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and sections 8014 and 8021 of the Act grant contracting-related exceptions or preferences to Native Hawaiian organizations. The executive branch shall implement the provisos and sections 8014 and 8021 in a manner consistent with the requirement to afford equal protection of the laws under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

The executive branch shall construe section 8101 of the Act, which purports to prohibit alteration of command responsibility or permanent assignment of forces until 270 days after submission of a plan for such alteration to the congressional defense committees, as advisory, as any other construction would be inconsistent with the constitutional grant to the President of the authority of Commander in Chief. Also, the executive branch shall construe section 8124, relating to integration of foreign intelligence information, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief, including for the conduct of intelligence operations, and to supervise the unitary executive branch. Finally, the Executive Branch shall construe section 12001, which purports to assign the Secretary of Defense the duty to negotiate with a foreign country, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, which includes the authority to determine who shall negotiate for the United States under the President's direction with a foreign country.

George W. Bush

The White House,
August 5, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the Designation of Emergency Funds in the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

August 5, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I hereby concur with the Congress in the designation of $25.856 billion provided as part of the Department of Defense Appropriations, FY 2005 (H.R. 4613), as an emergency requirement.

These funds are necessary to support Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, the Department of State's Mission in Iraq, State and local law enforcement assistance for security and related costs associated with the 2004 Presidential Candidate Nominating Conventions, the Judiciary, and to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the attached letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Remarks in a Discussion in Columbus, Ohio

August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you all. That's what I'm here asking for, for 4 more years. Yes, I'm traveling our country—coming to Ohio a lot, by the way. I think you have to ask for the vote, and that's what I'm here doing. I want your vote and want your help.

I want to thank those of you who are involved with grassroots politics, the people who are helping to register the voters and the people who are going to be asking the voters to do their duty in democracy and go to the polls. I appreciate your work. And by the way, when you get them headed to the polls, kind of nudge them our way.

There's more to do for this country. That's what I want to talk about. We've got an unusual way of talking about the agenda for the future today. I want to share some thoughts with you. We've got some citizens from the Columbus area who are going to talk about some of the ideas that we're going to use to make America a compassionate place, a better place. And then I'll be glad to answer some of your questions.

First, let me tell you I'm sorry Laura is not here. She's got a valid excuse. Governor

Bush's oldest son—that would be my youngest brother—oldest son is getting married. [*Applause*] Yes. And she's there early. I'm going late, because I'm working. [*Laughter*] But she is a wonderful wife, a loving mother, and a great First Lady. I'm really proud of her. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

I was hoping she would come with me because I wanted her to come to the site where my grandfather was raised. I don't know if you know that or not—there you go—Grandfather Bush, raised right here in Columbus, Ohio. You know how we are in the political arena; we're always trying to find a local peg—[*laughter*]. I've got one here. [*Laughter*] And my family is better off having those Ohio roots in our background.

I also picked a good man to run with. I admit it, Dick Cheney is not the prettiest candidate in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him because of his looks. I picked him because he knows what he's doing. He's a sound man with good judgment.

Before we get started here, I do want to thank my friend your Governor, Bob Taft, for joining me today. Thanks for coming, Governor. Appreciate your service. I've known him for quite a while. We were both Governors together, and we're both members of the famous father club.

I appreciate Congressman Pat Tiberi. He's from this area; he's doing a fine job. Who you got there? Tiberi tells me coming in that this is his daughter's first political speech. So when she starts dozing off, you know the reason why: I've been going on too long. But I appreciate the congressman coming. Thank you. I also appreciate my friend Deborah Pryce, Congresswoman Pryce, for being here too.

Governor Jennette Bradley is with us. She's a good friend of mine. I appreciate her service to the State. Thank you, Jennette.

I want to thank Doug Preisse, who emceed the event. He's also head of the grassroots. He's what we call the party chairman. That's the person in charge of making sure people who want to help have an opportunity to help to find the vote and turn people out to vote.

I want to thank my friend Bernie Kosar. I reminded him that the Dallas Cowboys are going to be starting a 40-year-old quarterback this year. It's not too late, Bernie. [*Laughter*] He got his ring, he said; he doesn't want another one. But I really appreciate you coming. Thank you all for being here.

Today I met a fellow named Jack Lehr. He's a soldier in the army of compassion. That means he's a person who is taking time out of his life to volunteer to help people. Jack has been involved with tutoring people in GED preparation programs. That means he's a mentor, see. Jack has taken time out of his life to help somebody who needs some help.

One of the reasons I'm running—where are you, Jack? Oh, there he is. Thanks for coming out at the airport. I appreciate you. He's also involved with Hospice. I know a lot of you are doing the same thing in your lives: You're coaching Little League; or you're involved with Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts; or you're feeding the hungry; or you're finding shelter for the homeless. All of you are soldiers in the army of compassion. And one of the reasons I'm seeking the office for 4 more years is to continue to call upon our fellow citizens to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. See, that means I understand the strength of our country is the heart and souls of our citizens. That's the true strength of America, and we can change America one soul at a time by encouraging people to spread something Government cannot spread, which is love.

One of the most important initiatives of this administration is what is called the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, that allows faith-based programs—people from all faiths—to access Federal monies to help them do their job of spreading love and compassion. If you're an addict, if you're hooked on drugs or alcohol, sometimes government counseling can work. But sometimes it requires a change of heart in order to change habit. There are people who are empowered to change hearts in our society—not by Government, by a higher calling. And therefore, Government ought to welcome these works of compassion and healing.

I know we can change America for the better by calling on those who are change agents, those who are willing to put an arm around somebody who needs love and say, "I love you, brother. I love you, sister. What

can I do to help you have a better life here in America?"

I'm running—I'm asking for your vote again, and I'm running because there's more to do to keep this country safer. You know, it's very important that we never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. I know I won't; I know many of you will never forget it, either.

Audience member. We'll never forget.

The President. There you go. Let me share with you some of the lessons that I remember. One, we're facing an enemy which has no heart, no compassion. And that puts them at an advantage, in a way, because we're a country of heart and compassion. See, these are ideological extremists who are willing to use terror to affect the conscience of the free world. They're willing to try to have their way by wanton destruction of innocent life. That stands the opposite of what America stands for, isn't it? We don't believe in that, yet they do. They're trying to shake our will and our confidence. One of the lessons of September the 11th is we face deadly foe who will kill on a moment's notice to try to shake our confidence and our will.

The second lesson of September the 11th is, is that in order to protect ourselves—and that's my most solemn duty, is to protect the American people—and by the way, it's the solemn duty of first-responders all across our country; it's the solemn duty of those who wear our uniform. There's a lot of people who understand the seriousness of the job and the responsibilities we have. We're lucky to have a nation of so many responsible citizens who are willing to work hard to defend our homeland.

