hurt us. They did, because a lot of our economy depends upon trust, and when you have people who are supposedly writing good numbers down on paper violating that trust, it causes people to wonder. The message is clear now in America: We're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of this country. We're going to hold people to account. That attack on September the 11th hurt us. Make no mistake about it, it hurt this economy—estimates of a million jobs lost in the 3 months after the attack. That

meant people weren't working. That matters to me.

And we've overcome those obstacles. That's what I want you to tell your friends and neighbors. We have been through a lot, but we're overcoming the obstacles. I'll tell you why I think we have: One, we got great workers, workers who are productive, workers who work hard; we got great small-business owners, people who are dreamers and doers and planners and hope for the best, and employing new people; we got great farmers in America, people who know how to work the land. I also think the tax relief helped a lot, helped to overcome the obstacles.

We're adding manufacturing jobs here in America. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. We've added 1.7 million jobs since August of '03. We're growing. The national unemployment rate of 5.4 percent is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

That statistic doesn't help some of the working people here in Ohio. I understand that. I know that parts of your great State have lagged behind the rest of the Nation in recovery. So long as somebody is looking for a job and can't find one means we've got to continue to promote progrowth policies.

I'm fully aware that there's some communities in your great State that need help. That's why I proposed opportunity zones. These are a fantastic opportunity for cities and counties that have been affected by loss of manufacturing jobs to be able to get special tax relief, priority when it comes to Federal funding. It's a great opportunity to rebuild your communities, and the Federal Government is going to help you, so long as you take the initiative. We can't make people—[applause].

People often ask me, what about job creation? Of course we want jobs to grow here in America. In order to make sure they grow here in America, America has got to be the best place in the world to do business. So people say, "What does that

mean?" Well, you can't do business here if we don't have reliable energy supplies. How can you expect for people to be able to work in the United States of America if the employers can't get energy. We're too dependent on foreign sources of energy now.

Two years ago, I proposed to the United States Congress an energy plan, and it's stuck because of politics. And this plan encourages conservation. It says that we perhaps can add to our energy supplies by using ethanol and biodiesel. It says that we can do a better job of developing technologies, clean coal technologies. We want to be using our coal. Coal makes a lot of sense because we've got a lot of it here, and we can use technologies to make this economy grow.

But I need a plan to my desk that we submitted to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. That's necessary in order to keep jobs here in America. In order to keep jobs here in America, we got to cut down on all these lawsuits that are making it harder for people to hire people. In order to keep jobs here, we got to have a health policy that makes sense. We want health care available and affordable. We want the health care decisions to be made between doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

And there is a big difference of opinion on health care in this campaign. If you listen carefully to the plans of my opponent, it's all about strengthening the Federal Government's role in health care. And I think that would be a mistake. Our policies aim to strengthen the role of the individual and small businesses.

Now, let me tell you some of the plans I've got. Over half the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. Rather than Federalizing insurance, why don't we be wise about it and allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the discounts that big businesses can.

We're going to expand health savings accounts. Listen, I understand there are some people in this country that cannot afford health care. That's why we want to expand the community health centers in every poor county in America. That makes sense. It's a wise use of your money, as far as I'm concerned, to have places where people can get primary and preventative care if you can't afford it. It's much better that these clinics be available rather than emergency rooms of local hospitals.

We're going to continue to defend this Medicare program we put in place. This is good law. You might remember what the Medicare debate used to be like. It was called "Medi-scare." [Laughter] So they would lay it out there for somebody to talk about; then they would beat him over the head with it. But I went to Washington to solve problems. People say, "Please explain to me as clearly as you can the problem of old Medicare." Well, here it is. Medicare would pay for somebody's heart surgery, which might cost up to \$100,000. Medicare wouldn't pay for the drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Now, that's not a very cost-effective use of your money, because the pharmaceuticals would be substantially less in cost than the operation. And it's certainly not fair for our seniors to have a plan that didn't help them with prescription drugs.

Beginning in 2005, there is going to be preventative screenings for the first time in Medicare. If you sign up for Medicare, you're going to get a free checkup. And the reason why that's important is you solve problems early, before it's too late. Secondly, in 2006, you've got prescription drugs coming your way if you're a senior.

I'm just getting wound up here. Let me talk about one other issue as regards to health care. And one of the reasons why we have working uninsured is because small businesses can't afford health care. And one of the reasons they can't afford health care is not only the structural problem I just

outlined to you before but because there's too many frivolous lawsuits that are running up your costs. Make no mistake about it, these frivolous lawsuits are running good docs out of practice and are making the practice of medicine more costly.

And we need to do something about it. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital and pro-trial-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. Now, my opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [Laughter] I have made my choice. I'm standing with the small-business owners. I'm standing with the docs. I'm standing with the patients. I am for medical liability reform—now.

A couple of other things I want to talk about, then we'll talk with some of the citizens who are here. Remember I talked about a changing world? Some of the institutions of our Government need to change. Some of the systems of Government need to change, is a better way to put it. You know, a lot of—if you think about it, the pension plans were designed in the past. Health care policies were designed in the past. Tax policy is kind of old and stale. And I think we need to change these systems in order to make sure people can realize their dreams and so we got a better tomorrow.

The Tax Code needs to be simplified. We need to change it. People say, "Oh, sure, we've heard that before." I'm telling you, if I have 4 more years, I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to simplify the code. Here's why we need to simplify it. We spend about 6 billion hours a year on taxes because the code is too complicated. It's a million words long, and there's too many special interest loopholes. For the sake of fairness and for the sake of growth, economic growth, we need to simplify the Tax Code.

They say, "Oh, that's too hard." Well, listen. Medicare was plenty hard, and we got it done. The No Child Left Behind Act was plenty hard. We got it done. The

tax relief was plenty hard, and we got it done. This administration knows how to get things done, and I'm looking forward to simplifying the Tax Code.

One of the interesting facts about our society is many women work in the house and out of the house now. That wasn't the way it was 30 or 40 years ago. That's the way it is today. And that's why I think we ought to change labor laws to allow people flex-time and comp-time so moms can have more time to plan their lives, to do their duty with their children. Same with dad. In other words, the labor laws were written for the past. They ought to reflect the present and the future.

We ought to make sure that the Social Security system meets its promise. Now, if you're on Social Security, forget all the politics. Nothing is going to change. You'll hear all kinds of rhetoric, believe me. It's the way it is every campaign. Somebody says "Social Security," and immediately, people are going to jump up and say, "They're going to take your benefits away." Forget it. You're safe. Baby boomers like me, we're safe in Social Security. The trust is okay for baby boomers. It's the children and grandchildren we need to be worried about. The trust fund becomes insolvent down the road.

