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The President. We've got 4 more years to make sure that we win the war on terror. The world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity to every part of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

I'm honored to have your support. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 p.m. in the Jerome-Duncan Theatre at Freedom Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; and country music entertainers Travis Tritt and Billy Cerveny. The transcript of these remarks was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4.

Remarks in Maumee, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thank you. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Please be seated.

Audience member. Ohio is Bush-Cheney country!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. Nothing better than having a good pancake for breakfast—except I didn't get mine. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. *Viva Bush!*

The President. *Vamos a ganar.* That means, we're going to win. Gosh, it's exciting to be here. I'm here because I want you to know I have a reason to be your President for 4 more years. I see clearly where we need to go as a nation. I have a positive vision for our country and the world. I have a plan to win the war on terror and to spread freedom and peace. I have a plan to make sure prosperity reaches every corner of America so our citizens can realize the full promise of our country. I have a plan to tap into the deep compassion of America so the lonely will find help, so the children can be mentored, so that the hungry can be fed. I have a positive, optimistic vision for our country.

I'm here to ask for your help. I'm here to help you—I'm here to ask you to help me serve for 4 more years in the great country of America.

Here's the agenda. Together we can work together to make sure America is safer, stronger, and better. And I cannot do it without your help. And so, first, I want to thank my chairman. Bernie, thanks for your leadership. Thanks for all the people who put on this fantastic breakfast. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank those who are going to put up the signs. I want to thank those who are going to go to the community centers, to the religious congregations. I want to thank those who are going to go to your neighbors, both Republicans, Democrats. I want you to thank those who are going to go to the independents, and you remind them that we have a positive vision that benefits all of America.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. Yes, I know. She was on the bus trip yesterday but had to go back to Washington because, like me, she is—she works for the country. She's got something to do. She's got a scheduling conflict. [*Laughter*] But I tell you, she sends her love and her best. She is a fabulous First Lady. One of the main reasons to put me back in there—[*laughter*]—is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

I think when you're out there garnering the vote, convincing people to show up to vote, make sure you remind them that I put together a fantastic administration—good, solid Americans, people from all walks of life who have served our country, put their country above self-interest. I'm running with a fantastic man, a great Vice President in Dick Cheney.

I one time said to a crowd—and my mother was in the audience—I said, "Dick Cheney is the finest Vice President the country has ever had." [*Laughter*] Mother yelled out, "Wait a minute, buster!" [*Laughter*]

I want to thank your Governor, who's traveled with me today, Governor Bob Taft. I'm proud you're here, Governor. Thank you for coming. I want to thank Congressman Paul Gillmor for being here today. Congressman, I appreciate you coming. Larry Kaczala is with us, who is going to be elected to the United States Congress. I'm proud he's here. I know we got a lot of State and local officials. I'm proud you're here. I appreciate you being

here. I know there's some mayors here. I like to give advice to mayors. When you're the President, you can take liberties to give people advice. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate everybody bringing their families. There's some people bringing their families here. Go ahead and use me as a convenient excuse to skip school. Just tell them the President said, give you an "A."

I'm here seeking the vote. See, I believe you have to ask for the vote. I believe you've got to ask people for their help, and I believe you've got to ask for the vote. I've come to this important part of Ohio to say, "I need your help, and I want your vote." I want your vote come November the 2d. And with your help and with your vote, Ohio will be Bush country once again, and I will be the President of the United States.

I believe we've shown the country that I can put together an administration that knows how to lead, an administration that can handle the tough times, an administration that's steady and resolute, an administration clear of vision. And it's important that we not only talk about what has happened, but as importantly in a campaign, you talk about what you intend to do. And that's what I want to share some time with you today. I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, as we seek the vote, as we garner support, that this administration has done things. And the only reason we look past—to the past is to verify what we're going to do in the future to make this country safer and stronger and better.

