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we want, to laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted." We want our children, even the youngest children in America, to be challenged and entertained and delighted by learning. This is a responsibility of every parent, and it's a great calling for our great country.

Thank you for coming, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. in the school's gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to Edward S.J. Tomezsko, campus executive officer, Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County; and Mike Fisher, State attorney general of Pennsylvania. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Gubernatorial Candidate Mike Fisher in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April 2, 2002

Thank you very much. Well, "Governor," thank you for those kind words. I want to thank you all for coming, and thanks for that warm welcome. It's good to see so many friends. I want to thank you all for supporting the next Governor from Pennsylvania. I've been here quite a bit since I've been President, but I learned a new fact recently that made me a little nervous. I didn't realize this, but Pennsylvania has more pretzel bakeries—[*laughter*]—than any State in the Union. [*Laughter*] So I decided to take a risk. [*Laughter*]

I love coming to Philadelphia. I love the history of Philadelphia. I love the fact that Philadelphia is the cradle of freedom; that's what I love.

Mike mentioned Tom Ridge. You know, my biggest job is to defend freedom, is to protect our homeland. And you know better than anybody, I picked a really good man to lead the homeland defense of the United States. I want to thank you for letting Tom cut his eyeteeth here. [*Laughter*] He did a great job as Governor. He's doing a really good job in Washington.

And I want to thank Mark Schweiker as well. He's doing a fantastic job as Governor. Thank you, Mark. Pennsylvania has had two fine Governors. It's time to make three Governors in a row. I'm proud to be here on stage with Mike and the future Lieutenant Governor. There's no doubt in my mind they will both do a fine job, an excellent job, for the people of Pennsylvania. I'm also honored to be here with your senior Senator, Arlen Specter. Thank you very much, Arlen, for coming. I had the privilege of traveling from the University of Pennsylvania, in Delaware County, to the hotel with Jane Earll. She's solid on the issues. She knows what she's talking about.

I'm also honored to be here with David Girard-diCarlo and Manny Stamatakis. These guys were my friends before I was somebody—[*laughter*]—and I'm proud to call them friend. I want to thank them for their hard work, and I want to thank you all for contributing your hard-earned dollars to this good candidate. I also want to thank the leaders of the political party here, the chairman and the national committeeman and national committeewoman, all of whom are willing to provide the grassroots support necessary for candidates like me and Mike to succeed.

You know, fundraising is an integral part of politics but so is getting out the vote—so is those who are willing to spend a lot of time putting out the yard signs, dialing the phones, and doing all the hard work necessary to make candidates viable. On behalf of a grateful President, and a soon-to-be-grateful Governor, thank you for the grassroots politics here in Pennsylvania.

I also want to thank Carol Fisher, Mike's wife, for her willingness to make a huge sacrifice on behalf of a good man running for Governor. I know something about good wives. I'm very fortunate to have a good wife, myself. Laura is doing a great job as our First Lady. She is a steady hand. She was a public school librarian when I married her and really wasn't all that keen on politics. And if the truth be known, she wasn't all that thrilled about knowing politicians, either. [*Laughter*] But she is where she is, thank goodness. Thank goodness for my family, and thank goodness for the country. The American people have gotten to see why I asked Laura to marry me. There's still a lot of doubts in people's minds as to why she said yes. [*Laughter*] But I'm proud of her, and I want

you to know she's doing great, and so is my family.

I think there's a lot of reasons for the people of Pennsylvania to support Mike. First, he's done a good job as the attorney general. He's been given a huge responsibility, and he performed. He's one of these fellows that does in office what he said he would do, and that's refreshing.

Mike has led the fight against drugs, and he's made a difference. As I understand it, there's been over 6,000 arrests made to make sure Pennsylvania streets are safe from those who would sell drugs. But he also knows what I knew, that we've also got to work on demand. We've got to make sure our youngsters understand that drugs will destroy their lives and ruin their hopes. Mike can take this to the Governor's office and make a huge difference for the citizens of Pennsylvania.

