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The President. In these times, I have seen the—witness—I have been witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win. And the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have the duty to spread opportunity to every corner of this country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USA (Ret.), Minnesota veterans cochair, and Dan Urshan, Minnesota leadership team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Waukesha, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. It's good to be back here in Waukesha. What a beautiful day. Listen, I was talking to Tommy, and I said, "You know, I need to get back to Wisconsin." He said, "You sure do." I said, "Do you know your way around there?" [*Laughter*] So he and I have gotten on this modest little bus here. [*Laughter*] And we're going to travel your beautiful State.

I'm here asking for the vote. I've come back to this important State to say to the people of Wisconsin, I know what I need to do to lead this country. I know what I need to do to make the world more peaceful, America more hopeful. I know what I want to do to make America safer, stronger, and better. I'm here to ask for your help for 4 more years.

And I couldn't have come with a better escort. You educated him well. [*Laughter*] I picked a good man when I asked him to come to Washington to lead a very important agency. He is a superb leader. He's a great organizer. He's got a clear vision. He cares deeply about the people of Wisconsin and the United States of America. Tommy Thompson is doing a fabulous job on behalf of the American people.

My only regret, and I'm sure it's yours as well, is that Laura is not traveling with me. No, I know, most people are wise enough to say, "Why don't you just go ahead and stay at home and let her carry the burden." [*Laughter*] I was a lucky man when she said yes. She's a great lady and a fabulous First Lady for America. She's campaigning somewhere else, but today I am fortunate that one of our college graduates, one of our daughters, is traveling with me. I'm really proud to introduce Barbara Bush. Made it out of college in 4 years. [*Laughter*]

I know Sue Ann Thompson is with us, and so is Tommy—Tommy's daughter. I appreciate the Thompson family as well for enabling Tommy to serve the country so well. Listen, being in public life isn't easy on the families, and Tommy has got a great family. And I appreciate their supporting him so well.

I appreciate Cheryl Sensenbrenner representing her husband, Jim. The chairman is doing a fine job. He's a good Congressman. I enjoy working with him. I know you're going to send him back, and I know you're going to send me back, so we'll be working together for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend State Senator Mary Panzer, the majority leader of the statehouse, the State senate, for being here today. Thanks for coming, Mary. Mary Lazich as well, who's the State senator. Thanks for the members of the senate and the house and all the local officials who are here to say hello. Turn out the vote. Thanks for serving. But join these grassroots activists in finding people to register, and tell them they've got a duty as an American to show up and vote on election day. And when you get them steered toward the polls, give them a little

nudge in our direction. [*Laughter*] They're going to like the message. It's hopeful. It's optimistic. It's positive about the future of this great country.

I appreciate Jim Klauser and Mary Buestrin, all the people who have dedicated themselves to being involved in the political process. By the way, if you're interested in volunteering, we've gone high tech—georgewbush.com. It's an easy one to remember. [*Laughter*] Why don't you just go ahead and log on, and it will show you how you can help in the campaign. I'm serious. It's a—I can't win this without you.

I can't win—and when you're talking to the voters, remind them that over the last 3 years, we have faced serious challenges, and this administration has given serious answers. You might remind the voters that when we came to office, the stock market was in decline and the economy was headed into recession. We acted. We delivered historic tax relief. And over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation.

When we arrived in Washington, DC—when the great Vice President Dick Cheney and I arrived in Washington, DC—the military was underfunded, and it was underappreciated. You might remember back to those times. So we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning. We pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network. We will stay on the hunt until justice is served and America is safe. We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. Once again, America is proud to lead the armies of liberation.

These accomplishments are important to the security and prosperity of America. They should say to the American people, I understand it is my job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. It's the President's job to make the tough decisions and to keep his commitments. And that is how I will continue to lead this country for 4 more years.

I'm working hard because this is going to be a tough campaign. I know it, and you know it. We take nothing for granted. We got a lot of work to do. I've got to take my message out to the people. I've got to rally the volunteers such as yourselves to go to work. I'm looking forward to it. My opponent is a highly experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I've been in Washington. He's been there so long, he's taken about both sides of just about every issue. He voted for PATRIOT Act. He voted for NAFTA. He voted for the No Child Left Behind Act, and he voted for the use of force in Iraq. Now—[*laughter*]—he opposes the PATRIOT Act and NAFTA and the No Child Left Behind Act and the liberation of Iraq. If you disagree with John Kerry on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. [*Laughter*]

He came out here to the Midwest, and he said he was the candidate with the conservative values.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I know. I know—I know. [*Laughter*] I'm just quoting what he said. [*Laughter*] It's hard to square that when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." Now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate. Now in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [*Laughter*]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and set the course, the direction of our economy. I'm here to ask for the vote because I have a clear vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm here asking for your vote—I'm here in this vital State asking for the vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and, therefore, opportunity

throughout our entire country. I'm here to ask for the vote because I have a plan to rally—to continue to rally the compassionate spirit of the American people so every single citizen has a chance to realize the great promise of our country. When you give me 4 more years, America will be safer, America will be stronger, and America will be a better country.