And so what are we going to do about it? That's the fundamental question. I think we need to think differently. I think we ought to allow younger workers to take some of their own money and set up personal retirement accounts as a part of Social Security, so Social Security exists, something somebody owns. It's something Government can't take away, and it's something you can pass on from one generation to the next. I repeat, if you're retired, don't listen to the tired rhetoric, that political noise about taking away your money. It's just not going to happen. If you're a baby boomer, we're fine. But the problem is there's a lot of us, and there's fewer payers, and those fewer payers is who we need

to worry about, those coming up over the next couple of decades.

So what I'm telling you is, is that over the next 4 years, I'm going to work to change systems that are old and antiquated. That will help people. The role of Government is to help people with their lives, not try to run their lives. Our philosophy is to say, "We want to help people realize their dreams."

The tax relief worked. Now, the problem we have, for those of us in Washington, is they always talk about tax relief in terms of numbers—this number and that number. So I've asked a family here to join us—Jennifer and David Shoupe is with us today. Thank you all for coming. Stand on up. It looks like little Shoupe might have heard too much of hot air. [Laughter] Laura always warned me not to talk too much. [Laughter]

Listen, thanks for coming. First I want to tell you, these good folks from Portsmouth, Ohio, are teachers. And teaching is a noble profession. Thank you for doing what you do.

What grade do we teach? Jennifer, what grade do you teach?

Jennifer Shoupe. First grade.

The President. First grade. That must be exciting. [Laughter] Really, when you think about it, here's a chance—little learners come in with their eyes bright and sparkly. I know you focus on reading. It's really important we get reading right early. And thanks for teaching.

And you teach, David?

David Shoupe. Phys ed and health.

The President. Yes. And you are the baseball—

Mr. Shoupe. Baseball coach.

The President. Yes. I'm a baseball fan. [Laughter] I'm a fan because I peaked in Little League. [Laughter] The ball started to curve. [Laughter]

This good family, by the way, in tax relief in 2003 and 2004, saved \$1,700. That's what tax relief meant to them. The reason why is because we cut all taxes. We thought

if you're going to have tax relief and you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. Secondly, it's because we raised the child credit. They've got two children, one awake and one asleep—[laughter]—and a granddad holding on. And by the way, we reduced the marriage penalty. They're married. It doesn't make any sense to penalize marriage in the Tax Code.

Okay, what did you do with the money?

Mr. Shoupe. We actually used it to pay our homeowners' insurance.

The President. Good, okay. See, one of the things we want to do is encourage people to own their own home. Tax relief helped these people realize a dream, didn't it—to own their own home. We want more people saying, "I own my own home." A hopeful America in changing times is one in which people say, "Welcome to my home." During the Bush administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high.

What else—anything else with that money?

Mr. Shoupe. Yes, we put a little in savings.

The President. Savings? That's good, supposed to save, particularly when it comes time to educating these kids. [Laughter] See, here's the problem. This tax relief we passed is set to expire, and if it expires, these folks have a tax increase. They got their life planned out. They saved 1,700 last year, 1,700 this year, 1,700 next year. And here's the fundamental question we got in politics is, after we set priorities, who should be spending the money? See, I'd rather have David and Jennifer making decisions with their money than the Federal Government. Once we—[applause].

That's why I asked them to come, good, hard-working people. They got \$1,700 additional money in their pocket. And one reason our economy is recovering is because people have got more money to spend. In Texas they call it walking-around money. [Laughter] I call it tax relief money. And one of the ways to make sure this economy

not only grows this year, next year, and the out-years is to make the tax relief permanent.

And that's an issue in this campaign. It's an issue. I'm going to tell you why it's an issue. I'm running against a fellow who has promised over \$2 trillion of new money so—of new programs so far—2 trillion. And we haven't even gotten to the stretch run yet. [Laughter] It's pretty easy when you get out there on the campaign trail, believe me. You'll say, "Oh yes, I'll spend it on that, you know." It's easy to make promises. It's just hard to deliver them.

So they said to him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, "Well, that's easy. I'm just going to tax the rich." The problem is, you can't raise enough money taxing the rich. We estimate by raising the top brackets like he wants to do that you'll only raise 650 billion. So if you promised 2.2 trillion and you can only raise about 650 billion, you're short. And guess what happens when you're short? You get to pay. Yes. Plus, you've heard the rhetoric before, haven't you? "Oh, all we're going to do is tax the rich." Yes, I know how that works. That's why they've got accountants and lawyers. [Laughter] They duck, and you get stuck. [Laughter] But we're not going to let him. We're going to win the election.

All right, I've got a man I want you to hear from. Big Carl, pick up that mike. This guy, first of all, is a really interesting person. He was a timber worker, and he dreamed a big dream and now owns his own business.

Is that right?

Carl Pertuset. Yes, sir.

The President. All right. Tell the truth, who's the brains in this operation?

Mr. Pertuset. My wife, Vera.

The President. Yes, that's what I thought. Same thing in my household. [Laughter]

Mr. Pertuset. Right.

The President. Vera and Carl started their own business. Isn't that fantastic? It's American. It's a dream of the country. I

meet entrepreneurs all the time, and a lot of the time they say, "Well, we started it in our garage." You didn't start this in your garage, did you?

Mr. Pertuset. No, sir.

The President. Where did you start it? Kitchen table.

Mr. Pertuset. In the woods.

The President. In the woods. [Laughter] What do you do, Carl? Tell us what your business—tell us about your business.

Mr. Pertuset. I started out about 22 years harvesting timber out of the forest. And then in 2002, we purchased a piece of ground that had been abandoned in McDermott, Ohio. And now we are manufacturing those woods—it is harvested with—producing crossties for the railroads and hardwood flooring, and we also produce mulch. We have a grinding facility there that goes all over the United States, really.

The President. See what he's doing? He's got a little manufacturing company. He said, "Do you know anything about timber?" I said, "Well, we've got some trees in Crawford." [Laughter] "Plus, we did pass the Healthy Forests Initiative to preserve our national forest and, at the same time, recognize that forests are renewable resource."

How are you organized?

Mr. Pertuset. We are an LLC.

The President. Yes, he's not a lawyer, and I'm not, either, but let me try to explain it. From tax purposes, it means he pays tax at the individual income-tax level. That's what that means, see? A lot of people don't know this, but 90 percent of the small-business owners in America pay individual income taxes—90 percent. So when we talk about tax relief, we're talking about affecting 90—well, in individuals, we're talking about 90 percent—affecting 90 percent of the small-business owners. And that helps. You know why? Because 70 percent of all new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Think about that.

Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses.

You create any jobs?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir. We started out with four when we moved in there. Today, we have 18. And we interviewed four yesterday to go to work Monday.

The President. See you on Monday?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes.

The President. He just did it to make the President look good. [Laughter] He did it because his business is growing. Now, you know, four people added Monday by this small business—there's a lot of small businesses across the country adding them here and there. And it's an important part of our economic growth. Sometimes, the small-business numbers I don't think get counted in the big numbers until later on. There's kind of a lag.

But what I'm hearing is the small-business sector is doing well, and the tax relief helped. One of the interesting things we did in this—in the tax relief, was we said, "If you invest, you get a break. If you're a small-business owner and you make an investment, you get tax help when it comes to that investment."

Tell me, are you an investor?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir.

The President. What do you buy?

Mr. Pertuset. We've redone the facility, first of all, and then we've put different mills in, different sizes, and purchasing grinders. Probably around \$750,000 invested in 2003, and in 2004, we've invested around 200,000.

The President. So far. And you bought a grinder. And was it a new grinder?

Mr. Pertuset. Yes, sir, brand new.

The President. Yes. See, here's how the economy works. If the Tax Code says, "Go out and make an investment; there's an incentive for you to do so," old Carl says, "Well, it's going to help my business if I do. I'm more effective. My workers are more productive." And so he goes out and he says, "Well, I think I'll buy a grinder." Somebody has got to make the grinder.

See, good tax policy stimulates demand. It says to Carl, "It's wise for you to buy the grinder," and then when he makes a decision to buy the grinder, the grinder maker hires somebody. That's how the economy works.

If you run the taxes up on this guy, it has the reverse effect. And when my opponent says he's going to tax the rich, he's taxing Carl. See, his individual—with the individual rates running up, that means we're going to tax his business. We got it now where he's hiring people, where he's investing in grinders. The grinder manufacturer is doing better. And if my opponent has his way, he's going to run his taxes up on Carl. That's bad economic policy if he does that.

Thank you.

Chris—Chris, you ready? Yes, he's ready. [Laughter]

Chris Sanford. Sorry, Mr. President. My wife was side-tracking me there for a minute. [Laughter]

The President. Taking care of your—trying to keep him awake for Dad's discussion. Oops, just spit his gum out. Anyway—[laughter].

Mr. Sanford. That wasn't intended for you. [Laughter]

The President. Kept it under your seat. [Laughter] So what do you do, Chris?

Mr. Sanford. Mr. President, I happen to be a member of a security protective force up at the Department of Energy Gaseous Diffusion Plant up there in Piketon.

The President. Right. The reason I asked Chris to come, because he's going to—well, he's got a job because of the policies we did. Because of good management, good labor, and good collaboration with the Government, this guy is working.

And you came up from where?

Mr. Sanford. We relocated from west Tennessee.

The President. Yes, Tennessee, good. Nice part of the world.

Mr. Sanford. Not too bad.

The President. Yes. And you moved your family here.

Mr. Sanford. Yes, sir. This is my wife, Michelle, and my little boy, Ethan, and my daughter, Claire.

The President. Great. And let me ask you something. How is your pay compared to the old job?

Mr. Sanford. Okay. [Laughter]

[At this point, Mr. Sanford made further remarks.]

The President. Well, I appreciate—yes. Listen, Chris, thanks for coming. By the way, his family saved \$1,900 in 2003, about the same in 2004. I'm not a lawyer; I'm going to lead the witness. Does it help? [Laughter] Yes, it helps. We don't want to be running up the taxes on this guy. He just got his family going. You just heard him, "I bought my first home," he says. You know what it's like to get into your first home. You're wondering whether or not you can make the payments, and you're struggling, and you're dreaming, and you're working hard to get there. Why would you want to be taxing this family just as they're beginning to realize their dreams?

Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent. This bill is coming up in front of the United States Congress right now, as to whether or not to run taxes up on him, whether or not the child credit goes down, the marriage penalty goes up, the 10 percent bracket goes away. It would be a huge mistake for the Congress not to make the tax relief permanent, not only for the sake of our economy but for the sake of this family.

Bonny Huffman. I couldn't come to this part of the State and not talk about coal. Bonny is—she is the chairman of the Ohio Coal Association. Accurate? And you work for a coal company. As a matter of fact, you're one of the owners of a coal company. So what is the name of the coal company?

Bonny Huffman. Sands Hill Coal Company.

The President. Good. And what is your—who is your main customer?

Ms. Huffman. We have several customers—American Electric Power. We also supply coal to the Gaseous Diffusion Plant here and to—

The President. That's good. We were talking about that a little while ago. Good. We're talking about the need for coal in the energy mix. We also need—this country needs to be wise about nuclear power. It seems like, if we're worried about being hooked on energy from overseas, we ought to be using new technologies to expand the capacity for us to use nuclear power as well. But the resource we've got available at hand here is coal. And one of the initiatives the Coal Association of Ohio and other States—West Virginia and Pennsylvania and other States have been working on in Congress is clean coal technology. Do you want to try to explain what that means?

Ms. Huffman. Well, clean coal technology is the development of the coal to burn it more efficiently and more environmentally safe. It is critical to our future. And natural resources has made this country great, and if we don't develop, then we will take a step back in our being able to compete internationally, globally.

The President. Right. That's a wise statement. We'll take a step back in not being able to compete. I told the people in the country that if they elected me, we'd spend \$2 billion on clean coal technology. I said this 4 years ago. We're on track to do so.

I'll tell you why I think it's important, is because, as Bonny said, that clean coal technology means we'll be able to burn coal cleaner. We'll be able to protect the quality of our air and protect the quality of our jobs. And I want to—so we've been working with the coal associations here—she's been holding my feet to the fire to make sure I fulfilled the promise. I've been working with her to make sure that we get the right technology in place. And the mutual

benefit is the country is able—is being able to grow and less dependent.

By the way, Bonny's coal company—didn't you tell me you hired some people recently?

Ms. Huffman. Yes, we've put on about eight people in the last couple months. And that is strictly because the economy is improving. We're seeing more need for coal than we have and more optimism than we have in the last 10 years.

The President. That's good. See, people's outlook looking better. By the way, Sand Hill Coal—that's the name of the company—you're organized—

Ms. Huffman. S corp.