The second lesson is, though, that in order to defend the homeland, we've got to be on the offense. We must deal with those people overseas so we don't have to face them here at home, and that's what we're doing. We've got a lot of fine troops out there. We've got other nations working with us to bring people to justice. And we're making progress, slowly but surely making progress. This is a different kind of war. Sometimes you'll see action; sometimes you won't. We're chasing people down in caves, in the dark recesses of the world. About two-thirds of the known Al Qaida leadership has been brought to justice, and we're safer for it.

Another lesson of September the 11th is, in order to be able to defend ourselves, we've got to say to people who are willing to harbor a terrorist or feed a terrorist, "You're just as guilty as the terrorist." And let me tell you something about leadership and about being the American President. If you say something, you'd better mean it. [*Applause*] Thank you all. And when I said to the Taliban—those are the folks running Afghanistan—"Give up your evil ways or face the consequences," I meant it. They ignored us, and they paid the price. They're no longer in power, no longer can Al Qaida use Afghanistan as a safe haven for training. Remember, thousands of people were trained in Afghanistan and then dispersed throughout the world, some of whom came here to inflict great harm on our people. The world is better off and America is safer because of the actions we have taken in Afghanistan.

Think about this: Afghanistan is going to hold elections this fall. It's amazing, isn't it, when you think about it. What a change—what a change in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Listen, it wasn't but 3 years ago or so that these people lived under the clutches of one of the most brutal groups of people known to mankind, the Taliban. They wouldn't let young girls go to school in Afghanistan. They were so backward, their vision was so dim, that if you dared express an opinion that they didn't agree with, you were in trouble.

You know, I was in Cleveland the other day, and we went to the International Children's Games kickoff, and guess who was there—a girls soccer team from Afghanistan, right here in America. What I'm saying is, Afghanistan is a better place. They're an emerging democracy. Over 8 million people have registered to vote. They're an ally in the war on terror. And the world is better off because young girls and moms and dads have a chance to realize their ambitions for their families, not the ambitions of backward, barbaric people like the Taliban.

We've taken the lead in the world, and the world has changed for the better. Just think about Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan, for a minute. Because of our leadership and

work with the Pakistan authorities, Al Qaida is now on the run in Pakistan. We've got an ally in the war on terror with President Musharraf. No, this world is getting better off.

A very important lesson of September the 11th, one this Nation must never forget, is that when we see threats, we must deal with them before they fully materialize. That's one of the vital lessons of that fateful day. See, with these people—remember, I described what they're like—you cannot negotiate with them; you cannot hope for the best. I like to say therapy doesn't work. [*Laughter*] They made up their minds—they made up their minds to inflict terrible harm on those who disagree with them.

That's why people who say that because we've been on the offense to protect America, we've created more enemies than before, just don't understand the war on terror. They do not understand. These were people plotting prior to us taking action around the world. These are people who look for weakness in the free world. These are people who are willing to exploit fear in the free world. And the United States of America will stand strong and resolute in the face of this new challenge.

Another lesson of September the 11th: I said if we see a threat, we must deal with it before it fully materializes. We saw a threat in Iraq. And let me tell you why. Not only the intelligence say there was a threat there, but we remembered the history of the man. He was a sworn enemy of America. Terrorists were able to—and terrorist networks were able to operate in and out of his country. Remember Abu Nidal? He was the guy that killed the man, an American citizen, because he was Jewish. His network was there inside of Iraq. Zarqawi, who's still is running around in Iraq—his network was in Iraq. He is a—Saddam was a fellow who paid the families of suicide bombers. That's one of the—suiciding to kill innocent people as an act of terror. He paid the families as an incentive to do so. He had used weapons of mass destruction. Remember that? He had used them on his own people. He had used them against countries in his neighborhood. He was a source of instability. He was a threat, and we saw him as a threat.

Now, the United States Congress looked at the same intelligence I looked at, the exact same intelligence, and came to the same conclusion. Members of both political parties looked at the intelligence. My opponent looked at the very same intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations—remember I went to the U.N. and said, "You have forever condemned him. You've told him to get rid of his weapons, yet nothing has happened, so let's try her one more time." And the United Nations looked at the intelligence, saw a threat, and passed a resolution 15 to nothing. That was what the Security Council said. They said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

And so the world spoke, and again he defied us. And not only did he defy us, he systematically deceived the inspectors. You remember the period of time; we said, "Well, let's give the inspectors the chance to work." We agreed, until we found out he was deceiving them. What he was trying to do was buy time. Why? Because he wanted to reconstitute a weapons program. He wanted to make sure he had the capacity to make weapons. And if he had any, like we thought he did, he didn't want anybody to find them, that's why. I had a choice to make then: forget the lessons of September the 11th, trust a madman; or take action to defend our country. Every time, I will defend America.

We are safer—we are safer and the world is better off because Saddam is sitting in a prison cell. I want to share something with you. Committing troops into harm's way is—in harm's way is the most difficult decision a President can make. That decision must always be last resort. That decision must be done when our vital interests are at stake, but after we've tried everything else. There must be a compelling national need to put our troops into harm's way. I felt that. I felt we had a compelling national need. I know we had tried diplomacy. I knew that diplomacy at this point couldn't possibly work because he had no intention of listening to demands of the free world. And when you put your troops in harm's way, they better have the best—the best equipment, the best support, and the best possible pay.

That's why I went to the Congress and said—last September—said we need more

money for our troops, $87 billion more money. Some of it was for reconstruction; most of it was for the troops, over $60 billion for the troops—Humvees, spare parts, body armor, the things necessary that you would want. If you are a mom or dad—we probably got a mom or dad here whose child is in Iraq—you want your son or daughter to have the best. [*Applause*] Thank you, appreciate you.

There were two Senators—there were 12 Senators who voted against more funding for the troops, two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I don't know if you heard the explanation. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That's not the way most folks speak in Ohio. As the Commander in Chief, I'll see to it our troops have the best—the best possible pay, the best possible training, the best possible equipment to defend the United States of America. [*Applause*] Thank you all. By the way, I know we've got some veterans here. Thanks for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniform today. I appreciate your service.

The world is changing. This is an historic times. Freedom equals peace. Listen, we've done the hard work, and there's more hard work to do. But I want you to know that we're headed for a peaceful world. That's my hope. My hope is that young children can grow up in a peaceful world. My hope is that we never have to live another day like we did on September the 11th.

And you achieve peace by spreading freedom. That's what America believes. And that's hard work. Free nations are peaceful nations. Free nations, nations that listen to the aspirations of their people, are nations in which it's hard to recruit people willing to kill themselves for a radical philosophy. That's what Americans believe. We believe that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

And therefore, our strategy for peace is to do everything we can to protect the homeland by being on the offense against an enemy. But it's also to spread liberty. These are historic times. That's why it's vital we stand with those who love freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, it's not easy to be a free society in a place like Iraq; it's just not. You can understand why. These people were brutalized. There were mass graves of thousands of—of a thousand citizens.