I want you to know it's going to be a tough campaign. I'm under no illusions, and I look forward to it. My energy level is high. My enthusiasm for the job is strong. I have a deep desire to serve the American people for 4 more years, but it's going to be a tough contest. I'm fully aware of how tough it's going to be. I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been there a long time. He's been there so long, he's just about on both sides of every issue. [*Laughter*]

Ohio is going to be a contested State. He's been here seeking endorsements. As you might remember, he claims to have picked up some important endorsements from foreign leaders. [*Laughter*] He just won't give us the names. [*Laughter*] He did drop a hint the other day. He insisted—and here's what he said, "What I said is true." This is my opponent speaking. He said, "What I said is true. I mean, you can go to New York City, and you can be in a restaurant, and you can meet a foreign leader." [*Laughter*] I got a hunch this whole thing might be a case of mistaken identity. [*Laughter*] Just because somebody has an accent—[*laughter*]—and a nice suit and a good table at a fancy restaurant in New York doesn't make them a foreign leader. [*Laughter*] But whoever these mystery men are, they're not going to be deciding this election. The American people will be deciding this election.

And the American people are going to have a clear choice in this election. It's a choice between keeping the tax relief that is moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people. It is a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger. And I look forward to making these choices abundantly clear to the people of Ohio and the American people.

I know what it takes to win the war on terror. My most important job is to make America a safer place. That's my most solemn duty, is to protect us from an enemy that hates what we stand for. On September the 11th, 2001, disaster struck many families in our country and struck our Nation. It made us realize that we're no longer immune from being a battlefield in a new kind of war. It was an historic moment in our country. It's necessary for the President to see clearly the challenges that we face, to understand clearly the tasks.

My opponent and others believe this matter is a matter of intelligence and law enforcement. I strongly disagree. See, that was the attitude we had before September the 11th, after the World Trade Center was attacked in 1993. They thought we could solve it with legal indictments. Some people thought the matter had been solved, but the enemy was plotting and planning and training. They served notice on us, and we're now serving notice on them. We're not going to just serve them with legal papers. We will use every asset at the disposal of the United

States Government to bring these killers to justice.

My most solemn duty, the most solemn duty of our administration is to do everything in our power to protect the American people. We got better intelligence sharing now. Our ports and borders are better guarded. Airports are little harder to fly in. Heck, they're looking at the shoes—[*laughter*]—but we want to know. It's our job. We have to be correct 100 percent of the time to protect you. The enemy only has to be right one time. So we've got a daunting task. And we're doing everything we can to button up the homeland, but the best way to win this war on terror is to stay on the offense, never relent, never yield, and bring people to justice before they have a chance to harm Americans.

And we're making progress. We're slowly but surely dismantling Al Qaida. I like to put it this way: There is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from the justice of the United States of America and our friends.

It's very important for the President of the United States to speak clearly and, when he says something, mean what he says. In order to make the world more peaceful and the world more free, when an American President speaks he better speak with authority, clarity, and certainty. And when he does speak, he better mean it. And so when I said to the world, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant exactly what I said, and the Taliban found out.

The Taliban no longer exists in power in Afghanistan, and the world is better off for it. America is more secure as a result of the actions that we took, not just America but others. America and the world is better off because the Taliban and their hatred and their barbaric ways no longer are in power.

Equally as important, the people of Afghanistan are better off as a result of the Taliban being out of power. I want you to remember—first of all, see the movie "Osama." It's an interesting portrayal, and it's a sad portrayal of what life was like for a young girl in Afghanistan under the Taliban. This child, of course, never had a chance to go to school, never had a chance to realize her potential, was literally enslaved by the barbaric behavior and attitude and ideology of these backward people. Not only did we uphold a doctrine, not only did we make America more safe and secure, this great, generous, compassionate country liberated—liberated—people from the clutches of tyranny and slavery, and I am proud of our Nation for doing so.

A President must understand that things changed on September the 11th and that when we see a threat overseas, it must not be allowed to materialize. In order to do our duty to make America safer, we must not take any threat for granted. We must never hope for the best. We must never hope that somebody might change their attitude, and therefore, the world will be more peaceful.

Listen, I saw intelligence, and it told me loud and clear that Saddam Hussein was a threat. The Congress, members of both political parties, looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously and said to Saddam Hussein, "Disarm, or face serious consequences." They said that, and I believed it was necessary because not only did we look at intelligence and saw a threat, we remembered his behavior. He used weapons of mass destruction on his own people and on his neighbors. He had terrorist ties. He was paying suiciders to kill innocent people in Israel. He was a man who was a destabilizing influence in the world. He's a person who hated what America stood for.