The President. S corp. See, that's another fancy word—LLC, one way to do it—S corp—that's legalese and accountantese for you pay at the individual income-tax level. See, here's another example of what I'm talking about. When they say, "All we're going to do is tax the rich," running up those brackets, that's the rich. You just heard from her. That's a small business that has added eight, you said?

Ms. Huffman. Yes.

The President. Yes, eight. If you tax this little coal company, it's likely those eight aren't going to have work. The money doesn't stay in the company so people can have benefits and health care. The money goes to the Federal Government.

The small-business sector of this country is important. And I've got policies that encourage the growth of small business, and my opponent is going to tax small business. And it's a clear difference in this campaign. Our policies will cause this economy to grow.

I want to thank you. Good job.

Let me talk about my most solemn duty, which is to protect the American people. Let me share with you some of the lessons I've learned as your President. Maybe this is the best way to describe what I intend to do over the next 4 years.

First of all, we're facing an enemy that is so hateful and so backward. They have

an ideology that is opposite of ours, and they use terror to try to intimidate us. That's the reality of the world in which we live. These are the people that flew the airplanes. These are the people that share the same sentiment of those who took the school over in Russia. They're still trying to figure out exactly who did it. But nevertheless, it's the mentality I'm talking about, a mentality that tries to achieve an objective by killing little kids. It's a mentality that takes innocent life because they have no conscience.

That's the nature of the people against whom we're facing, and which says to me there's no negotiations, there's no "hope for the best," that the task at hand is to bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And that's exactly what we're going to do. We must be relentless and untiring and unyielding. That's the task at hand. We're making progress, by the way. Three-quarters of the known Al Qaida leaders have been brought to justice. We're after the rest of them. But we must not yield.

Second lesson is this is a different kind of war. I know there's a lot of veterans here, and I want to thank you guys for coming. But it's a different kind of war than you faced. It's really different. We're chasing an enemy down that hides in caves or lurks in the corners of cities around the world, and they're patient. They're plenty tough, you know. And they plan and they think and they wait for weakness, and they exploit it, which means that in order to make us more secure, we must not only deal with the enemy but those who harbor the enemy, those who provide safe haven to the enemy.

And so I laid out a doctrine. I said, "If you harbor the terrorists, you're just as guilty." Now, when the President says something—two things I want to tell you: One, it has to be easy for everybody to understand; and two, you better mean what you say.

I meant what I said. I understand that part of my job. I mean, when I speak,

I better mean it, for the sake of peace. And I meant it when I said to the Taliban, "Get rid of Al Qaida." They didn't. And so we got rid of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It's—and we put up the—we went in, and we just—it was necessary to uphold the doctrine. The world is more peaceful because of it.

Let me spend a little time on Afghanistan. I think it's such a hopeful story. First, we're safer. See, Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. They found a soft spot, is one way to describe it, and they exploited it. And they—Al Qaida loved the Taliban. These guys were so backwards, it's unbelievable. They'd whip these mothers in town squares, and they wouldn't educate the girls. That's their view of the future. Imagine a society that's like that. No wonder these thugs were able to burrow in, into that society. They were parasitical. They were like parasites with the idea of eventually becoming the host themselves.

And we routed them out of there. And this is a society which, by the way, has now registered 10 million citizens—over 40 percent are women—to vote in an election coming up next month. Think about that. It's amazing, isn't it?

I went to Cleveland to open up the Children's International Games. Right to my right, right on the front row, with all these—intermixed with all these kids was the Afghan girls soccer team. It was amazing. It's amazing to see the kind of hope in their eyes. They had just come from darkness, and now they found light. And the world is better off for it.

A free Afghanistan will help us keep the peace. That's what we want. We want peace. A free Afghanistan will prove to others who long for freedom that, "Maybe my freedom is possible." See, free societies are peaceful societies.

The short-term objective of this country is to find the terrorists and to stop any attack. And they're out there, and they're lurking. Believe me, it's a dangerous period. There's a lot of people working hard on

your behalf. Everyday, people are working. The long-term solution is to defeat terror with freedom. That's what we believe.

The third lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats before they fully materialize. When we see a threat, we must take it seriously. In the old days, which wasn't all that long ago—the old days now mean 4 years ago, roughly—we'd see a threat, and we say, "Oh, we don't need to worry about it, maybe, because the oceans were there." It's kind of hard to remember those days, isn't it? But that's what life was like. I guess it was 3 years ago. And all the threat could be materializing over here in this part of the world, and we could deal with it if we wanted to or maybe not, because it couldn't come home to hurt us. And that's what changed on September the 11th. It's a really important lesson for the American people never to forget.

And so I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. He's a fellow who had used weapons of mass destruction before. All of the intelligence I looked at, my opponent looked at, the Congress looked at, said the same thing: He had them. It turns out we haven't found the stockpiles yet, but remember, he had the capability of making those weapons. He had the capacity to make weapons. And the danger, of course, in the world in which we live is that capacity, that capability could be passed on to an enemy that had flown airplanes into our buildings and killed thousands of our citizens.

He had terrorist ties. Remember Abu Nidal? He's the guy that killed Leon Klinghoffer. He was there in Baghdad. So was his organization. Zarfawi and the poisonous network was in Baghdad. Zarfawi is the guy that likes to behead people and try to shake our conscience. He's a terrorist. Saddam Hussein was paying the families of suicide bombers. That's supporting terror. And he was a sworn enemy of the United States of America.

I saw a threat. I remembered the lessons of September the 11th, so I decided to, hopefully, solve this threat diplomatically. The first thing I did was to go to the United States Congress. In other words, I thought it was important to act with the Congress, not against the Congress. We work in concert with the United States Congress. After all, they're the duly elected representatives from districts and States. Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at, came to the same conclusion I came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Congress voted the authorization of force. My opponent voted yes when it came to authorizing force. It's something he sometimes hopes we forget.

I went to the United Nations because before I would commit troops into harm's way, I have to be able to tell the loved ones of those troops I've tried every avenue to try to deal with the threat. That's what you want in your President. And so I tried diplomacy. I was hopeful diplomacy would work. I was hopefully—I was hopeful that the free world would convince Saddam Hussein to end his threatening ways.

And I'll never forget going to the United Nations and laying out the case, talking exactly what I thought was right. And they listened and debated the issue. They looked at the same intelligence all of us looked at. They remembered the same history all of us remembered and voted 15 to nothing to say to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

And he ignored the world again. As he had for over a decade, he—I guess the best way to put it, he wasn't interested in what the free world had to say. We sent inspectors into the country. Hopefully, that would solve the problem. History has shown that he deceived the inspectors. In other words, he wasn't interested in complying with what we said, nor was he interested in letting anybody come in and find the truth.