I'll tell you an interesting story, and it's one that touched my heart. Seven people came to the Oval Office, seven Iraqi men. Walking in that Oval Office, by the way, is a pretty interesting experience—the kind of place people stand outside and say, "When I get in, I'm going to tell him what-for." And they walk in, they get overwhelmed by the Oval Office, say, "Man, you're looking good, Mr. President." [*Laughter*]

These people came in, and they said, "Liberator." I said, "You don't need to thank me; you need to thank the American people. You need to thank the mothers and fathers of those, and the husbands and wives of those, who served to free you." They had something in common besides being Iraqi men; all of them had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. That's the society that we've liberated. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed a scapegoat. So he found seven small-business men. For example, one of them was a jeweler, and he told me, he said, "I sold dinars to buy"—I think he said euros—"to buy gold so I could make a watch." And so what they were looking for, the authority, Saddam and his thugs, were looking for people who sold dinars that caused the currency to be devalued at that particular moment. They put them in prison, and he cut off their right hands and burned an X in their forehead. So in come seven guys who have got an X in their forehead. The good news is that they had been discovered by an American named Marvin Zindler from Houston, and he had a foundation to help people from around the world. They flew them into Houston. These seven guys had new hands, new prosthesis.

A guy took my Sharpie, wrapped his new fingers, and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. What a contrast—what a contrast in societies: On the one hand, a society that was so brutalized by a dictator that he could just say, "I'm going to cut off their hands," to a society which says, "We want to heal you,

no matter who you are, no matter your religion, no matter where you're from." We believe in human dignity and human rights in the United States of America.

There's good people now running those countries, Karzai and Alawi. These are tough guys. Alawi, I'm told, woke up one night in London to a axe-wielding group of men that had been sent by Saddam Hussein to kill him with an axe. He got away from the axe-wielding thugs severely wounded. In other words, this guy has seen the worst of tyranny, and now he's leading the country. He believes in a free Iraq. He believes in a self-governing Iraq. He believes in listening to the aspirations of the people. And he's plenty tough to do the job.

And so we've got to stand with these people, see, because, you know what, a free world—a free Iraq in a part of the world that's desperate for freedom is an historic opportunity. Maybe I can put it to you best this way: You know, my dad, I'm sure some of your dads, fought in World War II against Japan. And right after World War II, there was a movement to rebuild Japan so it would be a self-governing nation. Some doubted whether that was possible. Some people in our country, they said, "Why are you wasting your time? Why worry about a self-governing Japan?" Fortunately, there were some optimists, some people who believed in the power of liberty to change societies and lives who stood the line and finally succeeded. We succeeded in helping Japan self-govern.

So I'm having Kobe beef one night with Prime Minister Koizumi. He's the Prime Minister of Japan and a good friend of mine. We're talking about how to keep the peace. We're talking about how to deal with Mr. Kim Chong-il of North Korea—people are starving, by the way, and who wants to try to blackmail the free world with a nuclear weapon. And here we are talking about peace. That's what we're talking about. See, free societies are peaceful societies. Someday, an American President will be talking to a duly-elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace, and America will be better for it.

And the people of Iraq are watching carefully right now. Are we going to be a country of our word? When we say we believe people should be free, are we willing to stand by our word? Or are we going to go timid and weary and afraid of the barbaric behavior of a few? I want to be your President for 4 more years because I believe that freedom can change the world and the world will be more peaceful.

A couple of other—[*applause*]. Thank you all. Let me talk about domestic policies. And then we're going to call on some of our—some of your citizens to help me make some points. First of all, when I came to Washington, I said we're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. That means the attitude that some kids can't learn; therefore, let's just shuffle them through the school. You know what I'm talking about. And people got shuffled from grade to grade, and society woke up, said, "Oh, what happened?" Well, what happened was, was that we didn't set high expectations and we never measured, really. We never—you see, if you believe a child can read, then you want to know whether that child is reading. And you want to know early, before it's too late. And when you can figure out whether a child is not reading early, it gives you a chance to correct the problems so that no child is left behind. That's why we called it the No Child Left Behind Act.

And we made good progress. There is more to do. That's what I'm here to tell you. There's more to do. We need intensive reading programs for junior high kids. We need to make sure that they've got the basic education as they head to high school. We must make sure that the Internet is in classrooms so that the free flow of information is vibrant and well. The broadbrand technology initiative of mine is essential to making sure information flows into our schools. We want to make sure the high school diploma means something.

There's more work to do. We want to make sure the community colleges are vibrant. We're about to talk to one of your citizens who has gone back to school, after years, to upgrade her skill level. If we want them to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure our kids are educated so they can compete. And we've got to make sure people have got the capacity to retrain for the jobs which exist. You've got jobs here.

Listen, I understand something about the job base in Ohio. I know people are nervous. People are skittish. But there's jobs being created, and we're going to talk to a job creator here as well. But one of the ways to make sure jobs stay here is that we train people for the jobs which actually exist. And we're going to talk to one of your citizens here pretty quick—or two citizens, actually, that are involved with work training.

Health care is an issue in this campaign—how do we keep it affordable and available. We've made some good progress in health care. We've expanded what's called community health centers. Those are for low-income Americans to get help with primary care so they're not getting help in your emergency rooms. One way to hold down costs—which I think is the crux of much of the problems; health care costs too much—is to provide care for people who can't afford health care in a cost-effective manner. And we're doing that by expanding community health centers.

We've got to make sure that small-business owners have the capacity to pool risk. See, most people who are working uninsured work for small businesses. And small businesses must be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries—associated health plans, they're called—so they get the same purchasing power as big companies do in order to make sure there is health insurance available for employees.

We want to make sure there's health savings accounts available for people. We're going to talk to a new purchaser of a health savings account. You've probably heard of them, aren't sure what they mean. You're about to learn what they are. They are wonderful ways for people to save money, to make sure that the person or the family is in charge of their own health care decisions so that bureaucrats aren't making the decisions for people. And there are ways to save money. You'll hear—[*laughter*]—you'll like it. [*Laughter*]

We strengthened Medicare. Think back, now. You know, President after President, candidate after candidate said, "Elect me; I'll do something about Medicare." I got the job done, along with Congress. Medicare is better off. Four million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards. If you haven't, if you're eligible, sign up for one. You'll save money when it comes to purchasing prescription drugs. Next year, we're going to actually start screening seniors. Doesn't that make sense, to have a health care system that says let's screen you first so we can detect problems early, before they're too late. That was never a part of Medicare. Thanks to the reforms we worked together on, it's now an essential part and will save taxpayers money.

In 2006, prescription drugs will become available for the first time in Medicare, and seniors will have more choices. Seniors will be able to design the health care plan that meets their needs. That's never been a part of Medicare. And here's how you save money. Medicare would pay for the $100,000 or so heart operation. Medicare would not pay for the prescription drugs to prevent the heart condition from happening in the first place. See, you spend $2,000 of drugs to save the Government $100,000 of operating expenses. Inherent in my philosophy for health care is we want the patient and the doctor to be central to the decisionmaking process in health care, not Washington, DC, bureaucrats.