The United Nations Security Council acted. He defied once again. This wasn't the first time that he had said to the world, "I don't care what your demands are," and he defied—my attitude is when you say something, you better mean it. When you say, "Disarm, or face serious consequences," the world, when it speaks, better mean what it says in order to make the world more peaceful. So I had a choice to make: Either to take the word of a madman, a tyrant, a hater, or to defend America. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted, torture chambers are closed. Because we acted, there won't be any

more mass graves. Because we acted, because we kept our word, countries like Libya got the message and voluntarily disarmed. Because we acted, democracy is beginning to rise in the heart of a troubled region. Because we acted, the world is more peaceful, and America is more secure.

There's hard work left to be done in Iraq, and like you, I mourn anytime an American soldier loses his or her life. It's an incredibly sad moment for our country. I met with many families, and I've assured them that their loved one will not die in vain, that the mission we're on is an historic opportunity to make this country safer and the world more peaceful.

Freedom is an essential part of my vision for the future, because I know that free countries will be peaceful countries. I know that freedom, when it takes hold in the Middle East, will change the Middle East. The doctrine up to now has been for stability in the Middle East, and look where it's got us. I think we have to have a different strategy, a different vision, a different future, and that is to promote freedom and democracy in the part of the world that desperately needs freedom and democracy. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty's gift to each man and woman in this world.

These are historic times. It's an historic opportunity. The Iraqi people, of course, are watching very carefully. See, most Iraqis, of course, want to be free. They want to live in a free society. Moms and dads want to raise their children in peaceful settings so their children can realize their dreams and fulfill their talents. That's what they want. And they're watching carefully the United States. They're watching to see how we react. They're watching to see whether we cut and run or whether we're good for our word. They don't have to worry about me. I don't care what the politics are. I don't care what the pressures are. We will make sure that we fulfill our mission and Iraq is free.

Either Iraq will be a camp for terror and tyranny, or Iraq will be a model for freedom and democracy. And I believe Iraq will be a model for freedom and democracy, and the world will be better off.

I love to tell the story about my dinner with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan. And Laura and I were visiting him in Tokyo, and we were having Kobe beef, by the way. And we were talking about North Korea. Amongst many of the topics we discussed, one of them was how to make sure the Korean Peninsula—what we can do together to make sure the Korean Peninsula is nuclear weapons-free. It's a vital mission. There's a tyrant in North Korea that wants to develop a nuclear weapon. And I, of course, believe that we ought to work with other nations to convince him not to have that nuclear weapon, and one of those nations is Japan.

And it dawned on me in the course of the conversation, that here I was talking to the leader of a former enemy. My dad went to the theater to fight Japan in World War II. Many of your dads—I'm sure we've got some veterans here who did the same thing—and here I am talking to the Prime Minister of Japan about how to keep the peace. And it dawned on me, what happens if we had gotten it wrong after World War II? Would I have been having this conversation? And also I realized that when we get it right in Iraq, some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq to discuss the threat of that era, about how best to safeguard America and the world.

These are historic times. This is a time in which the world has an opportunity to change for the better. America is leading the way. America won't relent. We'll stay steadfast. We will not let thugs and assassins shake our will. We will keep our promise to the Iraqi people, and the world will be better off for it.

There's a different attitude in this race, about foreign policy. My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world but only if other countries do not object. [*Laughter*] I believe in forming alliances and coalitions. I understand how important it is to share intelligence. I know how important it is to work together to cut off finances that go to terrorists. I understand how important it is to share the burden of fulfilling our mission, which we have done. There's over—about 30 countries in Iraq that share the same vision we do. Now, I'm for—all for united action, but

I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

I have a vision to make sure that America is a strong country, and that starts with making sure our economy is strong. In order for us to be a leader in the world, in order for people to be able to realize their dreams, this economy has got to grow. And I'm optimistic about the future of this economy because I know what we have been through, and so do you, in this part of Ohio.

Let me remind you right quick about the short-term history, the economic history of our country. We've been through a recession. That is a relatively long word for meaning we were going backwards, that there was negative growth. Recession is a really tough time for families. Recession is tough times for small-business owners. Recession is a period of uncertainty. The stock market also started to decline in March of 2000. That makes people feel pitiful—not pitiful—it makes them feel more poor when you see your asset base drop, when you open up your retirement accounts and all of a sudden, the value is less.

We started to recover from that. Then the enemy hit us, and that affected our economy. It affected our national psyche, and it affected the economy. Remember, we had to shut down Wall Street; airplanes didn't fly. It was a traumatic time for the American economy.