A big issue for every family and a big issue in this campaign is the Federal tax burden. It's a big issue. By providing the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and to helping create jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government could have.

Today I met Scott and Shelly Mueller and their children. They're from New Berlin. They've got four kids. The tax relief that we passed—and we raised the child credit and reduced the marriage penalty and created a 10-percent bracket and reduced all rates. Our view is if anybody pays taxes, all people ought to—if we have tax relief, everybody ought to get tax relief. That's what we thought. That's the fair way to do things. Well, the Muellers saved $2,700 on their taxes in '03. They'll save the same this year. And the reason I bring them up is oftentimes in Washington, they speak in terms of billions of this and billions of that, and we tend to forget what tax relief means for the families of America, what it means for the individuals. The $2,700 for the Muellers means a lot.

Here's what Shelly said. She said, "We used that money for home improvement projects." See, it's their home, and they're trying to improve their home. That's a positive development. She said, "We just couldn't afford these investment projects on our monthly budget. This is something we're counting on."

Tax relief matters to the people of this country. Oh, some of the sophisticates will say that $2,700 doesn't matter to the Muellers—it doesn't sound like a lot to me. It's a lot to them. That's what counts. And when they have more money in their pocket, the economy benefits.

When people fully understand what they did, they'll understand a big component of the tax relief was to encourage the growth of our small businesses in America. See, 70 percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. Therefore, the tax relief must address the needs of the small-business owners.

Today I met Kyle Stoehr. He's got a manufacturing company. His business is strong—at least that's what he told me, and I take him for his word for it. He said he hired seven new workers. See, that's what's happening all across the country. Small business after small business after small business is gaining confidence about the future, and they're putting people on the payroll. He's planning to invest $400,000 in software and machinery. Because of the tax relief, he's going to save $65,000 this year. See, that tax relief matters to small-business owners. It's helping the small businesses of the United States of America.

Steve Ziegler, he's the president of the InPro Corporation. He's a small-business owner. He makes architectural projects—products. He hired eight workers this year. He's planning on investing money; the tax relief has encouraged him to invest money. The reason I bring up these small-business owners is because it's not Government that creates wealth; it's the small-business owners that are expanding, that are creating the opportunity for Americans from all walks of life.

I don't know if you know this or not, but there are thousands of small businesses which pay tax at the individual income tax rate level. See, if you're a Subchapter S corporation or a sole proprietorship like most small businesses, you pay tax at the individual income tax level. And so when you hear them talking in Washington about running up those taxes, kind of taxing the rich, really what you need to be hearing is they're going to tax small-business owners. And that would be bad for this economy. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on small businesses or on working people in America. Now is the time to make sure we've got permanency in the Tax Code. Now is the time to make sure we don't ruin this economic growth by running up the taxes on the American people.

Tax relief is working. It's working. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. As Tommy said, since last August we've added

1.5 million new jobs. People are going back to work. Here in Wisconsin, the unemployment rate has dropped to 5.1 percent. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. That's a fantastic statistic, isn't it? We want more people owning their own home. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States of America.

Interest rates are low. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are up. The economic stimulus plan that we worked with Congress on is paying off. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

And there's a different view, of course. That's what campaigns are all about. My opponents looked at this progress and somehow concluded the sky is falling. It doesn't matter whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism—same old pessimism. And they're going to cheer us up with higher taxes—[*laughter*]—more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. The good news is, we're not going to let them do that. We're going to keep taxes low to make sure people can find work and people to be able to realize their dream.

We're going to continue to bring fiscal discipline to Washington, DC. See, it starts with understanding that we're not spending the Government's money; we're spending your money. And we must be good stewards with your money in the Nation's Capital.

I hear it all the time that small-business owners are very worried about some things, and so am I. We got to solve these problems to make sure people can find work. I want this economy not only to be strong today, I want it to be strong 10 years from now. I want this to be the best place in the world to do business so people can find good, high-paying jobs.

We've got to do something about these frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I will continue to push Congress to reform the laws of America to end these frivolous and junk lawsuits that make it hard for small businesses to grow their businesses.