He also has been making sure Pennsylvania stays safe. He's a tough crimefighter. He makes it clear that there are consequences for bad behavior in the State of Pennsylvania. And that will stand him in good stead when he becomes the Governor as well.

We had a chance to talk about education today in the car. I was promoting an early childhood reading initiative here in the Philadelphia area. Mike knows what I know, that we must set high standards for every child, that we must expect the best from every single child, and that we must hold people accountable for results. It's fine for States and the Federal Government to spend money, but for that money we expect our children to learn how to read and write and add and subtract. And if the status quo is unacceptable, if children are not learning to read and write and add and subtract, it's important to have somebody in the Governor's office who is willing to say, "That is not good enough. The fact that children can't read and write and add and subtract is not satisfactory to me, because every child counts in America, and no child should be left behind."

It is important to have a Governor who sets high standards and expects the best and a Governor who is willing to challenge a system that simply shuffles children through. During the campaign, I called that the soft bigotry of low expectations. Mike understands that we must hold people accountable, that we must insist upon basic education. We must challenge failure wherever we find it, in order for the American Dream to reach every neighborhood in every community in every State of our Nation. And I want to thank Mike for that.

I had the honor of working on and signing a substantial piece of education legislation, a significant reform. I was able to work with Senator Kennedy and Senator Gregg and Congressmen Boehner and Miller to get this done. The Federal Government spends a lot of money on education, and finally we're beginning to say, "What are the results? Can our children actually do what we expect them to do?"

In that bill not only do we insist upon strong accountability to show us whether or not we're achieving standards, but we pass a lot of power back to the States, where power belongs. I fully recognize one size does not fit all when it comes to public education all across America. It's important for Governors to be empowered to meet high standards. And therefore, it's important to have good Governors, who understand high standards and accountability, in the Governors' offices all across America. Mike Fisher will be such a Governor.

And as Mike said, he understands the importance of empowering the private sector in order to create jobs. Governments don't create wealth; governments must create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes.

Mike believes in lower taxes, and so do I. You might remember, I came to Pennsylvania a lot, saying, "If you give me a chance to be your President, I will work with Congress to cut the taxes on the people who work in America." And that's exactly what we did. And not only did we do that, we did it at the right time in Washington, DC.

You see, when the economy slows down, like it had, it's important to let people have more of their own money, so they can spend it. When people have more of their own money, it creates demand. And when people demand more goods and services, somebody will produce the goods and services. And when somebody produces the goods and services, somebody can find work. The best

way to make sure America goes back to work is to trust the American people with their own money.

Now, there are some in Washington who don't understand that, but they read a different textbook than Mike and I do. There are some who say, the more money the Federal Government has, the better off America will be. That's not the way I think. That's not the way Mike thinks. And history will prove us right. By cutting taxes, we saved the country from a significant recession.

I remember campaigning in Chicago one time, and the guy said, "Would you ever deficit spend?" I said, "Well, only if we were at war or the country was in recession or there was a national emergency." [*Laughter*] I didn't realize we were going to get the trifecta. [*Laughter*] We're dealing with the issue of our economy, and I want you to know that we're dealing with the issue of war and our national emergency as well.

I mentioned Tom. Our job is to make sure that if anybody hits us again, the Nation can respond. We've got a great first-responders initiative. I had the honor of meeting the fire chief of Philadelphia and leaders of the Philadelphia police force, those who lead the brave men and women who are on the frontline of dealing not only with crime but with any emergency that may come.

We've got a significant amount of money in our budget to protect the American people. Not only are we going to bolster our first-responders, to provide them more training and more equipment in order to respond; we're going to make sure our border security is better. We want to know who's coming into the United States and why they're coming in and if they're leaving when they're supposed to be leaving. We've got a bioterrorism initiative to put in place a response mechanism if the enemy were to use a biological weapon or a chemical weapon on America. In other words, we're buttoning up the homeland security of the country.

You also need to know that any time we get any kind of hint that somebody may try to harm Americans, we will respond. We've got much better dialog between our Federal and State and local law enforcement officials. Our intelligence gathering is better than it's ever been. Our information sharing is very sound.