We started to recover from that, and then we had some citizens who failed us because they didn't tell the truth. They forgot what it meant to be responsible in their work. There was corporate scandals. That affected our economy. We passed tough laws. People are now being held to account. We will not tolerate dishonesty in any boardroom in America.

And then I made the decision, as we just discussed, about securing America and liberating Iraq. And as you might remember, on the TV screens for a period of time, it said "March to War." That's not a positive thought. It's a—if you're a small-business owner and you're thinking about investing and you hear the country is marching to war, it is a—it's the kind of thing that dampens enthusiasm for capital investment.

But we've overcome all that. We're now marching to peace. But we've overcome all that, and the economy is strong. The economy is getting better. We're in a time of transition as well. The nature of the job base is beginning to shift, which provides opportunity. But if you're somebody whose job is being transitioned, it provides anxiety.

And I know there's a lot of people in this part of the State who are anxious about their job future. I clearly understand that, but because of the optimistic outlook of our society, because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because we refuse to relent in the face of hardship, this country—this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. And the people of Ohio are going to feel the economic vitality that's occurring across the country.

I say that because in the month of March, there were 7,900 new jobs created in Ohio—7,900 out of the 308,000 new jobs that were created in the month of March. In other words, 7,900 in March in Ohio, part of the 308,000. In other words, the job picture is improving. It's getting better. Economic vitality is strong. The first quarter growth rate was at 4.2 percent. The economic growth rate over the past three quarters has been nearly the fastest in two decades. Things are getting better.

The unemployment rate here has dropped from 6.3 percent to 5.7 percent. That's across the State of Ohio. I understand there are pockets of frustration and disappointment. But one thing is clear—and by the way, homeownership, the rate of homeownership is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. In other words, things are improving. The pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur agenda that we passed in Congress is working. Tax relief has made a difference to the economy.

Tax relief means people have got more money in their pocket. Tax relief means you've got more money to spend or save or invest. Tax relief means there's an increase in demand for goods and services. And in our society, when there's an increase of demand, somebody produces a good or a service to meet that demand, and when that happens, somebody is more likely to keep a job or find work.

The tax relief has made a huge difference in families, like Jeff and Katie Seevers' family. Where are Jeff and Katie? There they are. Thank you for coming. This good family—they've got three children. The tax relief provided them $2,200 last year and $2,200 this year of additional money for them to spend. I said—the other day I made a comment—I'll probably say the same thing tonight in Cincinnati—that the growth in our economy has shown that the American people are spending their money far better than the Federal Government would have.

Jeff and Katie can spend their money better than the Congress, in our opinion. It's the cornerstone of our economic policy to trust them with their own money. They said they're going to build a new playroom in their house. That's good for the economy. In other words, they have made a different decision than they would have had they not gotten the tax relief. Somebody has got to build the playroom, unless old Jeff decides to do it himself. [*Laughter*] But when he hires somebody to build the playroom, somebody has got to buy the materials. When somebody buys the materials, somebody has got to manufacture the materials. In other words, when he makes a decision, it begins to ripple throughout the economy.

There are million of decisions being made in America as a result of the tax relief that is encouraging economic growth and economic vitality. Remember how the tax relief was structured. We said, "If you have a child, you're going to have your child credit increased." In other words, we want people to be able to better raise their families. We said, "We're going to try to reduce the effects of the marriage penalty." I mean, think about a Tax Code, by the way, that discourages marriage. It's the wrong signal. We want to encourage families in America. We want our families to be strong in this country.

We've created a 10-percent tax bracket to help people at the lower end of the economic ladder. In other words, we expanded opportunities by decreasing taxes on the American people, and that, of course, created a huge debate in Washington. There are some up there that would rather have your money to increase the size of Government. Our policies, our progrowth policy says the way to make sure people can find work is to increase your ability to spend your own money, your ability to make your own decisions with your own money, and it's a difference in this campaign.

An important point—when you're out there gathering the vote, explain to them our vision about economic growth. A lot of it has to do with making sure the small-business sector of our economy is vibrant and strong. An integral part of creating new jobs is to make sure the small-business owner and the entrepreneur have gotten more resources to spend. After all, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small-business owners and entrepreneurs. They're a vital part of any economic recovery.