So I have a choice to make at this time. Diplomacy is not going to solve the prob-

lem. My choice is based upon the nature of the man. Do I trust a madman? Can I, conceivably, as the President of the United States, whose major obligation is to protect the people of this country, trust a madman? And given the behavior of the past, do I forget the lessons of September the 11th? Or having tried diplomacy, do we take the action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

A couple of other points, and then I'm going to answer some questions. And then old Zell and I got to get on the bus and head down the road. [*Laughter*]

One, we've got a great military, and this Government owes the military all the resources necessary for them to do the job. I get asked all the time, "Are you for the draft?" The answer is, absolutely not. The All-Volunteer Army works. And it works if this Government supports the All-Volunteer Army, and we are. We've raised pay by 21 percent over the past four budget—well, when they passed the—they passed it, over the last four budget cycles. Housing is a lot better and equipment is a lot better. We're transforming the military to make it work better. But as well when we've got them in harm—people in harm's way, we support them.

I went to the Congress a year ago and said, "\$87 billion is necessary to support these troops." And this was a really important legislation because it was vital funding. And we got great bipartisan support. That means both Republicans and Democrats supported it. It was so strong in the Senate that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. As a matter of fact, I think it's interesting—and people ought to know this—that there was only four Members of the United States Senate that voted to authorize the use of force but didn't vote to fund the troops they authorized. In other words, they said, "Use

force,” but, “No,” when it comes to funding the troops. And two of those four are my opponent and his runningmate.

I just came from Huntington, West Virginia, where he made his famous statement, “I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it.” Now, you know, I don’t know if they talk that way at the Piketon Plant or not. I doubt it. I suspect the people who work on the floor there tell it the way they see it.

And so they pressed him, and he went on. He finally said, “The whole thing is a complicated matter.” There’s nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Finally, let me tell you—you’re probably worried that I could go on all day. [*Laughter*] I could. Let me tell you something that just—I believe in my heart and soul, and I want the loved ones who have got somebody in Iraq and Afghanistan to understand. It’s really important you understand this, that we’re changing the world for the positive, for the better. See, I believe liberty has got the capacity to transform the world. That’s what I believe.

One of my favorite leaders in the world is Prime Minister Koizumi. I think he caught my attention when I first met him. He said Elvis is one of his favorite singers. [*Laughter*] His favorite movie was “High Noon.” [*Laughter*] He loved the values embodied in “High Noon.” This is really a good fellow, and Laura and I view him as a dear friend.

We were eating Kobe beef in Tokyo one evening, and just during the course of the conversation I was thinking about what an amazing experience it is, one, to represent the United States, and two, to be talking to this fellow about world affairs, because, after all, it wasn’t all that long ago that my dad was at war with his country. Your dads were at war; your grandfathers were fighting the sworn enemy of Japan. They were the sworn enemy, and we were at war with them. And after World War II was over, a President named Harry Truman

believed in liberty, believed that liberty had the ability to transform societies. So did a lot of Americans, and they worked with the Japanese to develop a democracy.

Now, there’s a lot of people in our country during that period of time that didn’t believe it could happen. You understand why. Imagine if your loved one had been overseas, fighting the Japanese. You can understand why people said, “These people can’t possibly be our—ever be our friend. They’re our sworn enemy.” We lost a lot of lives in that theater—I mean, a lot of lives were lost. You could imagine people in this country saying, “Well, I lost my son. There’s no way this enemy is going to be a friend.”

But my predecessors believed in the power of liberty, and as a result, some 60 years later, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi—50 years later, whatever the number—right number is. I think it’s 50 years since they became a democracy, maybe a little less than that—and guess what we talk about? Sitting around that table eating Kobe beef, we’re talking about the peace. That’s what we’re talking about. We’re talking about how to work together to make the world a more peaceful place. We’re talking about how to work together to help on the issue of—for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. We’re talking about Iraq and how we believe that a free Iraq is in our nations’ interests. We’re talking about fighting an—HIV/AIDS around the world. We’re talking about helping to feed the hungry. We’re talking about making the world a better place.

It’s amazing, isn’t it, when you think about it, what liberty has done. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace. See, freedom is going to transform Iraq from a place of tyranny to a place of hope. It’s happening.

I meet with the families of those who have lost a soldier, and sometimes they ask me what you said to them. I say, “Well, I love them. We’re praying for them. And

we're going to finish the mission so that their loved one didn't die in vain." The mission is to spread freedom and peace. The short-term objective of this country is to find an enemy and bring them to justice before they strike us. The long-term objective is to make this world a more free and hopeful and peaceful place. I believe we'll succeed because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

A couple of other points I want to make, and then we got some time for some questions. You know, I told you it's a changing world. I believe certain things shouldn't change. Values shouldn't change, values like courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. I believe we ought to support institutions that matter in a changing time, our families, our schools. Government ought not to discriminate against faith-based programs.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters, every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for the Second Amendment. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench. And we stand for an America that is safer and more hopeful for every single citizen.

Thanks for coming today. Let me answer some of your questions. Anybody got any questions? Yes, sir. We got a mike lady right here—two mike ladies. Well, two "yes, sirs." Let her rip.

Financing Campaign Promises

Q. Hello, Mr. Bush.

The President. Yes, sir.

Q. You may not remember this, but in 1964, when you were a freshman at Yale, my roommates and I came over and knocked on your door. This was Governor George Pataki—

The President. Oh, yes.

Q. We persuaded you to join the Yale Republican Club.

The President. Oh, yes, well—

Q. Well, Mr. President, you—

The President. Problem is I never attended any meetings. [*Laughter*]

Q. You've become a very good Republican.

The President. Well, thank you, sir. Welcome. There's no telling, given politics, where you were about to take that story. [*Laughter*] Pataki, by the way, did a great job at the convention.

Q. You then went to Harvard Business School, and by your comments tonight we can see how you've put together a competent and credible business plan, not only for southern Ohio but for the whole country.

The President. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Q. In contrast, John Kerry, who also went to Yale with us, did not go to Harvard Business School but to the school of flip-flop. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay.

Q. And I'm wondering how you could address and elaborate a bit on this promise gap of how all of these programs and promises that Senator Kerry makes that would cost hundreds of billions if not trillions of dollars, in a miraculous manner, at no cost to working American taxpayers.