Finally, let me tell you one other thing about health care. One reason your health care costs are going up, and one reason doctors are nervous and many doctors are leaving the practice of medicine is because of junk and frivolous lawsuits. See, you can't be pro-patient, pro-doctor, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose, see. I think those of us in public life have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice. We need medical liability reform in Washington, DC, to help our patients and doctors.

A couple of other points. We've been through a lot. Ohio has been through a lot. Listen, when you go through a recession, corporate scandal, emergency, and war, you've been through a lot in a quick period of time, if you really think about it. Think about what we have been through as an economy and as a nation, and yet we're strong. You know why? We've got great workers. We've got the most productive workforce in the world. We've got great entrepreneurs. We've got wonderful farmers and ranchers. In other

words, we've got good people in this country that are willing to work together to overcome obstacles. But Government can help.

I think one of the reasons why our economy is strong and getting stronger is because of tax relief. Remember what the tax relief was like. If you're a mother or a dad, you've got a child, you got—your child credit went up to 1,000. If you're married, we did something about the marriage penalty. I like to remind people, it's a different kind of Tax Code, isn't it, that says we'll penalize marriage. [*Laughter*] That's not what we believe. We ought to be strengthening marriage in America, not penalizing marriage.

A lot of the relief—a lot of the tax relief—also remember, when you're out there gathering the vote, what I'm trying to do is arm you up to get ready to convince the undecideds. [*Laughter*] Just remember this: When we were for tax relief, we said if you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. In other words, we didn't try to play favorites. If you're going to have tax relief, the fairest way to do it at Government is to say if you pay taxes, you get relief. And it's working.

Part of the tax relief plan that's really important is the small-business tax relief. Most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Therefore, it makes sense to cut taxes on small businesses, doesn't it? Actually, I'll answer my own question: It only makes sense to cut taxes on small businesses if you understand the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish.

Let me make one other point on the small-business tax relief, so everybody understands it. Most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations or sole proprietorships. Now, what that means is they pay tax at the individual income tax level. And so when you hear me talking about cutting individual income taxes, you've got to be thinking about the small businesses that are getting relief as well. See, one of the cornerstones of the economic recovery package, the economic stimulus package, was letting small businesses keep more money, which means it's more likely they're going to stay in business or more likely to hire somebody. It also encouraged small businesses to buy capital goods. We'll talk about a capital good purchaser here in a minute.

And so the economy is strong. There's more work to do. But remember, we created 1.5 million new jobs in the last year. Ohio's unemployment rate is 5.8 percent. It's getting better, is what I'm telling you—5.8 percent is good; we can do better. I'll tell you how you can do better: Don't raise taxes on the American people, for starters.

Just remember, they're out there promising every day. I think they're over $2 trillion—"they" being our opponents—have promised more than $2 trillion in new spending. They just haven't said how they're going to pay for it. Well, they have—they have to a certain extent. They said they're going to tax the rich. They're going to raise the rates. Well, first of all, I don't think anybody ought to pay more than 35 percent to the Federal Government. I think that's a fair amount of money that somebody ought to pay.

Secondly, when they say they're going to tax the rich, remember, when they're raising those income taxes, they're also taxing small businesses. Most small businesses pay individual income taxes. Thirdly, you know how the Tax Code works. When they say "tax the rich," those are the folks who have got the accountants to see to it they don't pay tax, so guess who gets stuck with the bill? You're going to get stuck with the bill. The worst thing for job creation is to be running up the taxes on the working people of this country, and we're not going to let him have a chance to do so.

I'm winding down here. [*Laughter*] Nobody started to fall out yet. A couple other points I want to make. I'm running because I understand there's some things we need to do to keep jobs here in America. We need tort reform to keep jobs here in America. We need good health policy to keep jobs here in America. We need an energy plan to keep jobs here in America. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Audience member. Get it done, George!

The President. I am going to get it done. I told you when I ran we would reform the schools, and we did. I told you when I ran we would reform Medicare, and we did. I told you when I ran we would cut the taxes on the working people, and we did. When

this administration says something, we mean it, and we get it done.

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

The President. Thank you all. Okay. I've asked some citizens to come and help me make my points. First of all, the cornerstone of good policy, in my opinion, is to encourage people to own something. See, I believe a society in which there is widespread ownership is a hopeful and helpful society. If you own something, you really care about the future of the country. That's why I like ownership. We want to have an environment so more people own their own business. We're going to talk to the CEO of a small business here in a minute. There's nothing more hopeful, is there, than saying, "Welcome to my home." We want more people owning their own home. And I'm proud to report the homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America today. We're going to talk about owning your own health care account. I also believe that younger workers ought to be allowed, at their option, to have personal savings accounts in Social Security so that the Social Security system can survive.

For us old guys, retired or nearly retired, nothing will change. But to make sure there's a Social Security system around for younger workers—I'm talking about down there in the 30s—[*laughter*]—they ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and have a personal savings account that they can pass on from one generation to the next.

The Jaminets are with us, Emily and John. Thanks for coming. As you can see, Emily is about ready to have her fourth child. She doesn't look old enough, does she, to have four children. Thanks for coming. Tell us—first of all, they have told me that they bought a home.

Mr. Jaminet. That's right.

The President. First-time homebuyer.

Mr. Jaminet. That's right.

The President. Why?

Mr. Jaminet. Why? For our family.

The President. Good, well, most people buy a home for their families. That's good. [*Laughter*] And, so, like, tell—go ahead, tell me what you told me earlier. Refinanced it.

[*Mr. Jaminet made brief remarks.*]

The President. You like having your own home. First, the reason I asked him to come is, is that I told you I believe in ownership. There's nothing better than a story when somebody says, "We own our first home." They own their own home. That's what we want. We want people from all walks of life to stand up in America and say, "Hey, I own my own home. Welcome to my home"—not, "Welcome to the Government's home," but, "Welcome to my home."

These good folks saved money in the tax relief. That's what I wanted to share with you as well—2,200 in 2003.

Mr. Jaminet. That's right.

The President. Two thousand four—how much?

Mr. Jaminet. About the same.

The President. Same, okay. This is $2,300. Now, that's not a lot to people in Washington, I guess, the numbers counters up there. It's a lot to them. See, here's what I believe about tax relief. Government can set priority and it needs—and that's hard in Washington. Everybody has got their own priorities. My job is to set priorities: It's been the defense of the homeland; it's been winning the war on terror; it's been making sure education works well; making sure our seniors have a health care system that's reasonable. But I believe once Government sets priorities, these folks can spend their money better than the Federal Government can spend their money.