Tommy mentioned we've got a plan for better and affordable health care for the American people and for the small-business owners of America that includes association health plans and tax-free health savings accounts. Now, I agree with Tommy. In order to make sure you've got good doctors here in Wisconsin practicing their healing, in order to make sure health care is affordable, we need medical liability reform. We need the Federal Government to make sure that people can have their day in court, but we've got to stop these lawsuits that are driving docs out of business. It's in your interest. It's in the people's interest that we get this done.

Listen, in order to make sure this economy is a place where people can find work, we need an energy plan. I submitted one to the United States Congress. They need to pass that to my desk. It calls for modernizing the electricity system. It calls for the use of alternative sources of energy. It encourages conservation, but we can explore for energy in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of economic security, for the sake of national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I know we've got some farmers here. Listen, our farm economy is strong, and I intend to keep it that way. That's a good sign for States like Wisconsin. The farming families of this State are making a good living, and one of the reasons why is because they're selling Wisconsin products overseas. If you're good at something, we want people buying it. We're real good at growing things. We're very good at making things. I'm a person who believes that we ought to be opening up markets, not closing markets. Just listen, my view is, give our workers and farmers and entrepreneurs a chance to compete, and we can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime.

There's a clear difference in this campaign on how to make sure this is a good place for people to find work. If you reelect me, I'll continue to pursue a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-farmer, pro-small-business agenda, and America will be better off for it.

Our future also depends on our willingness to lead in this world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong. But we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not

broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

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

The President. After the attacks of September the 11th, I resolved and this Nation resolved to bring justice to the terrorists, no matter where they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. We made that resolution. And when you say something, you better mean it. In order for the world to be peaceful, when you say something, you better mean it. And I meant what we said. Afghanistan was a terrorist state. It was a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and many young girls now go to school for the first time.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world. It's important for our fellow citizens to remember, he used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. For decades, he has tormented and tortured the people of his country. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, its dictator now sits in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught us a lesson we must never forget. It's a lesson I'll never forget. And it's this: America must confront threats before they fully materialize, before it's too late. That's the lesson that we must never forget as a nation. And so, remembering that and remembering the past of the dictator, we looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Now, the United States Congress, including 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.

I went to the United Nations and said, "For years, you've passed resolutions, and for years, the dictator in Iraq has ignored the resolutions." I said, "Why don't we work together to pass a resolution and, this time, mean what we say." See, they had seen the threat. So on a 15-nothing vote, the U.N. Security Council demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. And as he had for over a decade, the dictator deceived the world. The dictator chose defiance. It was his choice to make. He refused to comply. So I had a choice to make: Ignore the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best, trust the word of a madman; or defend America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Although we haven't found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq, and America is safer today because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction. He had that capability. And he could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. After September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

And we've got hard work to do there and important work to do there. Our immediate task around the world and in Iraq and Afghanistan is to bring those terrorists to justice. See, you can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with terrorists. You can't sit back and hope that somehow therapy will work and they will change their ways. [*Laughter*] That's just not the way it is. We must engage the enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We know these terrorists want to strike us again because they want to disrupt our way of life and spread fear. That's what they want to do. So we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland. You just need to know there are a lot of really decent, hard-working people that are spending hours on our mutual behalf to do everything we can to disrupt a potential attack. We're sharing intelligence like never before. We're running down every lead. And I know I speak for everybody when I thank the police and the firefighters and the emergency teams from the great State of Wisconsin who are serving as great first-responders.

We will stay on the offense. We'll protect our homeland. Yet, in the long run, our safety

requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that the terrorists can exploit. Life in that region is going to be far more hopeful and more peaceful when men and women choose their own leaders. It will be a much better place, a much more hopeful place when the people get to decide their own fate.

You see, by serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our own country because, you see, we understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

The world is changing for the better because of American leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now, the terror camps are closed, democracy is rising, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now, we're working with the Pakistani Government to find those killers in remote regions of that country, and America is safer. Three years ago, Saudi—in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were not challenged by that Government. Today we're working with the Saudi Government, and the Saudi Government is running down Al Qaida leadership, and America is safer. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions of dollars to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now, thousands of Libyan chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up its nuclear processing equipment, and America is safer. No, the world is changing for the better. Three years ago, the dictator in Iraq was a threat. He was a threat to us. He was a threat to the free world. He was a threat to the people in the neighborhood, and he was a threat to his own people. That dictator is no longer a threat, and the American people are safer.

I need 4 more years to complete the work. There's more to do to make America a safer place. There's more work to do to make the world a more peaceful place. We will finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Listen, the good leaders have stepped up there, people who believe in the aspirations of their people. And we will support them. And the good people in those countries are taking more responsibility for their own security. They want to live in freedom. Their moms and dads want their children to be able to grow up in a peaceful and free society. They can count on us. That's what they need to hear. They need to hear from America they can count on the American people. You see, when we give our word, we keep our word.

