

Remarks at a Reception for Gubernatorial Candidate Jim Nussle in Des Moines

April 11, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Governor, I appreciate that introduction. I can't tell you how delighted I am to support Jim Nussle as the next Governor of the State of Iowa. He was there—he was there in Amana. No question about it. He introduced me. What he forgot to tell you was, he actually sang. [Laughter] He'll be known as the singing Governor of Iowa. [Laughter]

I've gotten to know this man real well. I've seen him when the heat's on. You know, you can judge a person in Washington by how they react to pressure. Jim Nussle stands strong when there's pressure. You need a Governor of Iowa who can take the heat and lead this State to a better future, and that man is Jim Nussle.

He's a proven leader. See, that's what the people of Iowa need. They need somebody to lead. He's proven himself to be a leader. He's got a record, something people can look at. The thing I like about him is when he gives your word, he keeps it. When he looks you in the eye and says, "Mr. President, I'm with you," he means it. What the people of Iowa need is a Governor who looks the people in the eye and says, "This is what I intend to do," and then does what he says he's going to do in office, and that man is Jim Nussle.

I like the fact he's getting Democrat support. I think you need a Governor who can reach across party lines to get things done. I was pleased to see Terry Duggan, the former mayor of Dubuque, is here tonight. He's a Democrat who's switching so he can support his friend Jim Nussle. That's the kind of Governor Nussle will be—he's the kind of person who sets clear agendas and clear goals and brings people together to achieve the goals. People in Iowa, like they are all across the country, are sick and tired of needless politics. What they

want is leadership. And they'll get strong leadership in Jim Nussle as the Governor.

And I'm proud to be with his wife, Karen, the next first lady of the State of Iowa. I know something about First Ladies—I'm married to one. [Laughter] And Laura sends her love. Nussle came out to the airport, and he said, "Fine, I'm glad to have you here this time of the year, but when we're coming down the stretch, make sure you send the A Team." [Laughter] I said, "Which one, Mother or Laura?" [Laughter] He said, "Both." [Laughter] They both want Jim Nussle to be the Governor of this important State. They know him well, and they admire him and like him. And, Jim, Mother and Laura send their best.

It's also a thrill to be here with your parents, Mark and Lori. You know, there's nothing better than having a strong family, coming down the stretch in a political campaign. And nothing, also, better than having a good runningmate, and it's an honor to be here with Bob Vander Plaats and his wife, Darla. Thank you all for being here. Good luck to you.

I'll never forget campaigning in Iowa, and particularly in the caucuses in 2000. And I had the honor of campaigning with your United States Senator. And so we're driving down the road, and he said, "Old Bill lives in that house, and Jim lives in that house. That's the Smiths' house over there." I've never been with a person who understands the grassroots and the people of Iowa better than Chuck Grassley. Senator, I'm thrilled to be here with you. Oh, there he is.

And so we land at the airport, and Senator Grassley says, "I want you to meet the next member of the statehouse from the 17th District." I said, "I'm looking forward to that, Senator. Who is he?" He said,

“Well, it just happens to be my grandson, Pat Grassley.” You’re following the footsteps, Pat, of a really fine man in your grandfather. Good luck to you. All I can tell you is they had Grassley in to talk about key issues facing the country, and he said, “Before we talk about the key issues, I just want you to know, my grandson is going to be elected.” [Laughter] The guy puts his family first, and I appreciate that.

I’m also honored to be here with Congressman Steve King of Iowa. Where are you, Steve? There he is. Thanks for coming. I know when Nussle gets elected to be the Governor, he’s going to be smart enough to call upon former Governor Bob Ray for advice. Bob Ray is here—thrilled you’re here, Governor. Thanks for coming—one of the real class acts in Iowa politics.

State Senator Jeff Lamberti, who’s going to be the next United States Congressman from the Third Congressional District, is with us.

You know, one of the people that has impressed me the most here in Iowa politics is a fellow who’s served as a State senator, but he left the party chairmanship of Iowa to go to Iraq. His country called; he said, “Yes, sir, I want to serve”—and that’s Chuck Larson.

It’s good to see the speaker is here. It’s a good sign, Governor. When the speaker starts showing up before the elections, it’s always a good sign something is in the air. And by the way, this is a huge crowd for a person running for Governor. And I want to thank you all for coming to support this good man. It’s a good sign this early in the campaign to have such a big crowd.

Speaker Chris Rants is here. Thanks for coming, Speaker. And I want to thank Chuck Gipp as well, the majority leader. You’re going to have you a Governor you can work with and get some stuff done. I want to appreciate the State auditor—David, thanks for coming. It’s proud to be with you again.

