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Editor's Note: The President was in Kennebunkport, ME, on August 6, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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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 flextime 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

great State is with us today. Senators are with us today, very fine people in Senators Voinovich and DeWine. Members of the Congress are here today. The reason why is they want to join me in welcoming you who do not live in the United States to our great country. We're glad you're here, and we hope you have a wonderful experience in America.

You're in a great United States city. Cleveland, Ohio, is a fantastic place to visit. And I want to thank—and I know you join me in thanking the mayor of Cleveland, Mayor Jane Campbell, for her gracious hospitality.

I want to thank the sports authority figures who are here. I appreciate David Gilbert of the Cleveland Sports Commission. I want to thank Alex Machaskee, who is the cochair of the International Children's Games, and Dr. Fred Loop, who is the other chairman, for working so hard to put this event on.

I know you join me in thanking all the volunteers from the city of Cleveland who have worked hard to make sure your stay here is a good stay. I suggest you go to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. Oh, yes, that's where you need to spend some time.

I want to thank the former Olympians who are here. They wish you all the very best in the games and hope that you become Olympians yourselves. And this is a good place to start, right here in the competition.

A couple things I want to tell you. One, I hope you enjoy yourself, and I hope you spend time not only competing hard but getting to know each other. Like, there's all kinds of cultures here and different languages are spoken, but I think you'll find you share a lot of things in common. Yes, you hope for a better life. You care deeply about people you love. You want the world to be a better place. And so, not only compete hard, but spend time with each other and share cultures. I think you'll find you're all God's children. There's so much in common.

A couple other things I want to tell you is make sure that you continue to make the right choices in life. See, you're at the age where you're going to be challenged with some tough choices: drugs and alcohol, prejudice and hate. Reject that. Reject those kinds of temptations and continue serving your bodies and your soul well by making right choices in life. You made right choices to get here to compete. Continue doing so. I think it will help you—I know it will help you in your life.

I want to say one other word. I want to welcome the Afghan girls' soccer team who is here. We're glad every country is represented. I think it's especially interesting and an especially poignant and uplifting moment that young girls are here from the country of Afghanistan. Because your country is free, you're here. Because your country is free, you can now go to school for the first time—many of you can now go to school for the first time.

Freedom is such a powerful part of the world in which we live, and we take great pride in welcoming you all into a free society from a free society.

May God bless you, and may God bless all the athletes and their families and coaches who are here. Enjoy yourselves. Good luck. All my best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:35 p.m. at Cleveland Browns Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Matt Ghaffari, 1996 Olympic silver medalist, Greco-Roman wrestling; and Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

July 31, 2004

Good morning. This week, we received encouraging reports that show our economy is gaining strength. Consumer confidence hit a 2-year high in July. Existing home sales hit an alltime new record in June. The homeownership rate has hit a new alltime high. And since last summer, our economy has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

These gains in our economy have come at a time when Americans are benefiting from the full effects of tax relief. I have traveled across America meeting small-business owners who are investing tax savings into new equipment, and I have met families who are using tax savings to pay for their children's needs. All of this added economic activity is creating opportunity. Since last August, Americans have started work at more than

1.5 million new jobs, many of them in high-growth, high-paying industries.

The impact of our growing economy is being felt in Washington, where estimates of Government deficits are shrinking. My administration now forecasts that the combined deficits in 2004 and 2005 will be about $100 billion less than previously expected, and because of my policy of strengthening the economy while enforcing spending discipline in Washington, we remain on pace to reduce the deficit by half in the next 5 years.

These are hopeful signs, and we must make sure our economy continues to gain momentum. Families are working hard to make ends meet, and these families depend on good policies in Washington that promote growth, new jobs, and new opportunities.

Thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act, we are improving our public schools so students learn basic skills like reading, writing, math, and science. We have expanded Pell grant college scholarships so that more students can attend college, and we are helping community colleges train workers for the new high-skill jobs being created in our growing economy.

We're giving individuals more control over their health care dollars through newly created health savings accounts, and we must also address the rising costs of health care by enacting commonsense reforms in our medical liability system. We must continue to open up foreign markets to American goods, because on a level playing field, American workers and farmers and entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere.

We must enact reforms to our legal system so hard-working entrepreneurs are not run out of business by frivolous lawsuits. We must have a national energy policy so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. We must have sensible regulations so that America's job creators can focus on satisfying their customers and not bureaucrats in Government.

And we must keep taxes low on American families and small businesses by making the tax relief we have passed permanent. Thanks to tax relief enacted since 2001, a family of four earning $40,000 a year now pays nearly $2,000 less in Federal taxes. That is enough to pay the average home electricity bill for more than a year or fill up the gas tank of two cars for an entire year. To millions of hard-working Americans, tax relief has been the difference in helping make ends meet.

