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I said if you gave me the chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all. I appreciate your coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:37 p.m. at the United Sports Training Center. In his remarks, he referred to Alan Novak, chairman, Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Hershey, Pennsylvania
October 21, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. So he said, "A couple of hundred people might show up if you came." I came—thousands are here, and I'm grateful. You know what this tells me. With your help, we will carry Pennsylvania on November the 2d.

Listen, we have a duty in our country to vote. And I'm asking you to turn to your friends and neighbors, go to your coffee shops, your houses of worship, your community centers, and tell people that we have a duty. And as you get people going to the polls, don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. Our message is for everybody. If you want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

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

The President. Thank you all for coming. I am so grateful so many came. It means a lot. My only regret is that Laura is not here to see this crowd. She was a public school librarian when I met her for the second time. See, we went to the seventh grade together, San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. When I met her the second time and I finally asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She's giving a lot of speeches, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, strong, great First Lady. She is not with me today, but one of our twin daughters, Barbara, has come. Thank you for coming, baby. There's nothing better than campaigning for a President with a daughter you love.

I'm proud of my Vice President, Dick Cheney. Now, look, I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I did not pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience, his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I am proud to have been introduced to this great crowd by Major Dick Winters, an American hero who commanded Easy Company in World War II.

I want to thank Congressman Todd Platts for joining us today. I'm proud you're here, Congressman. I want to thank the folks who are here from the statehouse and local office. I'm here to say as clearly as I can that Scott Paterno needs to be the next Congressman from the 17th Congressional District. I appreciate Tom Corbett, who is going to be the next attorney general, and Jean Craige Pepper, who's running for treasurer.

But most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. It's getting close to voting time. It's time to crank up the phones. It's time to put up the signs. It is time to carry Pennsylvania.

In the last few years, the people have come to know me. They know my blunt

way of speaking. I get that from my mother. They know I mangle the English language sometimes. I get that from my dad. [*Laughter*] Americans also know I tell you exactly what I'm going to do, and I keep my word.

When I came into office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months. And the American economy was sliding into a recession. To help families and to get this economy growing again, I pledged to reduce taxes. I kept my word. The results are clear. The recession was one of the shallowest in American history.

Over the last 3 years, our economy has grown at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. The past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The unemployment rate across our country is 5.4 percent—lower than the average rates of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. Farm income is up. This economy is moving forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

To make sure jobs are here in America, to make sure people can find work, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on our job creators. That means we've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits that are plaguing small-business owners.

To keep jobs here in America, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that encourages conservation and encourages renewables. It's a plan that encourages clean coal technology. It is a plan that recognizes, to keep jobs in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep the taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign.

Now, my opponent has his own history on the economy.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. In 20 years as a Senator from Massachusetts, he's built a record of a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] He's voted—he has voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. He voted to tax Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Ninety-eight times in twenty years—that's about five times a year. I would call that a predictable pattern. See, he can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

Now he's promising not to raise taxes for anyone who earns less than $200,000 a year. He said that with a straight face. [*Laughter*] The problem is, to keep that promise he'd have to break all his other promises. He has promised $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That's trillion with a "T." And so they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said, fine, he's just going to raise taxes on the rich. Now, you've heard that before. When you try to raise taxes on the rich, that raises between 600 billion and 800 billion. There's a gap between what he's promised and how he says he's going to pay for it. And guess who usually gets to fill the gap?

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There's something else wrong with the "tax the rich" slogan. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to slip the bill and pass it to you. We are not going to let him tax you; we will carry Pennsylvania and win on November the 2d.

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

The President. When I came into office, our public schools had been waiting decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were being shuffled through school without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability in the

school and to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act, and we're seeing results. Our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We're closing achievement gaps all around this country, and we're not going to go back the days of low standards and accepted mediocrity.

When I came into office, we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing, but Medicare was not. For example, we'd pay hundreds—tens of thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That did not make any sense to our seniors. It wasn't right. I pledged to bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare. I kept my word. Seniors are getting discounts on medicine. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We got more to do on health care. We've got to make sure health care is available and affordable. We'll have a safety net for those with the greatest needs. That's why I believe in community health centers for the poor and the indigent. We'll do more to make sure poor children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families.

Most of the uninsured in America work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. To enable small businesses to afford health care, we must allow them to pool together so they can buy insurance at the same discount big companies get to do. We will expand health savings accounts so workers and small businesses are able to pay lower premiums and people can save tax-free in a health care account they manage and call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we have to do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. You have a problem here in the State of Pennsylvania because of these junk lawsuits. You're losing too many good docs. Too many ob-gyns are leaving the practice. Too many pregnant women are wondering whether or not they're going to get the health care they need in order to bring their child into this world. The system is broken. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-personal-injury-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent put a personal injury lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against medical liability reform 10 times. I'm standing with the doctors. I'm standing with the patients. I'm standing with the people of Pennsylvania. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

I laid out a health care plan that's sensible and reasonable. Now, my opponent has got his health care plan of his own. And it's a plan for bigger Government.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, the other day in the debate, he looked right in the camera again, and he said this about his health care plan: "The Government has nothing to do with it." I remember him saying that. I was standing right there. [*Laughter*] I could barely contain myself. The Government has got a lot to do with his health care plan. Eight out of ten Americans would end up on a Government health insurance program. Eight million Americans would lose their private health insurance at work, and most would go on a Government plan. He says his plan helps small businesses. That's what—that's not what small-business groups think. They've called it an overpriced albatross that would saddle small businesses with 225 new mandates.

