

Week Ending Friday, August 6, 2004

**Remarks in Grand Rapids, Michigan**

*July 30, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you all. I appreciate you coming. Sit down if you've got a chair. I'm proud you're here. Thanks for inviting me. You can't come to Grand Rapids and not think about a great President, Gerald Ford. What a decent man. What an honorable citizen. And what a great example for Presidents.

I appreciate you coming out for our Heart and Soul of America tour. This is going to be a great campaign. I'm looking forward to it. And there's going to be big differences. We'll have differences over taxes, how to keep the peace. And there seems to be a difference over the heart and soul of America. My opponents think you can find it in Hollywood. I think you find it right here in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I'm excited about traveling the country. I was in Springfield, Missouri, earlier. I'm going to Cleveland, Ohio; Canton, Ohio; on to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, tomorrow. I like traveling. I like being with people. The crowds are big. The enthusiasm is high. And with your help, Dick Cheney and I will serve this Nation for 4 more years.

Speaking about my friend Dick Cheney, I admit, he's not the prettiest face in the race. [Laughter] But I picked him because he's steady and strong and reliable. He's got good judgment. Dick Cheney is a great Vice President.

And speaking about really fine people, I am sorry that Laura is not here.

**Audience members.** Aw-w-w!

**The President.** I know it. [Laughter] Most people feel that way. They wish she were speaking and I stayed at home. [Laughter] But I'm really proud of her. She is a great lady, a fantastic First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most

important reason of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank Juan Olivarez for his leadership of this very important institution. I appreciate a fellow *Tejano* serving the community of Grand Rapids—that means a fellow Texan. [Laughter] I appreciate his warm words of introduction. *Gracias, amigo.*

I appreciate Hoekstra—Peter Hoekstra for his service in the United States Congress. I'm proud to call him friend. And I appreciate my friend Vern Ehlers' service to the people of Michigan in the United States Congress as well.

I'm honored that Terri Lynn Land and Mike Cox and Ken Sikkema are with us today. I've gotten to know these good souls during my trips here in Michigan. And they represent the State well. I appreciate Speaker Rick Johnson joining us as well; State Senator Bill Hardiman. I'm honored that these good citizens have decided to serve the people of the communities in the great State of Michigan. I thank them for the hard work they have done and are going to do to make sure we carry the State of Michigan this time.

I want to thank my friend Betsy DeVos and Chuck Yob and Holly Hughes and the ambassador, Peter Secchia. I want to—does it strike anybody funny, “Ambassador” Secchia? No? [Laughter] We love him in our family.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate your willingness to work in the political process. I encourage you to get people to register to vote. Make sure people go to vote on election day. We have a duty in our society—in our democratic system, we have a duty to participate. And I want to thank you for getting people to participate. And when you get them headed into the polls, give them a little nudge our way. [Laughter]

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has got to answer one central question, and that's why—why should the American people give

me the privilege, the high privilege, of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together, and we have accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who will lead the Nation forward, who can do the job for the American people. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have much more to do to move this country forward.

I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer, to make our economy stronger, to make the future better and brighter for every single citizen who lives in this country. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to protecting our homeland, we've made much progress, and I'm here to tell you, we have got more to do.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we know they can be so that no child is left behind in this country. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we've challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're setting high standards. We're focusing on results. We're insisting on accountability. We're empowering parents. And we're making sure local folks are in charge of their own public schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we are turning the corner, and we are not turning back.

We have more to do. This world of ours is changing. Jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher skill levels. We must reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science education so young people can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. With 4 more years, we will help a rising generation gain the skills and confidence to achieve the American Dream.

We have more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare

didn't pay for them. Leaders in both political parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. We got it done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

We've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to giving Americans more choices about their own health care and making health care more affordable, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Most Americans get their health coverage through their work. But today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. To help more American families get health insurance, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big corporations.

To improve health care, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive doctors out of medicine. We will do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We will do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make America's economy stronger. We've come through a lot together. We've come through a recession and terrorist attacks and corporate scandals. We overcame these obstacles because the hard work of the American people, because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, because people like our farmers and ranchers refuse to buckle. We overcame these obstacles as well because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't—when we provided tax relief, we didn't try to pick winners or losers. We didn't play politics. We did it the fair way. We provided tax relief to every American who pays taxes—for families with children, for married couples, for small businesses. And this time, the check was really in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. We still face serious challenges, especially in places like western Michigan, where the slowdown hit hard. I understand that. That's why I'm going to keep working to help all sectors of our economy recover. We will not rest until every American who wants to work can find a job.