I want to thank the party chairman; I want to thank the grassroots activists; I want to thank those who are getting ready to turn out the vote next fall for what you’re going to do. You got to help this good man. You got to start manning the phones and putting up the signs at the right time. He’s going to count on you to win this election. He cannot do it alone. And I want to thank those of you who have contributed to his campaign. It’s hard to have a fundraiser this successful this early in the campaign season. It means you put together a good organization. And I want to thank those who put this fundraising dinner on. You know, it’s nothing better than to be a candidate running for office and know that there’s a lot of good folks standing with you. It’s going to be the kind of thing that empowers the candidacy as it gets closer to the election. The fact that he’s had this many folks show up is a good sign. And I want to thank you all for contributing to the next Governor of your State.

You know, I’ve gotten to see Nussle during some interesting times in our country; we are living in historic times. I wish I could report to you that this was a nation that wasn’t at war, but we are. And it’s a deadly serious war. It’s a war that requires strong leadership and resolve. The war came to us on September the 11th, 2001, and we didn’t ask for it, but it came unexpectedly. We lost more people on that day than we lost at Pearl Harbor. It’s a day I’ll never forget. And it’s formulated how I think about foreign policy.

I said to myself on that day that I would use all assets of national power to protect the American people. The most important job Jim and I have in Washington, DC, is to protect our country. And the best way to do that is to stay on the offense, is never relent, is never give in, is never hope for the best but to pursue the enemy until we bring them to justice.

And Iraq is the central front on this broad war on terror. You know, I said

this—I gave a speech the other day, and in it, I said something—I said, you know, I wonder why people—what kind of people is it who wants to stop democracy? In our country, we got to think about the nature of the type of person that can't stand liberty. What kind of people is it, when they see a chance for people to live in a free society, they do everything in their power to stop the advance of freedom? I'll tell you what kind of people it is—these are the kind of people who think the opposite of—they adhere to an ideology that's dark and dangerous.

The enemy that we face has got plans. They got ambitions. They believe that democracies are weak. They believe it's a matter of time for the United States to withdraw, and by withdrawing, they would find safe haven from which to launch attacks again. We're not going to be intimidated by thugs and assassins. We will achieve victory in Iraq, and by achieving victory in Iraq, we will make it more secure for a generation of Americans.

They hope that we lose our nerve. We will not lose our nerve. We will stand with the brave freedom fighters and democracy—democrats in Iraq—[*applause*].

These are difficult times for the American people, and I understand that. The enemy cannot defeat us on the battlefield. The only thing they can do is kill innocent life and hope we retreat. We're not going to retreat. Victory in Iraq is vital for our security. We got one powerful weapon going for us besides our brave military, and that is liberty. Jim Nussle and I understand that liberty is universal, that there is an Almighty, and the Almighty's gift to each man and woman on the face of the Earth is freedom, that deep in everybody's soul is the desire to live in a free society. And we understand that as democracy takes hold in parts of the world that is desperate for freedom, we are laying the foundation of peace for a generation to come.

The temptation in Washington, DC, is to try to make decisions based upon polls

or focus groups. You cannot lead the Nation, nor can you lead a State, if you rely upon polls to tell you what to think. The thing I like about Jim Nussle is he stands on principle. Principles will be the bedrock for his decisionmaking. You don't have to worry about this man—kind of drift, trying to figure out what he thinks or what he believes. He'll lead this State to a better tomorrow because he's a man willing to stand on principle and make the hard decision and stand by it.

I've got to see him when it comes time to spending your money. And he's pretty good about it. You know, the temptation—every program sounds great in Washington, by the way. And believe me, those appropriators in Washington, they love to appropriate. And that's why it's been important to have an ally on the budget in Jim Nussle. We have passed some lean budgets in Washington, DC, because we want to cut the deficit in half. But he's not going to fall into that trap that you hear coming out of the halls of legislatures all around the country that say, "In order to balance the budget, let's raise taxes." That's what you're going to hear out of Washington, DC. But that's not how Washington works. Yeah, they'll raise your taxes all right, but they'll also figure out ways to spend your money. The best way to balance this budget is to keep your taxes low so this economy grows and be wise about how we spend your money. And Jim Nussle is doing just that as the budget chairman of the House.

He's got a plan to reform the taxes of Iowa. He's got a plan to keep this State on the leading edge of economic vitality. And he's the kind of fellow that can take a plan and put it into action. You know, we were talking about education behind the stage. When I was the Governor of Texas, I used to say, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. Nussle says, "You bet, education is going to be my number-one priority." And it should be. It's really important to get it right. It's important to have a Governor

who's willing to challenge the status quo when he sees failure and mediocrity. It's important to have a Governor set high standards. I love the idea of hearing a Governor-to-be who says, "I'm going to make sure that Iowa is the center of excellence for public education in the United States of America." And there's no doubt in my mind he can get it done.