I wake up every morning, and I get into the great, beautiful Oval Office, and I read a threat assessment. It reminds me that we're still threatened. But I'm here to tell you, our country is responding. We're diligent. We're alert. We know our mission, and we know our priority. But the best way to defend the homeland, the best way to make sure our little ones can grow up in a peaceful world, is to find the enemy wherever they try to hide and bring them to justice.

When our—when the enemy hit us, I couldn't understand what was going through their mind. They must have thought our Nation was so self-absorbed and so materialistic that all we would do would be to file a lawsuit. [*Laughter*] They sure were wrong.

I said some things, and I meant them. I said to those nations around the world, if you think you can hide one of those terrorists or feed them or harbor them, you're just as guilty as the terrorists. And thanks to the United States military and a vast coalition of freedom-loving nations, the Taliban found out exactly what I meant.

Every chance I get, I try to stress, particularly to the young in America, that ours is a nation that doesn't seek revenge; we seek justice. And that we went into a country like Afghanistan not as conquerors but as liberators. I want to remind you all that, as a result of our military action in Afghanistan, we saved thousands of people from starvation. And as importantly, schools opened up to young girls. For the first time, many young girls got to go to school. I'm so proud of the compassion of America. I'm proud of our strength, but I'm equally as proud of the compassion of this great nation.

But we're just starting in Afghanistan, and there's still a lot of work to be done there. Afghanistan is still a dangerous place, and wherever we find them bunched-up or wherever we find their leaders, we're in hot pursuit. We're teaching these people—treating these people the way they need to be treated.

You need to understand: These are cold-blooded killers. These are people who hijacked a religion so they can kill for means which freedom-loving people can't understand. They hate America. They hate what

we stand for. They cannot stand the thought that we worship freely in America. They hate the thought that there's viable political discourse. They can't stand the thought that we're a free country, that everybody has got an equal chance in America. And so they want to harm us.

We're going to treat them as international crooks, and we're going to get them on the run. And like you read in the newspapers or saw on your TV screens, we're hunting them down one by one. Our Nation is resolved. Our Nation is united. Our Nation understands that we're in this for the long haul. History has called us into action. History has said to America, "Are you going to defend freedom or not?" And the answer clearly is, you bet we're going to defend freedom.

And that's why I've submitted a budget to the United States Congress that significantly increases our defense spending. It's the largest increase in 20 years. And here's why. First, this is a long struggle, and it's not an easy struggle. And secondly, any time the United States commits our troops into harm's way, they must have the best equipment, the best training, the best possible pay. The price of freedom is high, no question about it. But it is not too high, as far as I'm concerned.

The world watches America very closely. They want to know: Are we serious; are we determined; will we tire and grow weary? Because if we do grow tired and grow weary, others will as well. They're going to find a determined administration who leads a determined country to defend freedom.

And I believe, as a result of being steadfast and strong and determined, we can achieve the peace. I long for peace, but I understand the road to peace can be really hard. But if America is strong and determined and we constantly keep the pressure on terrorist activities and terrorism, we can bring peace to places in the world that never thought they could have peace.

I've got a vision for the Middle East that says that Israel must be allowed to exist and be at peace with its neighbors. I appreciate the fact that Saudi Arabia spoke clearly about the need for Israel to be able to have normal relations with its neighbors, so that Israeli boys and girls can grow up in a peaceful society. I feel the same thing about the Palestinians. I hope that they can have their own peaceful state, at peace with their neighbor, Israel, a self-governing country, a country in which there is economic prosperity to end the hopelessness of many of the citizens who live there.

But there are those who want to destroy that vision. There are those who want to murder to make sure that vision never comes to be. The United States of America will stand strong and continue to insist that those who yearn for peace in the Middle East and other regions around the world must do everything they can to stop the terrorist activities all aimed at making sure that peace does not exist.

Now, out of this evil is going to come some good. A strong America will lead to a more peaceful world. And at home, we can fight evil as well. People say to me, "What can I do? What is it that I can do to help?" Well, you can love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. You see, in order to fight evil, this country can gather millions of acts of kindness and put a compassionate, kind face on our country. In order to fight evil, in order to stand squarely in the face of evil, we can let our hearts flow.