What did you do with all that money? First of all, it's your money. Get nervous when you hear people in Washington say, "Well, we're spending the Government's money." [*Laughter*] It's not the Government's money. It's John and Emily's money that we're spending. Now they've got more of their own to spend. It's an important distinction in the campaign. People have got to listen carefully to the words. I think they'll get a difference of philosophy.

Now, what did you do with all your own money? [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Jaminet. Well, I'm a stay-at-home mom, so it's allowed me to do that.

The President. Good.

Mrs. Jaminet. I'm just really—keep focused on our family values and continue, like John said, to pay off debt, and him going

back to school is such a huge blessing to be able to work at Honda and have a career that provides for all of us.

The President. You work at Honda?

Mr. Jaminet. Yes.

The President. That's good. It's interesting, isn't it, a foreign company investing in the United States. That's positive. I can see why they did. We've got great people here in America. They need to keep coming with their money. They'll find great workers here. Thank you all for coming.

One think I want to remind you of is, parts of the tax relief package expire. That's what happened when Congress passed the deal. It's going to stay low for a while, and then they go away. See, I've been calling on the Congress to make the tax relief permanent. Now, if they don't make it permanent, these good folks will pay $1,300 more in taxes. They'll have less of their own money. In other words, they'll have $1,300 less to spend. And I don't think that's good for the economy, to be taking—I know it's not good for their family. They're worried about their family. I'm worried about their family. I'm worried about the economy too. And taking that money out of their pockets is not good. Tax relief has got to be permanent in order to make sure this economy continues to grow. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

We've got an interesting story with Linda Wagner. Linda, thanks for coming. What's your job description?

Ms. Wagner. Well, I happen to be a registered nurse, and I'm director of employee education for Ohio Health Corporation.

The President. Great. And how does it work?

[*Ms. Wagner made brief remarks.*]

The President. Let me ask you something. Obviously somebody is looking for workers in those fields, I guess is why they're retraining people.

Ms. Wagner. Yes, that's a desperate need. Health care——

The President. Desperate need—there are jobs in this new society, jobs in a high-tech world that—where people need help in order to gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's what we're talking about. A compassionate America is willing to retrain people for the jobs which exist.

[*Ms. Wagner made further remarks.*]

The President. Right, and there's Government money for that, trade adjustment assistance, displaced workers programs. I think it's a wise use of taxpayers' money, frankly, to help people who have been displaced from their work go back to school and gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs which exist. Interestingly enough—I don't know if, Linda, you're in a position to say this—but most people who go back to school for the new jobs end up making more money.

Ms. Wagner. Absolutely.

The President. Yes, she was. That's good. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Wagner. You're talking somewhere between 200 and 300 percent difference in salaries between an unlicensed person and somebody who has got a license.

The President. Listen, if you're out there looking for work and you don't think there's work available, go to your one-stops, ask and look for what's available. Good Government policy has made money available for people to be retrained in institutions which are flexible and available and affordable. The community colleges, for example, are willing to change curriculum to help meet the needs of the workplace. And this is a private institution that's doing the same thing. You're doing great work.

Ms. Wagner. Well, we're pretty proud of our program.

The President. You ought to be.

Ms. Wagner. We pay for the tuition, expenses, books, and we also fund three clinical instructors to also assist Columbus State in getting our people educated.

The President. Well, thank you, Linda. Appreciate you. Good job. Pass that over to Jerry. See, the reason Linda came is because I was convinced that she would be able to explain it better than me, and she did. [*Laughter*]

Jerry Hurley. Absolutely.

The President. But I appreciate that. You didn't have to agree with her, Jerry. [*Laughter*] All right, Jerry.

Ms. Hurley. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Ms. Hurley. I am great today.

The President. Okay. You don't need to tell us your age, like you told me earlier.

Ms. Hurley. I am 53.

The President. And proud of it, I want you to know.

Ms. Hurley. Yes, I am.

The President. And you're probably a grandmother.

Ms. Hurley. I am a proud grandmother.

The President. There you go. Okay, tell us about—this is an interesting story. I hope people out there are listening to Jerry's story. Go ahead. I feel like a talk show host. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. Hurley made brief remarks.*]

The President. There you go. Listen, the reason I asked—isn't that a great story? Thanks, Jerry. What a fabulous story. And, see, that's going to be the story of the 21st century, when you think about it. This is a changing world. The job picture changes quite rapidly. Some jobs don't change—like firefighters, guys. We'll need you forever. You don't have to worry about these guys. Thanks for your service.

But jobs change. When most of you were coming up, your dad worked, your mom stayed at home, your dad had the job at the same company, and everything was fine. But it's a different world we live in today. And the job picture changes, and it requires new skill sets. In order to make sure America is a competitive place, we've got to make sure education not only gets it right for the youngsters but that there's continuing education opportunity for people like Jerry.

Now, Government can't say, "Go back to school." Somebody has to make that choice herself or himself. But we darn sure can help. And the community college system is a great place to get people retrained for the jobs which exist. Not only is there great job satisfaction achieved by somebody choosing to take advantage of educational opportunities; they're making more money too. And that's what's important to realize. If you gain new skills and you become a more productive worker, productivity increases yield higher wages. And that's what's happening in America.

Some people are nervous—of course they're nervous—but there are jobs out there, and the role of Government is to help people train for the jobs which exist, just like Jerry. And I want to thank you for coming.

We've got an interesting story that Russ and Kathy Griffith are going to share with you. They're here with us. Russ is a self-employed consultant, engineering consultant. And he is—well, he's going to talk to you about health savings accounts, let me put it to you that way. Tell everybody what a health savings account is.

[*Mr. Griffith made brief remarks.*]

The President. Right, so let's put it this way. Say you've got a—you buy a insurance policy that says they'll cover everything above the first $1,000 of expenses, which is not a very high premium policy. And then, you put $1,000—in his case, he's self-employed, so he puts $1,000 of his own money, tax-free, into a savings account which earns money tax-free, which he can withdraw tax-free to cover up the first $1,000 of expenses before the insurance policy kicks in. So in his case, the expense is the cost of the insurance policy plus the $1,000 tax-free money into the account, is that accurate?

Mr. Griffith. That's true, yes.

The President. All right—and this is a new product, by the way, and it's going to take a while for the American people to figure it out, but it's a product that says he's in control of his health care decisions. See, he decides how the $1,000 is spent, not somebody you never see before, you know, somebody writing the insurance. It's his call to make. After all, it's his money. Probably going to cause him to make better health care choices, for starters, like exercise. [*Laughter*]

Now, let me ask you something, what were you spending prior to your health savings account, and give people a sense of the savings.

Mr. Griffith. We established our health savings account and insurance policy in the middle of June, and before that, we were spending $1,111 a month for our insurance policy. Since we established the HSA account and the insurance policy, we're now spending less than one-third of that on our monthly premium. We expect that on an annual basis, we will spend less than half—when you count

the insurance premium as well as our out-of-pocket medical expenses—we'll be spending less than half of what we spent with our previous medical insurance.