The President. Right. Well, I appreciate that. That's a—the point I tried to make about making promises and paying for them, and his plan isn't going to pay for them, unless we tax everybody. And that's just the reality. They pressed an economic adviser the other day and he said, "Well, we'll let you know how we're going to do it after the election." [*Laughter*] Seriously. And when you hear that you got to be nervous, because that—I put out a budget. Portman has seen it, and it's a tough budget. And it's a budget that reduces the deficit in half by 5 years. It's a budget that prioritizes defense and homeland security, and it's a budget that grows non-discretionary—I mean, discretionary, non-homeland—yes, non-homeland, non-defense—

everything other than defense and homeland—[laughter]—at less than one percent. But it's necessary if you want to shrink the deficit.

It requires being wise about the political promises you make. And so you're right, there's a promise gap. And I'm going to continue to remind people of it here in this campaign. I think it's an issue, because I think people need to tell you how they're going to pay for things. If they come out here to Ohio and promise you this program or that program or this program or this education program, I think it's a fair question, "How are you going to pay for it?"

I've explained how we're going to pay for it. And my opponent can't explain it because he doesn't want to tell you he's going to have to tax you. But he is, and we're not going to let him.

President's Visit/Taxes/Health Care Costs

Q. Mr. President, I just want to thank you for coming to southern Ohio and Scioto County.

The President. Thanks for having me.

Q. Also, I'm from Claremont County, and we're working very hard for you there, and we want to see you there, if you can squeeze that into your schedule sometime. I'd appreciate that.

The President. Okay, thanks. That's good, used the moment to invite me, nothing better than that. [Laughter] A fellow always likes to be wanted. [Laughter]

Q. The other thing I wanted to thank you about, you were talking about taxes earlier and a tax break, and I just wanted to tell you how it affected me personally. If Al Gore had been elected, I would be in a 28-percent tax bracket today. But because you are my President, I'm making more money, and I'm in a 15-percent tax bracket, thank you very much.

The President. Well, that's good. Yes, I appreciate that.

Q. The last thing I wanted to say, you were talking about health care and the problem with health care costs. And what

gets me is the audacity that John Kerry has to talk about wanting lower health care costs when it's people like his runningmate, John Edwards, that are part of the problem, being an ambulance chaser.

The President. Yes. No, I appreciate that. I think this is an issue. I'm telling you, it's a national issue. Everywhere I go people understand now the cost of lawsuits. And people ought to have their day in court. Don't get me wrong; I mean, if you get hurt, you ought to have your day in court. And there's a reasonable way to do so. But frivolous lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit causes docs to have to practice defensive medicine.

You know that it costs the Federal Government about \$28 billion a year because of the practice of defensive medicine. That's why I believe it's a national issue. It affects our national budgets. I submitted a plan. The House passed it. Of course, it's stuck in the Senate where the trial bar is tough. They're one of the most powerful special interests in Washington, DC. There's a lot of powerful interests in Washington, DC, and the trial bar is one of the toughest.

One of the reasons I'm running—well, one of the issues I'm making during the course of this run is, I want people in Washington to hear the voice of the people. It's the great thing about campaigns: You get out and you say the same thing a lot of times. And I do. I talk about medical liability reform almost every speech I give. You know why? Because when I win I want to be able to stand up in front of the Congress and say, "I made it an issue, and the people spoke. Now, let's get the job done on behalf of the patients and doctors."

Yes, sir.

Mad Cow Disease/Canadian Beef

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, and I just want to thank you for the privilege of speaking to you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I've never been in the same room as the President, and I just wanted to have the opportunity to thank you.

The President. Well, I appreciate it. I hope you view me as just like the neighbor next door.

Q. Good. You just spoke a minute ago about great farmers. Just a few hours ago, I was in up to my knees in cow manure. [Laughter] And I've been a dairyman—

The President. No wonder you're sitting way up there. [Laughter]

Q. I milked my first cow in—when I was 12 years old, 41 years—yes, 41 years ago. And my wife and I, tomorrow, will celebrate, on 9/11—we had no idea was going to happen about emergency numbers or happen in New York—but our 33d anniversary is tomorrow.

The President. Congratulations. I appreciate that.

Q. And I have a question. I don't know whether you'll like this question or not, but it is a farmer's question. Less than a year ago, the first part of December, mad cow disease was discovered in Washington State.

The President. Right.

Q. It was eradicated there and traced by DNA—every offspring—and traced to a herd back in Canada. The border was closed and is closed—Canadian beef and dairy animals. I just wondered if you could tell me about a timetable—

The President. Sure.

Q. —and how it would be done. I know for a fact that there's cattle that weighs over 2,000 pounds in Canada that's wasting—waiting across the border, and what that will do—impact that will have on the United States.

The President. No, I appreciate that. That's a legitimate question on BSE. First of all, thanks for being a farmer. Secondly, we have an obligation to make sure the meat supply is safe. I'm sure you understand that. And there is a whole process in place that, once we discover diseased meat, that kicks into action. And our Agriculture Department responded according to

the law. And the law was, as you mentioned, to make sure the dairy herds are properly—or herds are properly inspected. And that's what we have been doing.

Now, what he is basically saying is, "Hasn't the inspection process gone on too long?" Certainly, the Canadians think that. And so we're in the process—by the way, some beef is moving across the Canadian border. Cut beef—cut box beef, I believe—where is the guy? [Laughter] Oh man, you got a lousy seat. [Laughter] Cut box beef is moving, right? You don't know. It is. And so we're working the Canadians to make sure that the herds—the herd is clean enough so that we could get cross-border beef moving again.

I would like to do it as soon as we possibly can. I understand the cattle markets fairly well. I think it's in our interest we move product. It's also in our interest that we convince the Japanese to reopen their beef—their markets to U.S. beef, which they have shut down because of BSE—same with the Mexican market.

So the—our approach is threefold. One is to finish the regulatory process that we're required to do to make sure the herd is—the product is safe for consumers. Two is to work with the Canadians to get the border open again. And three is to get markets back open again that shut down as a result of the BSE scare.

Okay. Yes, sir. Number 22. How old are you?

Q. Fourteen.

The President. Good.

*Wheelersburg High School Student
President Election*

Q. Well, first of all, it's just an honor to be here, and I'm glad to meet you, and you're really a hero to America.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. My name is Dillon MacDonald. I go to Wheelersburg High School. I'm running for student president of my freshman class, and I was wondering if I could have your support. [Laughter]

The President. Man, you're heading in the right direction. [*Laughter*] Grab a mike when you find one, and let her rip. [*Laughter*] I assure you, when I was 14, I couldn't have stood up in front of all these cameras. Yes, you can have my support.