The cornerstone of our tax relief plan was help for small businesses. Most new jobs in America are created by entrepreneurs in small businesses. Today I met Bob Roth again. He runs a manufacturing company. He told me that business in this part of the country is turning around, that people are beginning to add jobs. As a matter of fact, his small business hired nine workers in the past year. He tells me the reason why is because he is confident about what tax relief means. He says, "We'll take fair advantage of any relief that is possible. It helps us feel more confident about investing." The small-business sector of the country is leading the growth for new jobs in America.

We can do more to make America more job-friendly and America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations must be minimal, reasonable, and fair. To keep American jobs here, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs here, we must end the junk lawsuits that hurt small businesses. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low.

I met Audra and Brian van Haren. They're here today. These good folks saved about \$2,500 on their taxes in 2003, and they're going to save another 2,500 on their taxes in 2004. That's what the tax relief provided. It's their own money to begin with, by the way. It's not like—we're not passing the Government's out. These people worked hard for that money. They can spend it better than the Government can spend their money. Some of the tax relief is set to expire, which means they'll have to pay \$1,100 more in taxes next year. Now is not the time to be raising taxes on the working people of this country.

Over the next 4 years, we'll offer American workers a lifetime of learning and help them get training for the jobs of the future at places like our community colleges. The education and training community colleges offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

Today I met Sarah Soles. She used to work as a part-time receptionist at a doc's office. She went back to a community college program. She's now a nurse. She makes more money at steady employment because she found time to get more training and to get a new degree. The community college system of America is vital in making sure America is a competitive place in the world.

To make sure we continue to grow our economy and people can find work, we will insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. This country can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere with free and fair trade. And we will help American families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that's time—time to play with the kids, time to go to the little league game, time to take care of their parents, or to go to class to improve themselves. I believe that Congress must enact comp-time and flex-time to help America's families better juggle the demands of work and home.

After 4 more years, our Nation will have more small businesses. The entrepreneurial spirit will be strong. There will be greater opportunity and better and higher wages for the American workers.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness 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.** The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terrorist cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy, an ally in the war on terror, a place

where many young girls now go to school for the first time, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistani forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists. They're an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government has taken the fight to Al Qaida, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and clear message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer for it.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots who were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat.

After September the 11th, we had to look at threats in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th was, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded that our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction, might use those weapons or share his deadly capabilities with the terrorists. We saw a threat. We looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the intelligence, and they saw a threat.

The United Nations looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat and unanimously

demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs or he will face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. When he continued to deceive the weapons inspectors, I had a decision to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or defend the United States of America. Given that choice, I will defend our country every time. Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell; America and the world are safer.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world and spreading peace, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back. We have more to do. We will continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorist enemy and the foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to them. You cannot negotiate with the terrorists. They're coldblooded killers. We must engage the enemy so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other nations.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people committed to freedom. People in Afghanistan and Iraq are stepping up for their own security. They're willing to step up and to fight those who want to stop the advance of a free society. You know why? Because they want their children to grow up in a peaceful world. Moms and dads in Iraq and Afghanistan have great hopes for their children. They want them to be educated. They want them to realize their dreams. The people of those countries, the freedom-lovers in those two countries, can count on continued help from America and our coalition.

You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty,

and to set them on the path of liberty. And when America gives its word, America keeps its word.

In these crucial times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. At bases across the country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. Ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we must make sure they have the full support of the Federal Government. And that's why last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a very small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

**Audience members.** Boo-o-o!

**The President.** Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] End quote. [Laughter] He's had different explanations since then. He said that he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding, then he further said, "The whole thing is a complicated matter." [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a neighborhood that is desperate for freedom. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries are peaceful countries. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're living out the ideals of this country. America knows that freedom is not our gift

to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. We are turning the corner toward a more peaceful world that we long for, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do to protect our country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us; this is still a dangerous time. I agree with the conclusion of the September 11th Commission: Our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses. We're creating a new Department—we have created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement tools needed to track and bring terrorists to justice. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We've integrated intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. When it comes to better protecting America, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, to dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capabilities. Reform won't be easy; it never is in Washington. See, achieving it requires taking on the entrenched interests and challenging the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done——

**Audience member.** Right!

**The President.** ——because when it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving our economy and creating quality jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing the homeland and fighting the forces of terror, results matter. When it comes to choosing a President, results matter.