So we did a couple of things in the tax relief package, in the progrowth package to encourage small businesses to grow. First, we've provided incentive for people to invest. In other words, when you invest, the Tax Code says you get a little extra tax break because we want people investing. We want people buying things. When a small business buys a piece of equipment, somebody has to manufacture that piece of equipment. And when somebody manufactures it, somebody is likely to find—to keep a job, and/or, if there's enough orders, they're going to expand the job base to make the new equipment that the small-business owner is trying to buy.

The other thing we did—and it's very important for our citizens to understand this—is that we cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. See, the tendency is to say, "Well, you're deserving tax relief, and you're not deserving of tax relief." My attitude is, if you're going to have tax relief, everybody ought to get tax relief, and so we cut all rates.

Most small businesses are Subchapter S corporation or sole proprietorships. That's legal terminology for meaning that small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax rate. So when you hear us talking about cutting all rates, I want you to connect that with small business vitality. If you're a sole proprietorship and a Subchapter S, and all rates have been cut, it means you got more money as small-business owner to expand your business. If 70 percent of new jobs are

created by small businesses, it makes eminent sense. It's logical. It is important that the small-business sector of America receive benefits from tax relief, which is precisely what we did.

Mike McAlear is with us. He runs a manufacturing commission in Millbury. Where are you, Mike? There you go. He is—this has been a family business. There's a lot of family businesses. There's a lot of people who started their business in a garage and passed it on from one generation to the next—another reason we need to get rid of the death tax, by the way, is so he can pass his assets on to whoever he wants to. Mike hired 13—last year, he hired 13 workers, because he's optimistic about the future. He's going to invest $200,00 in new equipment. He'll save about $40,000 more because of the tax relief package we passed. In other words, there was an incentive for Mike to make the decision to buy $200,000 worth of equipment. He's going to need workers to run that equipment.

So when you hear that Mike is optimistic enough to hire 13 people, new workers last year and is thinking about hiring workers this year, that's a good sign. It means tax relief is working. It means there's a vitality alive here in the American economy. The best way for people of this part of the world to find a job is to make sure the small-business sector, businesses like Mike, are vibrant and strong and able to compete and willing to hire new workers, and that's precisely what's happening around America.

This campaign is going to be based upon understanding whose money we spend in Washington, DC, and how to make sure we're fiscally responsible enough in Washington so we don't raise your taxes. See, the economy is beginning to grow. The worst thing to do is to take money out of the people's pockets. The worst thing to do right now is to raise the taxes on the American people. I'm steadfast in my support of letting the people keep more of their own money. I have a question about my opponent's steadfastness. And I'll tell you why. Thus far in the campaign, he's proposed over a trillion dollars in new spending.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot of promises, and we're just getting started. I mean, we're 6 months away; there's no telling how much more money he'll be putting out on the table. [*Laughter*] And he said he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich. That's an old slogan we've heard before, isn't it? Yes. But guess who the rich is? That's you. Because there's not enough money when it comes to taxing the rich to pay for all these promises. So my——

Audience member. Is he going to tax his wife? [*Laughter*]

The President. Behave yourself. [*Laughter*]

See, he laid out all these promises, and he said he's going to do it by taxing the rich, but there's a huge funding gap. Either he's going to break his promises on spending, which I doubt, or he's going to raise your taxes, which I believe. And raising your taxes right now would be an economic disaster for America. We're not going to give him a chance to raise your taxes.

The job—the vision of this campaign is to make sure America is the leader in the world when it comes to the economy. That's the vision. The vision is to make sure we're the best place to do business in the world, in order for people to find work. The vision is to put practical, commonsense policies in place to make sure that we're on the leading edge of change.

I tell you what's important, is to make sure that we've got good tort reform in America. These frivolous and junk lawsuits make it awfully hard for small businesses. We're for people being able to have their day in court, but we fully understand the costs and the effects and how difficult it is for small businesses and others to be able to survive on the onslaught of junk and frivolous lawsuits.

Junk and frivolous lawsuits also affect the cost of health care. When you're a doc and you're afraid you're going to get sued, you practice defensive medicine, which runs up the cost to your health care. And in some places, docs just decide to quit practicing medicine. We need medical liability reform at the Federal level.

In order for people to be able to find work, we've got to make sure that we have practical policies to control the cost of health care. If you're a small-business owner, you're concerned about making sure your employees

have got health care. Association health care plans will enable small businesses to better compete. In other words, what we're saying is small businesses can pool their risk just like big businesses can, so they can afford better health care for their employees.