It doesn't take much; it really doesn't. Mentoring a child, teaching a child to read or telling a child you love them, a big brother or a big sister, a Boys and Girls Club member, is all part of defining the true face of America. You know, if you want to fight against—the war on terror, if you walk across the street to a shut-in and simply say, "Can I talk with you today," that in itself, is part of defining the true character of our country.

The way to fight evil is to help build character in our children. The way to fight evil is to tell your children you love them every single day, is to remember the most important job you'll ever have, if you happen to be a mom or a dad, is to love your son or your daughter with all your heart and all your soul. This country is going to win the war against evil, because not only are we militarily strong and determined, but because we're a nation that is so compassionate and so kind and so loving.

There is a new culture evolving in America. It's a culture that is shifting away from "if it feels good, do it," and "if you've got

a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understand that we are responsible for something greater than ourself. That was clearly defined on an airplane that crashed in Pennsylvania, when several people on that plane told their loved ones goodbye. They told them they loved them. They said a prayer. They said, "Let's roll," and drove an airplane into the ground to save other people's lives. It is a symbol of what is possible in America. It is a sign that there are people in this Nation willing to make a sacrifice to help a neighbor in need, willing to make a sacrifice to make their community a better place.

That's how you win the war on terror. You understand that there is a responsibility that comes with living in the greatest country on the face of the Earth. The great news is, America is rallying to the cause. I can't tell you what an honor it is to be the President of a nation full of such great and decent and compassionate and tough and firm and freedom-loving human beings.

I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank you for supporting Mike Fisher. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jane M. Earll, candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania; David Girard-diCarlo, cochairman, chief executive officer, and managing partner, Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley LLP; Manuel N. Stamatakis, president and chief executive officer, Capital Management Enterprises; Alan Novak, chairman, Robert Asher, national committeeman, and Christine J. Toretti, national committeewoman, Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania; and Harold B. Hairston, commissioner, Philadelphia Fire Department.

Remarks on the Ready To Learn Program

April 3, 2002

Thank you all. Thank you. Laura and I are honored to have you all here today, and thank you for coming. Some of you have been to the White House before, and I know we've got some first-time visitors here. For example, this will be the first time the Vowelles have ever been to the White House. [*Laughter*] Theo and Cleo Lion are also here to sing a song titled "W Trouble." [*Laughter*] I don't know the song, but the theme is familiar. [*Laughter*] My mom often used to say, "The trouble with W"—[*laughter*]—although she didn't put that to words.

We're delighted that so many children can be a part of this special event here in the East Room. Thank you all for coming. It's so good to see you. It is wonderful to see children so young and so eager to learn, with so many fun opportunities to learn together. Every child is born with a love of learning—every child. We adults have a responsibility to give them every possible chance to learn and to start early.

I appreciate the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, for being here today. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I want to thank all the good folks at PBS for coming. I appreciate your concern for our Nation's children. And as Laura said, we've been aware of your programming for a long time.

I notice that we've got a larger-than-usual contingent of White House staff here today. I know they're not here to see me. [*Laughter*] They're here to see Mr. Rogers. [*Laughter*] When he comes to the White House, it's sure to be a beautiful day in the neighborhood. [*Laughter*] It is impossible for us to count the number of lives you have touched. But you have had a huge impact on thousands and thousands of children. And there are thousands and thousands of parents and Americans who are grateful for your service to the country. In "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," every child is welcomed into the world of learning—not just a few, not just ones from certain neighborhoods, but every child.

Our goal as a nation must be to make sure that no child is denied the chance to grow in knowledge and character from their very first years. Public Broadcasting System has excelled in carrying out that responsibility. Shows like "Between the Lions" bring a combination of charm, creativity, inclusiveness, and as importantly, proven teaching methods to the task of educating young children. And these shows are being used in Head Start and day care centers to encourage early learning. The Ready To Learn program helps