I see people who proudly wear our uniform here, and I want to thank you for your service. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our country. I had the high honor of meeting those family members whose son or daughter paid the ultimate sacrifice. The best way to honor their bravery is to complete the mission and make sure America is safer and the world is more free.

Anytime we put our troops in harm's way, they deserve the best training, the best pay, the best possible support. That's why last September, I proposed what we call a supplemental funding request to support our military in its mission. That's more money for the troops, money that would help pay for body armor or vital equipment or hazard pay or health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. It was money to support them.

In the Senate, only a small, out-of-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, when Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote, here's what he said. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. It sure doesn't clear it up, does it? [*Laughter*] Now he's offering a different explanation. Earlier this week, he said he is proud he and his runningmate voted against the funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, he's entitled to his view, but here's mine: Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and

then vote against funding them. As the Commander in Chief of this great military, I will see to it they have what is needed to complete their mission.

We are leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. And we're calling on other nations to help us. There are over 60 nations involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative, nearly 40 nations in Afghanistan, over 30 nations in Iraq—countries committed to the same thing we're committed to, our own security through spreading democracy and peace and freedom. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to build coalitions to make the world a peaceful place. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet, we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The true strength of America lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. The other day my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places in Wisconsin, in places just like Waukesha. Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by, courage, compassion, reverence, and integrity. We're strong because of the institutions that help give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools. We stand for local control of our public schools. We stand for accountability in our public schools so no child is left behind in America. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which have helped millions of Americans find independence and dignity in their lives. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in a life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period where the stakes are high, the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

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. I'm never going to forget that moment. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember looking in the eyes of either a policeman or firefighter, and he said, "Do not let me down."

Like—as we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of the American people, whatever it takes.

I've also been witness to the great character of this country. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most. We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win, and 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 blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

Thanks for coming. God bless. May God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the Waukesha County Exposition Center. In his remarks, he referred to James R. Klauser, chair, Wisconsin Leadership Team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Mary F. Buestrin, national committeewoman, Republican Party of Wisconsin; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Exchange With Reporters in West Bend, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

Purchase at Mike's Candyman

The President. This is spectacular, thanks.

Q. What are you getting there?

The President. I'm just getting, you know, about 400 calories a pop.

Q. I thought you gave up on the sweets, sir.

The President. Well, I'm confronted with excellent sweets. I'll be biking this weekend, in other words. Are you a biker these days?

Q. I'm ready to go.

The President. You are? Record that. [*Laughter*]

Employee Dot Bradley. You will enjoy these thoroughly. They're wonderful. Just for the President.

The President. I'm looking forward to it. How much do I owe you?

Owner Davey Bartlett. They are free.

The President. No, they're not free.

Mr. Bartlett. Okay, $5.28 with tax.

The President. How's your business doing?

Ms. Bradley. Wonderful.

Mr. Bartlett. Seventy-two cents is your change.

Ms. Bradley. So good to meet you.

Mr. Bartlett. Nice to meet you.

The President. Appreciate you, candy man, great to see you all. Thanks for saying hi. Good to meet you.

All right, listen, buy something here. [*Laughter*] Here's how the economy works. You're overpaid. My tax relief has left more money in your pockets to spend here.

Q. Can you spot me $5? [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you all. Hey, Tommy—you remember Tommy.

Ms. Bradley. Yes, hi, Tommy.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. It's always good to see you.

The President. Thank you all. Is anybody going to buy anything here? I'm trying to drum up a little business. [*Laughter*]

Q. As long as you don't leave us behind.

The President. Leave no reporter behind. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:12 a.m. in the Mick's Candyman store. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Discussion in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you. Please be seated. Thanks. Thanks for coming to say hi. Thanks for having me. It's great to be here in Fond du Lac. We're here—I'm going to talk about how I intend to make sure America is a safer and stronger and better country. That's what I want to talk about today. Tell you why we're here at a business, it's because this is a business that is successful. And I'm going to talk about why I think it is successful.

But I also want to answer some of your questions too. So I'll try to keep my remarks relatively short—which is kind of hard to do. [*Laughter*] First, I regret that Laura is not traveling with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it; yes, most people react that way. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, why didn't you stay home and let her come instead? [*Laughter*] I'm a lucky man that—you know, she was a public school librarian in Midland, Texas. And I asked her to—when I asked her to marry me, fortunately, she said yes. And she's a great First Lady. She's done a terrific job. You know, I like to tell people