

Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of

the Iraqi Interim Government; Theresa May, Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## Statement on the Millennium Challenge Account September 16, 2004

The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a groundbreaking initiative that encourages all nations to embrace political and economic reform and has enjoyed bipartisan support since I announced it 2 years ago. The powerful combination of trade, open markets, and good government is history's proven method to defeat poverty on a large scale, to vastly improve health and education, to build a modern infrastructure while safeguarding the environment, and to spread liberty and enterprise.

Already, the MCA has encouraged countries to govern justly, invest in their people, and promote economic freedom. The MCA will support these efforts, helping the poorest countries seize the opportunities of the global economy and meet the needs of their people for better health and education, cleaner water, and a brighter future. I urge Congress to ensure that the MCA can fulfill its promise as a bold new vision for international development and a powerful expression of the generous spirit of the American people.

## Remarks at a Victory 2004 Reception September 17, 2004

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. I want to thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here.

Al, thanks for your hard work. I appreciate your gathering up a little help here, as we're coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*]

I feel great about the election. I want to thank you for your help. We're making good progress. I want to thank you all here. I know we've got a lot of Latinos here. *Gracias por su apoyo.*

*Audience member.* [*Inaudible*]

*The President.* *Si. Vamos a ganar, con su apoyo.* Thank you all for coming.

You know, Laura and I are traveling our country a lot, and it's exciting to get out amongst the people. It really is. I'm enjoying it. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm

is high. Came off a bus trip in Minnesota yesterday, which was very successful; heading down to North Carolina today. [*Applause*] Yes. My energy level is high. My vision is clear, and we're going to win.

So I said to Laura—so when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you won't have to give any." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to the promise. [*Laughter*] You know, in New York City the people got to see Laura. You know, there's a lot of pressure on, and she gave a great speech. She's a compassionate, decent soul. She's a wonderful mother, a great wife. I'm telling the people around the country that the reason to put me back in is so Laura

will have 4 more years. [Laughter] I'm really proud of her. She's in West Virginia and South Carolina and Pennsylvania today. So she sends her best.

Dick Cheney is doing a great job. I'm proud to be running with him. I like to remind people that he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [Laughter] And then I tell them I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [Laughter] I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, sound experience, and a person getting the job done for the American people.

I also want to thank Suzanne Lord. Al gets the credit; Suzanne probably did all the work. But thank you. Thanks for being here. I want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds, who is the Victory 2004 national finance chairman. This is a Victory Committee fundraiser. This is—the money goes to help turn out the vote in key States. It's really important. And Mercer has done a great job. He was the finance chairman for Bush-Cheney, did such a fine job that we deputized him to do the Victory Committee. And I appreciate my friend's hard work.

I want to thank my friend Raul Romero. [Applause] Yes. *Donde esta, Raul? Alli.* It's good to see you, friend. Thanks for bringing so many of your friends here. I'm honored to have your continued support. Raul is a *Tejano*. I know him well from Texas. He's a good friend, and you got to count on your friends in politics, you know. If you don't have any friends, you're not going anywhere in politics. [Laughter] And I, fortunately, have got a lot of friends, many here in people like Raul. I appreciate you coming.

I want to thank my friend Jim Langdon. He's a Texan, too. I appreciate him being here, and his hard work. I want to thank Julie Finley, Dick Hug and Lois, and Shelly Kamins and Lynne. Thank you all for putting this good group together, and thank you all for coming.

I'm telling the people where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to

lead. That's what I'm doing and will continue to do so. I tell people that I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And I came to Washington to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. And we've done so, by raising the standards in schools, by measuring early so we can solve problems before it's too late, by spending extra Federal money but, in return, insisting upon results. And there is an achievement gap in America that is narrowing, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of public schools.

I tell people that I believe we have a moral responsibility to provide good health care for our seniors. I came to Washington to fix problems. We had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was modernizing. Medicare wasn't. People say, "What do you mean by that?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. It means that we can pay \$100,000 for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. We have strengthened and modernized Medicare, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

I tell people that I believe in the energy and innovation of America's workers and farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs, and that's why we unleashed the energy with large tax cuts. And they're working.