The President. So he's saving money. So people say, "How can you—what can you put in place to help people save money in health care?" Well, here's the plan right here. And let me tell you the interesting thing about the plan, is, see, Russ and Kathy are responsible for the $1,000. It's their money they put in tax-free, so therefore, they're going to be wise shoppers when it comes to health care. They're going to be a better decision-maker. If the doctor says, "You've got to spend $800 on this," they may say, "Well, I'm not so sure we want to spend 8, doc, you know." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Griffith. Tell me I need that——

The President. Go ahead. Seriously.

Mr. Griffith. I was going to say, "Tell me, doctor, that I need that."

The President. Yes, see, rational decision-making by patients where they're in control of the decisionmaking process, is part of how you hold costs down. If you've got people just spending your money and you just take it for granted that the decisionmaking process is wise, that's inflationary. As you're a part of the process of, kind of, discerning which is what's necessary and what's not, it also is when it's your money on the line and you see it on your line—on the line, you'll make better choices about your body. You'll realize savings by living healthy lives, which isn't the way the system is today. It's an interesting system.

And see, the way it works for small businesses—let's say Russ hires somebody and is doing quite well in his business, he can set up an HSA for his employee, and he can kick in the $1,000. The employer can kick in the $1,000 tax-free for the employee. That's how you fund a better health care system. It's going to take awhile for this product to evolve, but in the heart of it, the heart of the system, is that rather than bureaucrats making decisions for Russ, he and Kathy are making decisions for themselves and are rewarded on a tax-free return by making good and wise decisions in the health care.

Listen, thanks for coming. I appreciate you explaining this. Go ahead. Got anything else? Yes, hold on.

Mr. Griffith. I'd like to say also that even though we made that change, we were able to keep the doctors that we had under our previous policy. So we had no—have had no change at all in the health care we received, either in hospitals or doctors.

The President. Yes, the docs will like this because they like dealing directly with their patients. They'd rather be spending time healing than filling out paperwork, I can assure you. And at any rate, it's an interesting idea. Thank you all for coming. Very good job. It's working, in other words. A man just stood up and said he saved half—from what he was spending, saved half of his previous expenses. That's a good deal. People ought to look into it.

Finally, Phil Derrow is with us, small-business guy, CEO and president, Ohio Transmission Corporation, New Albany, Ohio. Welcome.

Mr. Derrow. Thank you.

The President. What's your business do?

[*Mr. Derrow made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good, that's—keep saying that, will you? [*Laughter*] Let me ask you, are you adding any jobs this year? That's what I'm interested in, and so are the people looking for work.

Mr. Derrow. We are.

The President. How many?

Mr. Derrow. We expect to add anywhere from 10 to 36 jobs this year depending on the business that we——

The President. See, here's what's happening in America today. Remember, I told you most new jobs are created by small businesses? That's what he's saying, 10 to 35 jobs here, 10 to 35 jobs there. The entrepreneurial sector of this country is strong. The small-business sector is vibrant and alive. We've been through tough times. He's growing. A lot of it had to do with tax policy. Let me ask you something. Are you going to make investment?

Mr. Derrow. Absolutely. We make investments each year. The reduction or the accelerated depreciation allowance has allowed us to make more investment than maybe we

otherwise would have. It's also allowed our customers to purchase capital equipment that they may not have. We've had a number of customers tell us that they made capital equipment purchases because of the accelerated depreciation schedule.

The President. Yes, see, what that means is—that's accountant talk. He's not an accountant, though. He hires accountants, right?

Mr. Derrow. I do. I have one here.

The President. That's good. [*Laughter*] Okay. What he's telling you is that the tax relief we passed said that if you make an investment, you save money; you get a little tax break for making an investment. What will you invest in? Like, when you say "investment," what will you be buying?

Mr. Derrow. We purchase information technology equipment. We purchase capital equipment. We own and operate air compressor stations that deliver compressed air to our customers, and we have to make investments anywhere from several hundred thousand dollars to a couple of million dollars to purchase the equipment to build that station. And then we sell air to our customers.

The President. You and I are in the same business. [*Laughter*] Is it hot air, by any chance?

Mr. Derrow. Oh, no.

The President. When he makes an investment—listen, I want you to understand how the economy works. See, the tax relief said we're going to encourage him to make investment. He just said, "I'm going to purchase equipment." Somebody has to make the equipment that he is going to purchase. And that's how the economy—that's how good tax policy works. It says to Phil, "We want tax policy to make it more likely you'll make an investment," because when he makes an investment, somebody has got to build the product. And when somebody builds the product, somebody is more likely to keep a job or find work. That's why good tax policy has been working. And the key is to make sure that we don't disincent Phil—in other words, we changed the taxes at a time when he's still thinking about investing. Because if he chooses not to buy the equipment, then the person who is making the equipment may lose the job. That's how I think. I think about how to make the decisions of Phil easier, so he can stay in business and expand.

Tell me—he's got another interesting idea that I think is very important for the country to adopt: flex-time.

Mr. Derrow. I'm glad you told me what my interesting idea was. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm not a lawyer, but it looks like I'm leading the witness. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Derrow. I always appreciate the help.

The President. You appreciate the fact I'm not a lawyer? That's good. A lot of people just say——

Mr. Derrow. I appreciate that quite a bit, actually.

The President. Nothing wrong with lawyers. We occasionally need a good one. But go ahead.

[*Mr. Derrow made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, I think the Government ought to change that. What I'm telling you is, I think the Government ought to allow employers to say to an employee, if you want some time off and work different hours, you're allowed to do so. If you want to accumulate time to spend with your family, spend with your parents, spend for being reeducated, you're allowed to do so. Government ought to be standing side by side with people, not against people. Government ought to be helping families. Good job. Thanks, Phil.

Listen, I've got time for some questions. Yes, ma'am. Why don't you get up there and ask a question. Fire away.

Opportunities for Non-High-School Graduates/Association Health Care Plans

Q. I'm a small-business owner. We employ roughly—and I could talk to you about—20 percent increase every year in the last 7 years. However, we happen to be a trade school. We train people for hairdressing, barbering, manicuring, what have you. My people necessarily—are not necessarily college material, not necessarily community college material. There is a lack of ability for the people who are not high school graduates to take advantage of the kind of training that we offer, and we would have the ability to put many, many more people per year in the workforce if trade schools all over America

had the ability to have discretion about accepting non-high-school graduates or people who do not have GEDs.

The President. Well, I appreciate that. Thanks. I'll look into that. Let me tell you something, though, what you need to do, you need to be able to pool risk. You're talking about the health care—you need to be able to pool risk with people who do the same thing you do, whether they be in Texas, Michigan, California, or Ohio. You're prevented from doing so now. In other words, the more people that she can insure or seek insurance for in a larger pool, the more likely it is she's got a better price. And that's what we need to be able to do. Your other issue, I need to look into it. Thanks.