We need health savings accounts so customers are the decisionmakers in health care, not the Federal Government. The big debate in Washington, DC, is who best to control the health care. We believe consumers and patients and Americans ought to be the decisionmakers. Our opponent believes it's the Federal Government that ought to be making the health care decisions for America.

We've got to make sure we have an energy policy. Listen, if we want to be competitive in the 21st century, if we want our workers to be able to find jobs, we need an energy policy, an energy policy that encourages conservation, an energy policy that encourages alternative sources of energy, an energy policy that promotes clean coal technology, an energy policy that promotes safe nuclear policy, an energy policy that encourages exploration of natural gas in our own hemisphere and our own lands, an energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure people are able to find work and America is the leading country in the world when it comes to economic growth, we need to promote an innovation society. We need to make sure we're on the leading edge of innovation. I'm a strong supporter in research and development. I believe there ought to be broadband technology in every home by the year 2007. And shortly thereafter, there ought to competing services so you get a better price and better quality. Broadband technology is going to be one of the important parts about changing America and to make sure we're on the leading edge.

But one of the things that's interesting, if you're the most innovative country in the world and—one of the real challenges we face is to make sure people are educated. You see, technology can race through an economy and literally change how we do business and create fantastic opportunities. But if people are not educated, if they don't have the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century, America will not be the leading nation in the world.

We started by changing the whole way we run our public schools in America. First, we haven't changed the decisionmaking process. Local control of schools must be an integral part of any government policy when it comes to public education. But for the first time, in return for Federal money, mainly aimed at Title I students, the poorer students, we're saying, "Show us, Ohio, or any other State, whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract." You see, we believe in high expectations. We believe every child can learn, regardless of the color of their skin. We expect every child to learn.

We oppose a system which simply shuffles children through. In other words, there are some places where, if your parent doesn't speak English as a first language, the school says, "You're too hard to educate. Let's move you through." There's some school districts where a roomful of inner-city kids are—"It's too tough to teach you to read. Let's just move through." Those days are ended. We're challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And if the schools don't perform, the parents ought to have other options. And we're going to get it right early. We're going to get it right early, before it's too late.

But the economy changes, there's older workers that need help. I've got a robust plan to make sure that they get the training they need to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Some manufacturing jobs are going away. They're being replaced by high-tech jobs or jobs in the health care field. And the challenge to make sure America is competitive is to make sure those workers in the industries that are shrinking have an opportunity to be retrained for the jobs of the 21st century.

It's happening all across America, mainly at community colleges. One of the greatest assets we have in America and a part of my vision for making sure we provide productivity training—where we increase the productivity of our workers through training—is to use the community college system to match employers who are looking for workers with willing workers, so they get the skills they need to become a more productive worker for higher pay and a better standard of living for their families.

This is going to be a debate about the future of the country and the future of our economy. A strong America means that we have a strong economy today and are able to compete tomorrow. That's the whole debate. It's essential that we reject economic isolationism. It's essential we be a confident nation. Listen, most trade policy in the past has been to open up our markets to foreign goods. That's good for consumers. You see, when you've got more products from which to choose, you get better price and better quality. It's a market-oriented approach to goods coming in. The problem is we haven't been opening up markets overseas.

Listen, we're really good at things here in America. We're great at growing things. We're great at manufacturing. We're great at high-tech. Our policy ought not to be to wall ourselves from off—from the rest of the world. Our policy is to be optimistic and confident and demand that other countries open up their markets just like we have done for theirs, and we can compete with anybody.

This is the way to make sure that our economy is strong and people can find work. It starts with a philosophy: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment where the entrepreneur—the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, where small businesses can grow to be big businesses. The role of Government is to think out in the future. It is important that we reelect this administration because we're pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business, and pro-worker in America.

Finally, let me talk about a better America. It's important to understand—I think it's important for a President to understand where the true strength of America lies. If you're the President, you've got to understand the strengths of the country. And the strength of this country is not our military, although I intend to keep it strong. And for those of you who have got a loved one in the military, you tell them the Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of their service to our country.

The strength of the country is—"a" strength of the country but not "the" strength of the country is the fact that we're a wealthy nation, and that's good. The strength of the country is the hearts and souls of the American people. That's the strength of this country, when you think about it.