Our economy is—I remind people on the campaign trail that we've been through a lot. The economy of our country has been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. That hurt. Those corporate scandals hurt. It shook the confidence of the investor class. It shook the confidence of the consumers. I also tell them that we passed tough laws that now make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America.

We've overcome the attacks. That attack of September the 11th cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th. I say we're overcoming it because

our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The national—we've added 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is below the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and the 1990s.

I tell the people that my most solemn duty is to protect the American people, and that if America shows any uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. It's not going to happen on my watch.

I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And from what I hear and what I see, the American people want a consistent, steady, principled leader. And that's why, with your help, we're going to win.

I understand the world in which we live is changing. It's very important for me to explain that to the American people, that we are now part of a changing world and the role of Government is to change the fundamental systems of Government to help people. The changing world occurs because we've got women in the workplace today. Fifty years ago, women were at home. The changing world occurs because people change jobs or careers often in a lifetime. Fifty years ago, people only had one job and one career. And yet, the fundamental institutions of Government, our health care, our pension plans, worker training programs, or the Tax Code, hasn't changed. They were designed for the days of yesterday. I believe they need to be designed for tomorrow, and so I will do so over the next 4 years.

A hopeful society is one in which Government systems help people realize their dreams. A hopeful society is also one that has a growing economy. It's an issue in this campaign, is who's got a vision to make sure this economic recovery is sustained economic growth.

In order to make sure jobs are here in America, America must be the best place

in the world to do business. That means less regulations. It means tort reform, legal reform for our small businesses and all businesses, for that matter.

We need to get an energy plan to my desk. I proposed a comprehensive energy plan to the United States Congress. It's stuck. It's a plan that encourages conservation, encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's got a very important electricity title that modernizes the—help modernize the electricity grid. It says we'll explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways and use coal technology—clean coal technology so we can use abundant resources at home. I'm telling the people if we want jobs here, we must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to keep jobs here, we've got to have wise trade policy. We open up our markets for goods from overseas, and it's good for the consumers we do so. If you're a consumer for a product and you have more choices, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price and better quality. And what I'm telling the American people is, over the next 4 years I will continue to insist others treat us the way we treat them. I will continue to remind China that they must open up their markets to our products. And I say so because I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure the economy continues to grow, we'll be wise about how we spend the money, the people's money. And to make sure the economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign. My opponent has proposed at least \$2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—so far—[laughter]—and we've still got the month of October to go. [Laughter]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, it's simple, just tax the rich." Well, first, you can't raise enough money by taxing the rich to pay for \$2.2 trillion in new spending. So there's

a tax gap, and guess who's going to get to fill the tax gap? You are, yes.

And secondly, we've heard the rhetoric before, "tax the rich." The rich hire lawyers and accountants so that the middle class gets stuck with the bill. We're not going to let him tax anybody, because we're going to win in November.

I'm serious about fixing the Tax Code. It's a complicated mess. And I'm going to bring Republicans and Democrats together to make the code more simple and more fair. In order to make sure jobs stay here and to make sure this economy grows, we need to spend less time filling out tax forms and more time in constructive work. And so I'm serious about fixing this Tax Code, and the people want me to help fix the Tax Code.

You know, one of the interesting challenges we face here in this country during changing times is to make sure the workers have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. You know, I'm going down to North Carolina today, and I've met textile workers who lost their job but who are able to go back to a community college and gain the skills necessary to become employed in the health care sector, for example. Because of some education, because they're able to enhance their skills and enhance their productivity, they're able to find higher paying jobs in the jobs of the 21st century. So one of the real challenges for us is to make sure that the worker training programs are relevant and actually fulfill the need of making—of matching skills with people who want to work.

And as well we've got to do something about our high schools, because most new jobs in a changing world require 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there, which means we better have good remedial education, good intervention programs for at-risk students in high school. We've got to make sure we emphasize math and science. You know, as the No Child Left Behind Act gains steam and—and over time we'll require a

rigorous exam before graduation from high school. See, by raising standards in high school and by increasing Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, it will mean more Americans are able to start their career with a college degree.