Whoever made that grunt, please get up and yell a question. [*Laughter*] Sounded like a friendly grunt, doesn't it? [*Laughter*] Yes, sir. Okay. Yes, sir, go ahead. Right here. You didn't grunt, but go ahead.

[*At this point, a baby in the audience cried.*]

The President. Tell him to be steady; we're almost out of here. [*Laughter*] I don't blame you. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Faith-Based Initiative

Q. I'm a pastor of a church in Lincoln County, which is just east of here. And I've agreed to be the chairman of a Christian coalition for that county. Our church has grown, and we're very interested in trying to acquire two old buildings in the Newark City that are kind of dilapidated or falling down to put a rehabilitation, reorientation kind of job vocational training there for people to finish their GEDs, for men and women to give them some basic faith training and to help them rediscover what they can become. But it's been difficult to know how to acquire or plug into faith-based funds——

The President. Yes, I appreciate that.

Q. ——and I could use your support.

The President. Sure. He's got a great question. His question is, "How can I, somebody who is trying to set up a program to help people, understand how the faith-based program works?" First of all, you've got to understand this has been a struggle to change the culture in Washington. There's a lot of people in Washington who argue process rather than results. They say, "Well, we better not do this; it might obscure a very important line in our society, which is the separation of church and state."

I happen to believe that the better question is, does the program work; are we changing somebody's life for the better and, therefore, society is better off; and let's figure out how to make the process work, which is what we've done. This is a long answer I'm going to give you. I'm going to tell you how to do it in a minute. I'm just telling you there's a cultural issue, because nobody wants the church to become the state or the state to become a church. On the other hand, if a program is effective, we want that program to be able to compete for funds.

Now, there are some rules that you've got to understand. One, you can't proselytize. In other words, you've got to take all comers. If you're a faith-based program and a Christian faith-based program, and a Jewish person walks in looking for help, you've got to provide the help. In other words, it's open, which—that's not a problem for faith-based programs. People are willing to help cure and solve lives.

The other problem people have in the faith-based field, they're worried about interfacing with Government because they're afraid Government is going to give them so many rules and regulations they won't be able to actually practice their faith. It's hard to be a faith-based program if you can't practice your faith. That's our theory.

Now, so what I've had to do is set up offices, and we've got an Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in the White House. So, step one, contact the White House Faith-Based Office. Incredibly enough, you're not going to believe this, this guy is a great guy running the office. His name is Jim Towey. Guess what one of his jobs was. He was Mother Teresa's lawyer. [*Laughter*] Imagine—what kind of society is it where Mother Teresa needs a lawyer? [*Laughter*] That's what he was.

And the other thing is, sir, is that the State—have you got one? Yes, the State government has got an Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. Their purpose is to expedite the grant money that comes from the Federal

Government. Some of the grant money is directly—goes directly to the programs, and you can apply for that through HHS, HUD, for example—Health and Human Services—the Justice Department grants. There are grants that people can apply to directly. There are grants that come through formula to the State, and then it's up to the State to see to it that the faith-based community has got appropriate access to the money. Bob has done a good job of setting up that office.

Thanks for that question. I appreciate it. Yes.

Support for the President

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that a lot.

Yes, sir. If you don't have a mike, just yell it out.

Antidrug Efforts/Faith-Based Initiative

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. My name is Andre Porter. I'm a 24-year-old law student here in Columbus and a proud member of FBA. We sang a song for you today before you got here.

The President. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Q. Just wanted to let you know.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We sang two songs. The second song was about antiviolence and antidrugs. And we grow up in an era right now where the culture is so centered on violence and drugs, and so our group—the song that we wrote, these gentlemen here, FBA, we wanted to know what you have planned for our generation to stop violence and increase the goodness of our culture?

The President. No, I appreciate you saying that. That's a great question. First, I think we have a duty to go on an education campaign to explain to people that drugs will destroy your life. In other words, the drug strategy has been interdiction, which is important—in other words, stop them from coming in from Colombia or wherever they may be coming in from.

There's two other aspects, though, that we need to really stay focused on, and one is the reduction in demand. You know, the way the market works, unfortunately, where there is demand, somebody will figure out how to supply. And so we've got to get into people's minds and heads early in life that drugs will destroy your life. There's community-based effort that Washington helps fund, but it requires grassroots organizations dedicated to suppressing demand for drugs.

We actually have got a national advertising campaign going on. The whole idea is to send a message to the kids that drugs will destroy your life. So that's a useful role for the Federal Government, is to be advertising and then stimulating community-based programs.

I happen to think the Faith-Based Initiative is a very important program to help teach kids that drugs can destroy. I'll give you an example of a program I'm talking about. I think we ought to have—I know we need to have a mentoring program for children whose moms or dads may be in prison, and surround that child with a loving adult that helps that child understand that right choices in life—in America, if you make the right choices, you have a chance to realizing your dreams. Obviously, you guys made the right choices. Somebody told you, somewhere in your life, about right choices. Now I don't know who it was—probably mom or dad. But if not mom or dad, somebody did. And they told you about the right choices because they had love in their hearts. And so, therefore, one of the most—I think best ways to help kids get the right message is through vibrant mentoring programs. And many of those mentoring programs come out of the faith community.

Thirdly, third aspect of a strategy on drugs is to help the addict. There are—you know, the truth of the matter is, a few consume most of the drugs, relatively few. The addicts are really the big drug users. I don't know all the statistics off the top of my head. I'm going to guess, maybe 15 percent of the drug users consume by far the vast majority of the drugs. They're hooked. They can't get off.

And so one of the things we've got to do at the Federal level, it seems like to me, and State and local level, is focus efforts on helping the addicts kick the habit. And you heard me say earlier that addiction sometimes requires more than just a counseling session.

Addiction requires a change of heart, and that's where the faith community can play an integral role. And so I've asked Congress, and Congress has passed money to give a voucher to an addict, where the addict gets to make the decision of the type of program he or she thinks will best help save their life, faith-based or otherwise. And so there's a—that's our comprehensive strategy.

I've got some positive news to report: Drug use for youngsters is down 11 percent over the last couple of years. That's good. It depends on where we started from. But the point is, the trend line is good. And the role of Government, in my judgment, is to stand on the side of people in confirming the fact that people can and should make healthy choices with their life.

Counternarcotics Efforts in Colombia

Q. I'm from Colombia.

The President. Colombia, *que bueno. Bienvenidos.* We'll have the whole—conduct in Spanish. [*Laughter*] Actually, go ahead.

Q. I've been here for 20 years. I just took my wife and my kids to Colombia. Colombia is a country that has a lot of problems. At this point—[*inaudible*].