Thank you. Good luck. I'll tell you what you do. President—I'll tell you what you do. Let Portman know if you win. [*Laughter*] Seriously, write his office. When's the election?

Q. Monday.

The President. Monday? Yes, we'll know pretty soon. [*Laughter*] I've got a little longer to go in mine. [*Laughter*] But seriously, drop Portman a line, okay? I'm interested in knowing the outcome. I'll be curious. I'll remember you. I'll be watching the election like a hawk. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, *mi amigo*.

The President. *Como esta?*

Q. *Muy bien. Muchas gracias.* The Cubans in Miami want to know if you're going to be the President, going to get rid of Fidel Castro. You got rid of Saddam Hussein—[*inaudible*]—so I hope you'll be the one to clean Cuba. Hey, Puerto Rica and Cuba are for you.

The President. *Gracias.*

Q. *No hay de que.*

The President. All right, let me tell you what he's talking about. *Cuba libre.*

Q. *Cuba libre.*

The President. *Si. Ahora.* Here's what he said. We're talking about Cuba. Here's my view of Cuba. The people in Cuba want to be free. That's my view. And—but I think our policies—this administration has got the right policies. There's some pressure, I think, to make the wrong decision, and that is to trade with Cuba, for example.

Now, let me tell you the problem with that. Cuba—Fidel Castro does a marvelous job in a controlled economy of having certain places where dollars can purchase goods. The problem is, is that they pay

the Cuban workers in pesos, and there's an arbitrage—he's able to split the difference between currency valuations. The dollar is a lot stronger than the peso. So we buy goods in dollars, or a tourist buys goods in dollars, or an investor buys goods in dollars, and yet, the people get paid in pesos, and Fidel Castro keeps the balance. And it keeps him strong and keeps him in power.

That's why this administration has taken a view that we're not going to lift the embargo on Cuba, that we have got capacity for citizens to send some money and food and medicines directly to people, but we're not going to empower the Cuban Government through bad—through economic policy that would end up having an undesired effect. This guy is a tyrant right in our own neighborhood. He's not—he's—a while ago, we gave him a chance. I gave a speech down in Miami. I said, "Why don't you allow people to express their opinions in referendum and step up and participate in the process, and we'll change our policy. Just show some freedom." And instead what he did was he logged down and imprisoned librarians. This guy will put people in prison at a drop of a hat. There is no rule of law.

And so our policy is to keep the pressure on him and to not allow Fidel Castro and his dictatorial society to exploit trade and/or commerce to his advantage and to the disadvantage of the suffering people within his country.

Yes, ma'am.

Present for the President

Q. Thank you for coming to our area, first of all.

The President. Okay, thanks.

You're next.

Q. And I have made a promise to my little girl. She got up this morning and said, "Would you give this to the President?" She drew you a picture last night.

The President. Sure.

Q. And so I want to make sure that you got it, but I gave it to that gentleman back there.

The President. Where is he? [Laughter] Josh? Josh Gatlin? You picked—[laughter]—we grew up in Texas together. By the way, his old man is a good friend of mine, Larry Gatlin. Josh is a better—just for the record—hold on, just in case his old man is watching—Josh is a better golfer. [Laughter] I know him. He'll make sure I get the picture.

Q. Thank you.

The President. That's it?

Q. I just made a promise to her that I'd get it to you.

The President. Well, you tell her Mom fulfilled her promise. Thank you very much for coming.

Yes, ma'am.

President's Legacy

Q. President Bush, we absolutely love you. We love your sincerity. We love everything you represent.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And my one question for you is, 50 years from now, what would you like for your legacy to be?

The President. Yes, I appreciate you saying that. [Laughter] No, it's a great question. It's a great question. It's really an important question too. A couple of things. I'd like the reputation to be: He came and solved problems and didn't pass them on to future Presidents or future generations; that he realized he was fortunate to be the President of a mighty country and, therefore, set big goals, not only for our own country but for the world. I believe we have an obligation to lead. That's what I believe. And I also believe to whom much has been given, much is required.

I would hope that people would look back and say after 50 years of—that we put in place a certain momentum that caused more and more people to demand to live in liberty and freedom, that people saw that free societies could exist in parts

of the world where there had been hatred and, therefore, violence, that liberty was available and possible.

I think there are millions of women in the greater Middle East who want to live in free societies. That's what I believe. I believe that young men would rather have a hopeful life than strapping suicide belts on. I believe that there are reformers in the Middle East who watch very carefully the words and actions of the United States of America. And I would hope that after my time as the President—8 years of it—that people say, "George Bush didn't waver in his belief," in my hopes.

And so one of the legacies would be a peaceful world. That's what we want. We want this world to be—that's what we all long for. We've got peace in our hearts.

Secondly, at home, I would hope that people would look back and say our society was better off, for two main reasons. One, the education system fulfilled its promise. The No Child Left Behind Act is a major piece of reform, and I'll tell you why. It—one of my favorite phrases is, we're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know, if you have low expectations, guess what happens? Kids just get shuffled through the school system. And I looked at it as the Governor of Texas, and we challenged this low expectations in our schools.

I believe every child can learn. I believe every child can read. And therefore, I expect every child to learn and read. And so we raise standards. Rather than lowering standards, we raised them. And we said, "In return for a substantial increase in Federal money"—and there has been—"that we expect results." And that's the change. We said to the people of Ohio, "Measure. In return for money, you measure. Now, you figure out the test, but you measure." And here's why you want to measure—because you can't solve a problem unless you diagnose it.

If you think the system of just shuffling the kids through is wrong, then the way

you deal with that is you measure early and you solve problems early. That's how you raise the bar. The accountability system is crucial to making sure that there's a hopeful America. And that's what we're doing.

One of the integral parts of the No Child Left Behind Act says, "If you're deficient, if you're not meeting the standards in the third grade or first grade or second grade, there's extra money"—they actually start testing in the third grade—"there's extra money. Or the fourth grade, if you're falling behind, there's extra money. The fifth grade, there's extra money, so to pull people up."

Now, some may believe that you can't read, and therefore, just shuffle them through—or learn. I don't believe that. And so another legacy, I would hope, is that we've laid the foundation for a new way to approach public education so that the public schools meet the dreams of every parent and the obligations of our society, so that colleges don't become places for remedial education but in fact are places for additional education.