Health care is an issue in this campaign. I see Vin Weber there. He and I spent a little time yesterday in Minnesota, where I was explaining our health care vision. It's a commonsense, practical plan to make high-quality health care more affordable and more accessible, and we have a difference in opinion in this campaign. I mean, it's a clear difference on health care. My opponent wants Government to dictate the health care decisions. I want you to decide the health care decisions.

Here are some of the practical, commonsensical ideas that I'm talking about on the campaign trail. More than half of the working uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording insurance. One reason why is because they're in the marketplace alone. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can purchase insurance at the rates big companies get to purchase insurance. My opponent disagrees with that. Those are called association health plans, and they make a lot of sense.

Another way to help people with their health insurance is to expand health savings accounts, tax-free health savings accounts. These make a lot of sense because it enables a patient and a doc to interface. It lets a person control his own money. It means a person can take that health savings account from one job to the next. Remember, people are changing jobs and careers during the course of a lifetime here in America today.

I've got a plan to help small businesses better afford health savings accounts for their working uninsured. We're going to allow low-income Americans to have a tax credit that they can apply to a health savings account. Health savings accounts are

a practical way of helping reduce the cost of medicine and making sure people have got insurance.

We're going to continue to expand community health centers. I think they make sense, because community health centers are places where the indigent and the poor can get primary care and preventative care without having to go to an emergency room of a hospital. I told the people, when I was running, we were going to renovate or expand 1,600 clinics. I'm meeting that goal. The goal in a second term is going to be every poor county in America have a community health center.

A big issue in the campaign is medical liability reform. People are now beginning to understand what these junk lawsuits mean for their health care. The junk lawsuits are running up the cost of health care, and more and more citizens understand that. And junk lawsuits are running good docs out of the practice of medicine. If the goal is to make health care more available and affordable, this country needs medical liability reform—now.

I'm looking forward to the health care debate. My opponent's plan is a massive, big-Government plan. And you can tell by the size of the price tag it's massive, and it's big. [Laughter] They estimated the cost of his health care plan to be \$1.5 trillion. That's with a "T." [Laughter] And that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter]

He wants to expand Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid, you're crowding out families from small businesses, from private health plans in small businesses. In other words, you're moving people from the private sector to the public sector. And what's wrong with that is that all of a sudden you have Government officials deciding what coverage you get, and you have Government officials deciding decisions for you. His plan is the exact opposite of what we believe. We believe when it comes to health care decisions, they ought to be

made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats here in the Nation's Capital.

I've spent a lot of time talking about ownership in the campaign. I believe ownership helps bring stability in changing times. During my administration, the homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. We want more people owning their own home. It's a fantastic statistic.

We're working hard to make sure more Latinos own their own home and people from all walks of life own their own home. I can't think of anything more important than promoting ownership throughout America. I love the fact somebody opens up the door where they're living and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

And I think in order to make sure the retirement system, Social Security works well for a younger generation, we've got to incorporate ownership into Social Security. I tell the people where I go that if you're on Social Security, you don't have to worry about the Government fulfilling its promise. Now, I know there's going to be political rhetoric trying to say something different than that, but it's not a fact. Social Security trust is solvent when it comes to those who've retired. Finally—frankly, the Social Security Trust is in pretty good shape for baby boomers.

But we've got to worry about the youngsters, our kids and our grandchildren, when it comes to the solvency of the Social Security system. That's why I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own money, set aside a personal savings account that will help Social Security fulfill its promise, a private account that they can call their own, a private account they can pass on to the next generation and a private account that Government can't take away.

I also spend time out there reminding people that in a changing world some things don't change: The values we try to live by, courage and compassion, and reverence and integrity; the institutions that

are fundamental to our lives, our families, our schools, our religious congregations.

We believe in a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how our country responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. It's very important for me to continue to lay out our strategy. We've got to lay out our strategy. We've got a clear strategy. We'll continue to defend the homeland. We'll transform our military to meet the threats of the 21st century. We'll strengthen our intelligence services. We will stay on the offensive. It is best to strike the terrorists elsewhere, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we will continue to spread freedom and peace, and we're going to prevail.

Our strategy is working. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people about what life was like 3 years ago, compared to today. Maybe this will help you: Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat, headed by a sworn enemy of the United States; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks.