This week, members of the other political party gathered in Boston. There was a lot of clever speeches and some big promises. Listen, my opponent has got good intentions, but intentions don't always translate to results. After 19 years in the U.S. Senate, my opponent has thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the

Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the intelligence budget, yet he had no record of reforming America's intelligence-gathering capability. He's had no significant record for reforming education or health care. In fact, he and his runningmate consistently opposed reforms that limit the power of Washington, reforms that would leave more power in the hands of the people.

My opponent has spent 20 years in the Federal Government, and it appears he's concluded it's not big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than \$2 trillion of additional spending, and we're just getting started. The problem is, he hasn't told us how he plans to pay for it. But you know how. You and I can guess. It's an educated guess. After all, he's had a history of voting to raise taxes. But we're going to make it clear to him that raising taxes to fulfill all his big promises will be the wrong medicine for America's improving economy.

We have a difference of opinion. They share the old Washington mindset: They will give the orders, and you will pay the bills. But we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This is a time of amazing change. It's an exciting period of time. In our parents' generation, moms usually stayed at home while fathers worked for one company until retirement. The company provided health care and training and a pension. Many of our Government programs and most basic systems, from health care to Social Security to the Tax Code, were set up based on those old assumptions.

Yet, our world today is different. Workers change jobs and careers frequently. Oftentimes both parents work. Many times there's a single mom struggling to get ahead. Most new jobs are created by the small businesses that cannot afford to provide health care or pension or training. It is time to make the Government work for America's families. America's workers need their own health accounts that they can carry with them from job to job. American workers need pensions and retirement plans that they own, that they control, that they can pass from one generation to the next.

These reforms that make sure Americans stand on the side of families and workers are

based on this basic conviction: The role of Government is not to control or dominate the lives of our citizens; the role of Government is to help our citizens gain the time and tools to make their own choices and improve their own lives.

And that's why I'm working to usher in a new era of ownership and opportunity in America. We want more people owning their own homes. We want more people owning their own small business. We want more people owning a piece of their retirement plans. We want people owning and managing their own health care accounts. When people own something, they have a vital stake in the future of this great land.

Our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity are things that will never change in a rapidly changing world. In this changing world, there are just some things that will not change: The values we try to live by, courage and compassion and reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives and to our future, and they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Our culture 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're a mom or a dad, 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 ourselves.

The strength of this country is not our Government. The strength of this country is the heart and souls of the American people. That's the true strength of America.

Today I had the honor of saying hello to Dr. Peggy Curry. She's the executive director of Grand Rapids Reach. The reason I bring her up is one of the most important initiatives over the next 4 years will be to continue to expand the faith-based program, to have Government stand on the side of faith programs, not against faith programs.

Dr. Curry's program distributes food to senior citizens. It mentors. There's after-school programs. There's Christian outreach. See, it's a program that understands that when you help a person change their heart, they can help change their lives. For those of you who are soldiers in the army of compassion here in Grand Rapids and western Michigan, thank you for your service. Thank you for helping change America one heart, one soul at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. These aren't one of those times. This is a period where we need resolve, firm resolve and clear vision. None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbing my arm—a firefighter or policeman, I don't know which one—he had tears in his eyes, and he looked at me and said, "Do not let me down."

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 wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We've done a lot of hard work together. We're turning the corner. We're moving America forward by extending freedom and peace around the world, and we're moving

our country forward by expanding opportunity to every corner of this great land.

During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity so every single citizen has a shot at realizing the great dream of this fantastic country. We will pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. We will prevail. With your support and your prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a time of great change.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great country and came to places like Grand Rapids, Michigan, asking for the vote, I made a pledge to my fellow Americans that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected, so help me, God. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thank you all. God bless. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. at Grand Rapids Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Juan R. Olivarez, president, Grand Rapids Community College; Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; Michigan State Attorney General Mike Cox; Majority Leader Ken Sikkema and Speaker Rick Johnson, Michigan State Legislature; Betsy DeVos, chairman, Charles "Chuck" Yob, national committeeman, and Holly Hughes, national committeewoman-elect, Michigan Republican Party; Peter F. Secchia, former U.S. Ambassador to Italy; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks at the International Children's Games and Cultural Festival in Cleveland, Ohio**

*July 30, 2004*

**The President.** Thank you. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the United States. I am honored to have been introduced by a great Iranian-American, silver medalist Matt Ghaffari. Thank you, Matt, for being here, and thank you for your introduction.

Listen, I don't know if you know this—hold on—there are—the Governor of this