The President. *Gracias, senor.* I tell you, let me say something—[*applause*]. Thank you very much. We're standing strong with the Colombian Government. I want to thank you. You know why? I've got confidence in Uribe. He's the President, Uribe. He said, "Help us help ourselves." He understands that he has got to battle narcotraffickers in Colombia, for the sake of his own country. And so when he comes to the Oval Office, I take a look at him in the eye when he says, "I want your help." And I say, "Why?" And he says, "Because I want our country to be free from these narcotraffickers." It makes me feel comfortable that we're doing the right thing with the taxpayers' money to support Colombia. It's in our interest we do so. It's also in the interest of the Colombian people that we help.

And he's a freedom—this guy loves freedom. I mean, he is a strong leader. Tell him thanks, if you talk—I'll probably talk to him before you do. [*Laughter*]

Yes, ma'am.

Religious Freedom/President's Faith

Q. Hello. I just wanted to say that, being a young Christian, it's been very encouraging to me to see you, as our country's leader, being so open about your faith.

The President. Thank you. Thanks a lot.

Q. And I was just wondering, do you feel that your faith has been beneficial to your decisionmaking process? And if so, how?

The President. First, let me talk about faith in politics. It is essential that this country always guard the right for people to worship as they see fit. It's essential that people understand, if you choose to worship or choose not to worship, you're equally an American. It's very important for all our citizens to understand that—that you can worship or not worship, and you're equally patriotic.

Now, secondly, if you choose to worship, you're just as an American if you're a Jew, Christian, Muslim, or Hindu. That's what freedom of religion means. I want the youngsters out there to hear me on this. It's an essential part of the value of our country. It is an essential tradition and truth that we must pass from one generation to the next.

Now, having said that, I do have faith. And I want to thank—I'll tell you, the most sustaining aspect of the Presidency, one of the most interesting parts of the Presidency, one of the most touching parts of the Presidency is that people whom I have never known in my life take time to pray for me and Laura and our family.

And what that means is that's—it sustains us. It strengthens us. It—the prayers comfort us, and so do my own prayers. And so that's what religion means to me as the President. And I want to thank you for your question.

Yes, ma'am.

Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

Q. Mr. President, thank you for your stance on the sanctity of marriage between men and women. What can we do to keep judges who find in favor of relationships between homosexuals?

The President. Let me—again, this is an issue that people need to address with the utmost sensitivity and sincerity. It is an issue that is a—an issue that we must not allow

to denigrate into emotional debate. It's an issue that requires thoughtful discussion.

I believe society is better off by a clear definition of traditional marriage. And the reason I do is because, one, traditional marriage between man and a woman has served society and civilization well. Secondly, there is a firm commitment required in a marriage between a man and a woman that must not be undermined by redefinition. That commitment in itself provides stable, loving environments for families.

I am deeply concerned about the fact, on this very sensitive issue is being redefined by the courts, not by the people. I think that to the extent that—there needs to be a honest and open dialog about this issue amongst the people.

Now, Congress passed what's called DOMA, Defense of Marriage Act, signed by my predecessor, which defined marriage as between a man or a woman and prevented States from making a decision that would cause another State to have to accept that decision. Now, I think that law is a good law. I am worried about its constitutionality—in other words, whether or not it will be overturned by activist judges. As a matter of fact, a judge overturned the DOMA law of Washington State yesterday. In other words, judges are beginning to define the nature of marriage.

So I said that if you believe like I believe, that traditional marriage is important, that the best way to see to it that society—our society will continue to define marriage as between a man or woman, is to—is the constitutional process, is to amend the Constitution so that a judge cannot define.

Now, the other thing that that will do is it will enable the people to be involved through the State legislatures. In other words, you've got to get it out of the Congress, the amendment, and then it has to be ratified by the States, which I think is a healthy process. In other words, it's the legislative branch that will be deciding the definition of marriage on this very important issue, and not the judicial branch. And so that's why I advocated what I advocated, and it's the right position for the country.

Go ahead, yell it out. If you don't like—if I don't like the question, I'll reinvent it. [*Laughter*] Oops, he didn't believe me. [*Laughter*]

Support for the President

Q. Mr. President, I don't have a question; I have three thank-yous.

The President. Thank you.

Q. One, thank you for your availability to serve.

The President. Thank you, sir.

Q. Two, your candle is burning brightly.

The President. Thank you.

Q. And three, thanks for accepting the call and answering the call to work for what's right in the country and in the world.

The President. Thank you, sir. God bless. Thank you. Thanks a lot. I'll tell you what, a guy just gave me the hook. I'm off to Saginaw, Michigan. I want to conclude by telling you this: It is an honor to be the President of such a great nation.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, sir. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and share some thoughts with you. I have a desire, a deep desire to serve this country for 4 more years, to make us a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

May God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. at the Aladdin Shrine Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gov. Bob Taft and Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley of Ohio; Doug Preisse, executive chairman, Franklin County Republican Party; former professional football player Bernie Kosar; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request

August 5, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with my constitutional authority and section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganization Act, as amended, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request Act.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For Fiscal Year 2005, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $6.26 billion.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks in Saginaw, Michigan

August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me here. I'm here to ask for the vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. It's been a great turnout. Thanks for coming.

It's going to be an interesting campaign. We have big differences of opinion. For example, we have a difference of opinion over the heart and soul of America. See, my opponents believe you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. I think you can find it right here in Saginaw, Michigan.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. That's not the only thing my opponent seems a little confused about. The other day in Ohio, he said that there's nothing better than Buckeye football, period.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then he came to Michigan. First he told the crowd, "I go for the Buckeye football. That's where I'm coming from." No, I know, that's not what the Michigan folks were expecting to hear. [*Laughter*] Then he remembered where he was and he called an audible. [*Laughter*] He said that the University of Michigan was a powerhouse of a team. You see, my opponent is a Washington politician who's taken both sides of just about every issue, including Big Ten football.

Listen, I want to thank you for welcoming Vice President Cheney here a couple of months ago. I admit it, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] That's not why I picked him. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience, his ability to do the job. Everywhere I go, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will win 4 more years.

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

The President. I am—my only regret is that Laura is not traveling with me. She is a great wife, a wonderful mother, and a excellent First Lady for our country. I'm really proud of her. I'm really proud of her. I'm going to give you some reasons why to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Dave Camp, Congressman Camp. I appreciate you being here. Congresswoman Candice Miller, my good friend, is with us today. Thank you. Terri Lynn Land—I appreciate the secretary of state joining us. I wish Myrah Kirkwood all the best in her run for the United States Congress.

You invited the Gatlin Brothers. [*Applause*] I know. They grew up in Odessa, which is Ector County; I grew up in Midland County, which is right around the corner from here—just a different State. [*Laughter*] I appreciate my friends being here. They're good friends, and they're good guys who care a lot about our country.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. That means you're the people who put up the signs, make the phone calls; you're the people who are going to help register our fellow citizens. See, everybody needs to participate in elections. I believe we have a duty; I know you believe we have a duty to vote on election day. And so when