Because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; Saudi Arabia is after Al Qaida; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida key members and associates have been brought to justice.

America and the world are safer. This progress involves careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. I knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and his ties to terror. When people say, "What ties to terror," remind them about Abu Nidal, the killer of Leon Klinghoffer, and his organization, or Zargawi—he's the person who beheads people, trying to shake our conscience and shake our will; he was in and out of Baghdad, as were some of his cohorts—or the fact that Saddam Hussein paid the families of suicide bombers. He had a history of using weapons of mass destruction. It's important for the President and the country to always remember one of the lessons of September the 11th is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

My administration saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. I went to the Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I remembered, came to the same conclusion we came to: Saddam Hussein was a threat. And Members of Congress authorized the use of force. My opponent looked at very same intelligence I looked at and, having looked at it, concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat and voted yes when it came time to authorize the use of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits the troops into harm's way, he must try all options before the military. I was hoping diplomacy would work, so I went to the United Nations. And the United Nations looked at the same intelligence we did and remembered the same history we remembered and concluded, with a 15-to-nothing vote in the U.N. Security Council, that Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. I believe when international bodies speak, they must mean what they say. I believe when the President speaks, he must mean what he says.

Saddam Hussein wasn't about to listen to another U.N. resolution. We hoped he

would. We would hope he'd listen to the demands of the free world, but he didn't. He not only didn't listen to the United Nations Security Council, but when the U.N. tried to send inspectors in there, he systematically deceived them. So I have a choice at this point in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best when it comes to a madman, or take action to defend the country? Given the choice, I will defend this country every time.

We didn't find the stockpiles we thought would be there, that we all thought would be there. But Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to the enemy. And that is a risk we could not afford to take after September the 11th, 2001. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. And America and the world are safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

Because we acted to defend ourselves, 50 million people now live in freedom. Afghanistan 3 years ago was run by these barbaric people. When they hear me talk about an ideology of hate, I'm talking about people like the Taliban. Young girls weren't allowed to go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public square or killed in sports stadiums if they didn't toe the line of these backward people.

Today, 10 million citizens, 41 percent of whom are women, have registered to vote in the upcoming October Presidential election. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago that four women were pulled out of a bus and executed by some of the Taliban holdovers because they were trying to—I think they were registering people to vote or just registered to vote. And the world was, "Oh, no, the elections won't be happening. It's too dangerous." People want to be free. And if given a chance, they will exercise their rights. And look what's happened in Afghanistan.

Despite ongoing acts of violence in Iraq, that country has a strong Prime Minister;

they've got a National Council; and they are going to have elections in January of 2005. The world is becoming a better place because freedom is on the march.

We stand for free societies in the Middle East because they'll be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments, the resentments that cause people to kill in the name of a hateful ideology. We stand for free governments in the Middle East because we know they'll fight terrorists instead of harboring them. I talk to people a lot about why freedom will make us more secure—that's why. Free societies are hopeful societies. And free societies will be allies against these hateful few who have no conscience, who kill at the whim of a hat—at the drop of a hat.

So the mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear. We'll help these new leaders train Afghan and Iraqi citizens so they can do the hard work of preventing the designs of a few from stopping the hopes of the many. We'll help them train their police and help them train their armies so they can defend themselves. We'll help them have these elections. We'll get them on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops are coming home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great military. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of a fantastic military. It's been my honor to have met many who wear the Nation's uniform. These are extraordinary citizens of great courage and great decency, and they deserve the full support of the Federal Government. That's why, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding of \$87 billion to support our troops in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And this was an important request. It was for ammunition, spare parts, body armor. It was for fuel, hazard pay, health benefits. This was an important piece of legislation—so important, support was overwhelming in the United States Congress, so strong that only 12 Members of the Senate voted against it, 2 of whom

were my opponent and his runningmate. Do you realize this? Do you realize that four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding the troops? Only 4 of 100, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him why, and he said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion," right before he voted against it. [Laughter] And he said he was proud of the vote. And finally he just said, "It's just a complicated matter." [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