And finally—I know this is too long an answer, but you asked it, and I've got some big dreams. Finally, I want people to look back and say that George W. Bush understood the power of faith-based programs to change America one heart at a time. And here are the policy recommendations—policy implications. The question is, should we use Federal taxpayers' money for faith-based programs? In other words, should faith-based programs have the capacity to apply for Federal grants. And it's a legitimate debate on this subject. A lot of people say no, because of the issue of separation of church and State. I say that you don't have to blur the lines of church and State, and—by allowing faith-based programs to bid, so long as they don't use the Federal money to proselytize and so long as people of all faiths can be treated or saved or helped.

And let me give you an example of what I'm talking about: drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. Sometimes Government programs work. Sometimes, however, in order to convince a person to change their ways, you have to change their heart, and Government is not very good at changing hearts. As a matter of fact, change of hearts take place in faith-based programs. That's why faith-based program exists. That's the power of a faith-based program.

And so I believe that Government ought to welcome faith-based programs that work and give them access to Federal monies. As a matter of fact, we're changing the culture in Washington, DC, now to get Washington well-meaning, hard-working Federal employees not to fear faith-based programs. All I'm asking is, "Does it work," see. I'm not asking the process question. I don't have time to worry about process in Washington. I'm saying, "Does it work? Does this program to change the person's heart and, therefore, causes him to get off drugs—does it work?" If so, we ought to say, "Welcome. Welcome into our society. Welcome to the fabric of social help."

And so the legacy is one in which our Government recognizes that the true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of our citizens and empowers citizens to change America, one heart at a time. And so one of the legacies is a more hopeful America. That's what I'm talking about—when I say a more hopeful America, I want this society of ours to be hopeful for everybody. And I recognize, amongst our wealth there are people who hurt and people who weep and people who are hungry and people who need housing, and Government can help, but the true help can be found as well in neighborhoods, in churches and synagogues and mosques that empty out and pour out their love to help save lives.

Anyway, it's a long answer to a short question.

Q. Thank you so much.

The President. I don't think a President ought to be planning legacy. I think a President ought to be acting and leading, and let the legacy thing happen. I don't think you write your history right now. I don't think you can worry about how history is written. I think you deal with the hand you've been dealt and do the best you can do, not worry about polls and focus groups, not worry about the pressure here or the pressure there. You make the decision you think is right. You surround yourself with capable, competent people and listen to them.

Let me talk about the capable, competent people I've surrounded myself with. My administration has empowered more women than any administration. I'm talking about women who have got positions of responsibility, people who can march right in there to the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, you're doing all right," or, "Mr. President, you need to change."

I've empowered a lot of African Americans when it comes to making decisions and policy. My head of my State Department, my National Security Adviser, the head of the Department of Education, the head of the Housing and Urban Development. I mean, that's—what I'm tell you is—I'm kind of blowing my own horn here, for a second. [Laughter] I've got good, capable people from all walks of life, and I listen to them. And I listen to their advice. And I'm open-minded to their point of view. But when I make up my mind, I can make a decision and stay with it and lead this country. And that's what is important when it comes to leadership.

You know what? You got a question? Make it a good one, because this is the last question. No, I know—I know, but guess what. I got a bus to get on. [Laughter] We got to get on down the road. We got to start shaking some hands and get out there and campaign. You want me out there seeing as many people as I can see. This election is getting closer by the day.

Yes, ma'am.

Health Education

Q. I was wondering, with obesity and disease and all the things that are plaguing our youth in our schools today, what you can do as President and what you will do as President to promote health education back in our school system.

The President. Well, I appreciate that very much. Let me talk about education, putting programs in the school systems. Look, the Federal Government's role is to focus on at-risk kids, Title I kids, which we do. And we funded a reading program. But the truth of the matter is, we're spending about, oh, 9 percent of the money nationwide, and you don't want us to have 100 percent of the power. Quite the contrary. You want the local schools to be making the decisions here.

And so you ask the question, what are we going to do to make local schools have physical ed—frankly, that's up to your school boards and your Governor. I don't want to—I'm not the kind of guy who usually passes the buck, but I don't think you want the Federal Government making curriculum decisions for you.

Now, having said that, there's some things we can do. I believe that, first of all, I think it's good to exercise at school. But it is also good to exercise when you're not in school. And you can—it doesn't take much. It doesn't take much.

As you know, I'm kind of an exercise person. I like to get out and work out. It kind of clears out the cobwebs. [Laughter] But if you walk 20 minutes a day, you're improving your health. If you're—and let me tell you, I'm a busy guy, but I make time in my schedule to work out. I say to my schedulers, "I know so-and-so is important to come in here, but not nearly as important as giving me the hour to myself so I can exercise."

And so what I'm—one of my suggestions, and one of the things I will continue to do is try to set a good example when it comes to prioritizing physical exercise. I

know you can do it, and I know your friends can do it. And sometimes it takes turning off the computer or the TV to get it done, and I know that's not easy. But nevertheless, one of the roles I can do, a useful role, is to set an example, and I'll continue to do so.

I believe strongly in exercising. And I believe that the American people ought to be out there as best they possibly can. And I repeat, it doesn't take all that much. As a matter of fact, one of the best things we can do to keep health care costs down and to keep—is for people to exercise and to make right choices about what you eat, make right choices about whether you smoke cigarettes. I mean, there's some things that Government can't cause you to do, but we can tell you what you ought to do and inspire you to do it. And that's what I think one of my proper roles to be.

Remarks in Chillicothe, Ohio September 10, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here. Old Bob Ney, he said, "Why don't you come over to the Ross County Fairgrounds. Maybe a couple of people will come over and say hello." Thanks for having me. It's good to be here. I'm here to ask for the vote; that's what I'm doing.

I've been traveling on that bus throughout your beautiful State telling people I'd like their vote. And we're ending our bus trip right here in Ross County, and it's a good place to stop. This is where the people work hard. They value family. They like hunting and fishing, and they love their country.

I'm traveling with my friend Zell Miller. He—what Zell said is something I appreciate. He said, "You can be a Democrat and vote for George W. Bush." I under-

stand there's a lot of people here in this part of your State who call themselves Democrats, and we welcome you here, and we welcome your vote. I want to thank my friend Zell Miller for traveling with me. He's a great American. He is a solid, solid citizen of this great country. And I'm proud to call him friend.

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NOTE: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. at Shawnee State University. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Ohio State Senator Doug White; Mayor James Kalb of Portsmouth, OH; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz and his daughter, Michelle, former University of Tennessee women's basketball player who transferred to Ohio State University in 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarfawi; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.