I have a different view. We've got to help small businesses afford insurance, not saddle them with a bunch of rules and regulations from Washington, DC. In all we do to reform health care, I believe the

health decisions need to be made by doctors and patients, not by officials in our Nation's Capital.

I'll continue to set out policies for an optimistic and hopeful America. I believe this country should be an ownership society. You know, there's a saying, no one ever washes a rental car. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of wisdom in that statement. When you own something, you care about it. When you own something in America, you care about the future of our country.

That's why we promote entrepreneurship in this administration. Every time a small business is started in America, somebody is achieving the American Dream. We're encouraging health savings accounts so people have the security of owning and managing their own health care account. We're encouraging homeownership. Listen, more and more people are able to open up the door where they live and say, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." And America is better off for it.

In a new term, we'll take the next step to build an ownership society by strengthening Social Security. Now, let me speak to the seniors who are here. You remember the 2000 campaign when they were running the TV ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, the seniors will not get their checks." That's old-style scare politics. I want you to remind your friends and neighbors, they got their checks. They'll continue to get their checks. And baby boomers like me are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust fund.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. See, we need to worry about whether or not the Social Security trust will be solvent when they need help in retirement. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account that earns a better rate of return, an account they call their own, an account the Government cannot take away.

When it comes to Social Security, as you heard the other night in the debates, my opponent wants to maintain the status quo.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The job of a President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future generations or future Presidents. He's against the Social Security reforms I laid out, and he's against about every other reform that gives more authority and control to the individual. On issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to raising taxes, he takes the side of more centralized control and more Government.

There is a word for that attitude. There is a word for that philosophy. It is called liberalism. Now, he dismisses that word as a label. He must have seen it differently when he said, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." [*Laughter*] The others have noticed as well. There's a nonpartisan National Journal magazine that did a study and named him the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. That takes a lot of hard work in that bunch. [*Laughter*] Can you imagine being more liberal than Ted Kennedy?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. He can run—he can even run in camo—but he cannot hide.

I have a different record. I have a different philosophy. I do not believe in big Government, and I do not believe Government should be indifferent. I'm what I call a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives, not try to run their lives. We'll continue to help men and women all across this country find the skills and tools they need to prosper in a time of change, skills and tools necessary to realize the great promise of our country. That's how I have led, and that's how I will continue to lead for 4 more years.

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

The President. In this time of change, some things do not change. Those are the

values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for 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. We stand for the second amendment, which protects every American's individual right to bear arms. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy, but his record is plenty clear. He says he supports the institution of marriage but voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He called the Reagan years as a period of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. During this campaign, he can run, but he cannot hide.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We are defending the homeland. I thank the first-responders who are here with us today. We're strengthening our intelligence. We're transforming our military. We will not have a draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We are staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will spread freedom and liberty. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world, the way it was some 3½ years ago—think about this. 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 dangerous place and a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned horrific attacks.

Because the United States of America led, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror and is now a free nation; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for its country's freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's associates and members have been brought to justice.

We are standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. I want the youngsters here to understand what has taken place during a brief period of your life. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school in Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that their mothers were taken into the public square and whipped because they wouldn't toe the line of these ideologues of hate called the Taliban. It wasn't all that long ago that the people of that country lived in darkness. Because we acted in our own self-interest, because we acted to destroy the Al Qaida terrorists' training camps, because we worked to secure ourselves, 25 million people live in freedom. They had Presidential elections a couple of weekends ago in Afghanistan. The first voter in Afghanistan was a 19-year-old girl. Freedom is on the march, and the people of Afghanistan have gone from darkness to light.

The people of Iraq will be voting for a President in January. Think how far that society has come from the day of torture chambers and mass graves. It's in our interest that we spread freedom. Free societies will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. Freedom will help us keep the peace we all want. Freedom is on the move, and America is more secure for it.

So our mission is clear—our mission is clear. We will help these countries train armies and police forces and security forces in Afghanistan and Iraq so they can do the hard work of defending their freedom, so they can stand up and fight these terrorists who are trying to stop the advance of freedom. We'll help the countries get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great United States military because those who wear the uniform are people of such great character and service and duty and honor. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to thank the military families who are here for the sacrifices you have made. And I assure you, we'll keep the commitment we have made to the troops and their families. They will have the resources they need to complete their missions.