A President must be clear, and a President must mean what he says. During the course of this campaign, my opponent has, I think, seven or maybe eight different positions on the war in Iraq. He was for it but didn't fund the troops. Then he became the antiwar candidate. Then I think it was at the edge of the Grand Canyon that he said, well, knowing everything we know today, he still would have voted for it. Then he said we're spending too much money, and he was on a national talk show earlier that said, we weren't spending enough money. And then he did a radio interview 2 days ago to try to clear it all up. [Laughter] And here's what he said: There were no circumstances—none—under which we should have gone to war, although his own vote to go to war is the right one, and it was right to hold Saddam Hussein accountable. [Laughter] Even the radio talk show guy said, "I can't tell you what he said." [Laughter]

Mixed signals are the wrong signals to send our troops in the field, to the Iraqi people, to our allies, and most of all, to our enemy.

We've got a strong alliance, and during the next term I'll continue to work with our friends and allies to try to stop proliferation, to continue to help Afghanistan and Iraq. There are nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. And it's important for the President to continue to

reach out to other nations. But I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I've spent time with Prime Minister Koizumi. I like to share this with the people of our country, this little conversation about Koizumi, because it helps make the point of what I mean by the transformational power of liberty. Koizumi, of course, runs a country that—with whom—with which we were at war. My dad fought against the Japanese. Your dads, relatives, loved ones fought against the Japanese too. Japan was the sworn enemy of the United States of America.

Yet, after World War II, Harry Truman believed that liberty could transform societies. Fortunately, a lot of Americans agreed with him. I'm sure some didn't. You can imagine how hard it would be to say, after having lost a loved one in a war against the Japanese. They said, "Why do we care? Why do we want to work to help them become a democracy?"

But Truman did. And as a result of doing the hard work, of helping an enemy transform itself by becoming a democratic society, I now sit down at the table with the leader of Japan, talking about the peace that we all want. Think about that for a minute. See, liberty has the ability to take—transform an enemy into an ally, so we can work on the peace together.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about how to keep the peace in the greater Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

These are historic times. This is a historic moment in history, as far as I'm concerned. We're helping to change the world for the better by spreading freedom. And it's hard work. It's hard work for a society to go from one that had been brutalized by a tyrant who condoned mass graves, cut off the hands of the guys that came to see me in the Oval Office because his currency

had been devalued. It's hard work. But it's necessary work, and it's work that will succeed, because I believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I tell the people, this young century is going to be liberty's century. By promoting freedom at home and abroad, we're going to build a safer world, a more hopeful America. By reforming our systems of Government, more Americans will be able to make their own choices and realize the dream that are available in this country. We'll continue to spread ownership and opportunity to every part of our country. We'll pass the values of our Nation on to a new generation, and we'll work for peace and freedom.

And I want to thank you for giving me a chance to be your President. I'm excited

about this campaign. I'm looking forward to the next days. I like coming down the stretch. [Laughter] And I appreciate your help. We'll put your good, hard work and your help to good use. We're going to turn out the vote, and we're going to win in November. And I'm honored to have you on my side. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:41 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Washington. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

## Remarks in a Discussion on Women's Issues in Charlotte, North Carolina *September 17, 2004*

*The President.* Thanks for being here. Go ahead and be seated. We've got some work to do here. [Laughter] Thanks for such a warm welcome here in the great State of North Carolina. It's nice to be back here. I'm here asking for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help.

Gosh, there's a lot of people back there. Can you hear me back there? [Applause] That's good. Thanks for coming.

The first thing I'd like you to do is ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And while you're doing that, don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. And then after we get them registered to vote, when it comes voting time, head them to the polls and remind them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Listen, we've got an interesting way to talk about some issues today. One of the

things you've got to know is, I've got a reason to run again. I'm asking for the vote because there's more to do to make this country a safer place and a better place for everybody, a more hopeful place for those of us who live here in America. And so I asked some of our fellow citizens here to share some ideas, or to discuss some of the ideas I have about a new term. I think you're going to find it interesting. I hope you do.

Before I begin to talk with them about ways to make this country a more hopeful place, I do want to tell you that I lucked out when Laura said yes. One way to maybe look at this race is, you can judge the nature of a fellow by the company he keeps. I'm keeping great company when it comes to Laura Bush. I'm proud of her. Listen, when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I don't have to give any political speeches." [Laughter]