It's important to have a President who understands that if we're to have a hopeful future, it's important to understand the strength of America, because the job of the President is to rally that spirit, is to call people to serve their Nation by loving their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Government is not a loving organization. Government is—to me, Government is law and justice. Love comes from hearts and souls. Love oftentimes is inspired from above. Love is an essential part of helping solve some of the problems that seem impossible to solve. Amidst our plenty, there is loneliness and hunger and people lacking shelter. But those problems can be solved by rallying the armies of compassion, by encouraging people to serve their Nation by loving their neighbor.

Scott Dietsch is with us today. Where are you, Scott? Scott is a Big Brother in the Toledo area. See, he's taking time out of his life to mentor a child. His "little brother" Lance isn't here. He doesn't know his dad. Lance doesn't know his dad. Lance has got—now, however, has been surrounded by love because of Scott. Lance has had something happen in his life that's so incredibly positive and hopeful and uplifting because Scott has stepped up and said, "I want to be soldier in the army of compassion." Scott is taking time out of his life. Here's what he says: "It helps fulfill me,"—Scott's words—"It helps fulfill me to know I'm doing something for the better good. If I can change the route of one kid, at least I'll have done something."

That's the spirit of a compassionate, better America. You see, together we change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. That's why I think it's so important for the Government to encourage community-based and faith-based programs to flourish, to encourage their creation, to say to the social entrepreneurs of America, we welcome your works of kindness and compassion. We will not discriminate against people of faith. We will stand side by side with people of faith as they perform their duty as they see it, to make America a hopeful and compassionate place.

No, one of the key, important parts about this campaign for President is to make sure that we have a better tomorrow—we not only have a safer America, a stronger America, but a better America, that will enable each of our citizens to realize the God-given talents that they have been given. And it is possible to do so because this—America's strength, true strength, important strength is in the hearts and souls of our citizens.

On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It was an amazing day for me. I will remember—I remember clearly a guy in a hardhat as I was walking through the rubble, he said, "Don't let me down," and then people were shouting, "Whatever it takes." That's what they were shouting. And like we all did that day, I took it personally, what happened to America. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent to bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend America, whatever it takes.

I am here to ask for your help because I understand the task ahead for the country. I see clearly where we need to go. We have a war to win, and the world is counting on us to spread freedom and peace. We have a duty to spread opportunity and hope to every part of this country. That is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you, and my God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at a pancake breakfast at the Lucas County Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Bernadette Restivo Noe, chairman, Lucas County Republican Party; Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Larry Kaczala, candidate for Congress in Ohio's 9th Congressional District; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in Dayton, Ohio

May 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Mind if I take off my coat? I think I will. Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm thrilled to be here. I'm sorry I'm a little late. I got a little windy up in Toledo. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate you coming by for what we call a conversation. I'm going to talk a little bit. Some fellow citizens here are going to talk a little bit about their lives, in order to better illustrate our vision for an America that is safer and stronger and better. And if we've got some time, I'll answer some questions. Then I've got to get on the bus. [*Laughter*] The bus driver said, "If you talk too long, I'm pulling out of here." [*Laughter*]

I'm here to let you know that I want to serve as your President for 4 more years. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And I want to tell you why. I'm here to explain the reason why. We've got a job to do, a job to make sure this country is as safe as it can be, as strong as it should be, and as compassionate as it will be.

I'm also here to let you know that I need your help, that I need your help in convincing your neighbors to register to vote, to do their duty as Americans to vote. And don't be afraid to talk to people from the other party or people who may not be affiliated with any party, because our message is positive and optimistic and hopeful for every single American.

The good news is Laura W. Bush wants to serve for 4 more years as well. I regret she's not here. I talked to her on the plane earlier this morning. She said to send her very best. She is a—I'm a lucky guy. She's a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a fabulous First Lady of the United States. She's come to recognize what I know about the job, is that we can make a difference in people's lives, a positive difference. She is very much involved with encouraging teachers to teach, saying to people, "Look, if you're looking for a second career, say, if you served in the military and you're looking for something to do, get into the classroom and make a difference in some child's life." She understands the importance of reading. She was a public school librarian when I met her. She didn't like politics, and she didn't like politicians. [*Laughter*] Look where she is. [*Laughter*]

She can speak to freedom and the importance of freedom in societies like—she has the ability to speak to the women of Afghanistan like she did on a radio broadcast. Listen,