That's why I went to the Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way. I received great bipartisan support. Your Senators, Senator Specter and Santorum, voted with me on that bill. It was an important piece of legislation. Most people up in Congress understood how important it was. As a matter of fact, only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding for our troops, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, I want to tell you another startling statistic. When you're out gathering the vote—I want to tell you another startling statistic, a true fact. There were only 4 Members of the United States Senate—4 out of 100—that had voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against the funding to support our troops in harm's way, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him how he could have made that vote. They asked him how he could have made that vote. And you might remember perhaps the most famous quote of the 2004 campaign. Here is what he said: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They kept asking him, and he kept answering. He must have given five or six different explanations. One of the most interesting ones of all is he finally said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

All elections come down to a choice, and in this, America's first Presidential election since September the 11th, the security of our country is at risk in many ways different than we have ever faced before. We're in the midst of a global war against a well-trained, highly motivated enemy, an enemy that has no conscience, an enemy that hates Americans because of the very freedoms we love. The next Commander in Chief must lead us to victory in this war. Yet, you cannot win a war when you do not believe you are fighting one.

Senator Kerry was recently asked how September the 11th had changed him. And he replied this: "It did not change me much at all." End quote.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. His unchanged world becomes obvious when he calls the war against terror primarily an intelligence and law enforcement operation rather than a war which requires the full use of American strength. Senator Kerry's top foreign policy advisor questioned this is even a war at all. And here's what he said: "We're not in a war on terror in a literal sense. It's like saying 'the war on poverty'—it's just a metaphor." End quote. It's a different mindset, a different attitude. Confusing food programs with terrorist killings reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the world we live in, of the world we face. And this is very dangerous thinking.

Senator Kerry also misunderstands our battle against insurgents and terrorists in Iraq. He called Iraq a "diversion" from the war on terror. Let me talk about the case of one terrorist to show you how wrong this thinking is. The terrorist leader we face today in Iraq, the one responsible for car bombings and beheadings of Americans, is a man named Zarqawi. Zarqawi ran a terrorist training camp in Afghanistan until our military arrived. He then went to Iraq. He received medical care in Iraq. He plotted and planned in Iraq. To confirm where he's coming from, just the other day Zarqawi announced his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. Zarqawi and his associates were not busy fighting American forces in Iraq, does my opponent think they would be living peaceful and productive lives? Course not. That's why Iraq is not a diversion but a central commitment in the war on terror.

The Senator the other day talked about the need for America to pass a "global test" when it comes to committing our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. He was standing right there when he said it. No, we'll work with our friends and allies. I'll continue to build alliances and strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. I believe liberty can transform nations. One of our friends—Laura and my friends is Prime Minister of Japan. He's a friend. I saw him at the United Nations in New York. I said, "Listen, I'm going to be talking about you on the campaign trail. Do you mind?" He said, "No, go ahead and talk about me." I said, "Okay." What he didn't—I didn't ask him permission to tell you that Elvis is his favorite singer. [*Laughter*] We've gotten to know him quite well.

It probably doesn't sound much to folks out there, that I would call him my friend. But remember, 60 years ago, we were at war with Japan. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad, like many of his generation, like many of the Band of Brothers, fought against the Japanese—people of that generation served. And your dads and granddads did the same, I'm confident.

After we won the war, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. That's what he believed. There was a lot of skepticism about that, a lot of doubt. There was a lot of anger because of the war, and you can understand why. Families' lives have been turned upside down because of death during the war. A lot of people just said, "Well, the enemy can't possibly become a democracy." But our predecessors stayed with it. And as a result of that belief, I sit down at the table today talking about how to keep the peace with Prime Minister Koizumi.

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

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe women in the Middle East want to live

in a free society. I believe mothers and fathers in the Middle East want to raise their children in a free and peaceful world. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It is a day I will never forget. I will never forget the voices of those in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I will never forget the police or firefighter coming out of the rubble who grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day—ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I have been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at Hershey Park Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Corbett, candidate for Pennsylvania State Attorney General; Jean Craige Pepper, candidate for Pennsylvania State Treasurer; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
October 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It seems like yesterday I was here in Wilkes-Barre. Come to think of it, I was. [*Laughter*] I figure if I keep coming back, I'll meet everybody in town.

I'm coming back because I want you to know how important your vote is. That's why I'm here. We're close to voting time. I've come back to tell you how important your help is in this election. Find your friends and neighbors. Convince them to go to the polls on November the 2d. Do not overlook discerning Democrats, people like Senator Zell Miller. And remind your friends and neighbors, if they want safer America, a stronger, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I regret that Laura is not traveling with us today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. Yes, that is generally the reaction—[*laughter*]—kind of like, "Why didn't you stay home and let her come?" [*Laughter*] You know, we were in the same grade at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. That would be the seventh grade. And then I became reacquainted with her when she was a public school librarian. [*Laughter*] And when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, but make me a promise." I said, "What is it?" "Promise me I'll never have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that