Senator Grassley and I went over to watch some seniors sign up for Medicare. Jim Nussle and Senator Grassley and I have got a vision for health care for this country, and he's got a good vision for the State. We believe that the Government ought to fulfill its promises to seniors and the poor. But we also believe that Government shouldn't be telling the rest of us who our doctor ought to be and what the procedures ought to be. We believe in the doctor-patient relationship. It's going to be important to have a Governor who understands the power of health savings accounts and association health plans, who understands you can't have good medical care if you're driving good doctors out of the practice of medicine because of frivolous and junk lawsuits.

You know, it's really interesting; I remember coming in the 2002 campaign—we were talking about Medicare, and both Senator Grassley and Congressman Nussle said to me—they said, "If you're going to write that law and modernize Medicare so that seniors have got prescription drug benefits, you make sure we do something about rural health care in Iowa and across the country." They were instrumental in making sure that Iowa hospitals were taken care of. You're about to have yourself a Governor who understands the importance of rural health care in the State of Iowa.

I was trying to find Jim Nussle when I was giving my State of the Union. It's pretty close-in at the State of the Union. It looks like a big hall, but it's not. As a matter of fact, you can look them in the eye when you're giving the speech. And so I was trying to seek him out when I

said, "We got a problem; we're addicted to oil." See, he's been—he and Grassley have both been working on me for a long time about making sure that renewables become the centerpiece of our energy policy. I agree with them wholeheartedly. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, we got to get off of Middle Eastern oil. And the best way to do so is with Iowa corn. *[Applause]*

A couple of corn growers popped up. *[Laughter]* And I'm earnest about this, and I look forward to working with Jim throughout the remainder of this congressional term to make sure we got ample money in our budgets for research and development. And we want to be using corn for ethanol; we want to be using cane; we want to be using biomass. He's got a vision for Iowa that makes sense, and it's a vision that's important for our country as well. And we got to put our mind to it. I'm looking forward to working with this Governor in this important agricultural State. I can't wait for the day for some President to say, "Look, the crop—look at the crop report. We got a lot of corn, which means we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." It is vital for this Nation to get off oil if we expect to be a competitive nation in the 21st century. And I'm looking forward to working with Jim Nussle.

I think it's important to have you a Governor who understands that every life is precious and works to promote a culture of life in the State of Iowa. And that will be Jim Nussle. And I think it's important to have a Governor who understands the government can't do everything when it comes to helping heal broken hearts. The way I like to put it is government can hand out money, but it can't put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. I think it's important to have a Governor who is able to elevate and capture that great compassion of the people of Iowa to help solve seemingly intractable problems. I think it's important to have a Governor who says, "Fine, government has

got a role, but a primary responsibility of the citizens is to love a neighbor who hurts, is to feed the hungry, find shelter for the homeless.”

I think it’s important to have a Governor who is willing to call upon the faith-based institutions of a State to say, “Why don’t you help us heal the addicted, find love for the person who needs love?” Governments are law and justice; government isn’t love. But fortunately for places like Iowa, there are thousands of loving people who look forward to be called to action, who look forward to rallying behind a Governor who says, “Let us make this State the best

State it can possibly be.” And that Governor-to-be is Governor Jim Nussle.

It’s an honor to be with this good man. Thank you all for supporting him. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at Hy-Vee Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Vander Plaats, candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Iowa, and his wife, Darla; Christopher Rants, speaker, and Chuck Gipp, majority leader, Iowa State House of Representatives; Iowa Auditor of State David A. Vaudt; and Ray Hoffman, chairman, Republican Party of Iowa.

Message on the Observance of Passover, 5766 April 11, 2006

Say therefore to the people of Israel, “I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.”

EXODUS 6:6

I send greetings to those observing Passover, beginning at sundown on April 12.

The story of the Jewish people throughout history reflects the triumph of faith, the importance of family, and the power of hope. During Passover, Jewish people across America and around the world gather together with family and friends to celebrate the liberation of the Children of Israel from slavery. By reading the Hag-

adah, singing traditional songs, and sharing the Seder meal, Jewish people relive the story of their redemption and ensure that their values and heritage are passed on to future generations.

During this celebration of faith and hope, we are reminded that freedom is the Almighty’s gift to every man, woman, and child. We pray for a more peaceful and hopeful world where the blessings of liberty are bestowed upon all mankind.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed Passover.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.