This is a crucial time for our economy. We have emerged from a period of great challenge. Terrorist attacks, recession, and corporate scandal hurt the wallets of millions of Americans, but these shocks to our economy did not damage our spirit. We're a hard-working and resilient nation. Our economy is on a rising path, and together, we will bring our prosperity to every corner of America.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:40 p.m. on July 30 at the Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids, MI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Canton, Ohio

July 31, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I'm glad so many came out on a Saturday morning. I appreciate the warm welcome. I particularly thank those who are sitting behind me; you've probably got the best view in the house.

We're on the Heart and Soul of America tour. I'm out asking for the vote. I'm out asking for your help. I want to serve this Nation for 4 more years.

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

The President. Oh, there's going to be big differences in this campaign. You'll hear big differences on taxes, on how to win the war on terror. There seems to be a difference over the heart and soul of America. My opponents think you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The true heart and soul of America is found right here in Canton, Ohio.

Last night I was in Cleveland; we're heading to Cambridge; I'm heading to Pittsburgh

today. We're taking this bus tour. I'm excited about the campaign. The crowds are big. The crowds are enthusiastic. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will win 4 more years.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like, "Bring her on, and you stay at home." [*Laughter*] But she is a great First Lady. I am proud of her. Today I'm going to talk about what I intend to do over the next 4 years, but perhaps the most important reason to put me back in is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I mentioned my runningmate. I admit, he's not the prettiest on the ticket. [*Laughter*] That's not why I picked him. I picked him because he's strong, he's steady, and he gets the job done.

I want to thank my friend Senator Voinovich. Put him back in there, will you, for the sake of Ohio and for the sake of America. He is a fabulous human being and a great United States Senator. Every time I talk to him, he says, "You be thinking about Ohio, Mr. President." I said, "Don't worry. Ohio is an important State, George." It's important for a lot of reasons. I carried it last time. I intend to work hard to carry it this time.

And if you want to know how you can help, go to georgewbush.com. That's where you get your marching orders. I want to thank Mike DeWine, the United States Senator who serves with George Voinovich so well. I appreciate your Governor, Bob Taft, joining us today. I'm proud he's joining me on the bus tour. I want to thank Congressman Ralph Regula, and Mary, for joining us. I was proud to say hello to your mayor, Mayor Creighton, today when I came in. I appreciate the fact that Janet ran for office. She said, "When you get up there, make sure you assure them that I'm going to fill the potholes." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." I want to thank all the other State and local officials.

I'm proud that grassroots activists are here. Those are the people who put up the signs. Those are the people who make the phone calls. Those are the people who register the voters. Those are the people who tell Republican, Democrat, and independent you have a duty in this country to vote. And those are the people, when they get people heading to the polls, are going to nudge them our way. Thanks for what you're doing.

Also, I'm proud that Chris Spielman is here. I'm glad that he is—taking one look at him reminded me how I'm glad we're both on the same side. [*Laughter*] He's a good man. I want to thank the McKinley Bulldog marching band.

Every incumbent who asks for your vote has to answer a central question, and that's why. Why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together. Think about what we've been through. We've accomplished a great deal. We've done a lot together. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that's to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. I'm asking for your vote because we have so much more to do together to move this country forward. If the people give me 4 more years, this country will be safer. Our economy will be stronger. Our future will be brighter and better for every single citizen. From creating well-paying, good jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading peace and protecting the homeland, we have made much progress. And we will do more.

We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child is left behind in America. 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 challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We set high standards. We're focusing on results. We're empowering parents. We're making sure the local folks are in charge of their own public schools. Today, children across America are showing real progress, substantial progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving public schools, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. The world we live in is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level

skills. We will reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand our math and science education so young people can compete in the 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 the 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 couldn't 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. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for the 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 health care and making health care more affordable, we are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health care. 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 companies.

To improve health care, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care and drive good doctors out of medicine. To make the health care industry more efficient and cost effective, we must harness technology to reduce costs and to prevent mistakes. We must expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases.

In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Still back there? [*Applause*] They are.

We have more to do to make America's economy stronger. We have come through a recession. We've come through terrorist attacks. We've come through a stock market decline. We've come through corporate scandals. Yet, this Nation has overcome all these obstacles. We've overcome the obstacles because we've got great workers in America, the most productive workers in the world, many of whom are right here in eastern Ohio. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers in America. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong and the small-business sector is alive and well in America.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax relief. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal taxes. We didn't play winners or losers. We did it the fair way. We gave tax relief for families with children. We gave tax relief for married couples. We provided tax relief for every small business that was making purchases. And this time, the check really was in the mail.

Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any time in nearly 20 years. Because we acted, America has added 1.5 million new jobs since last August. The economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. It lags in places like eastern Ohio; I know that. I'm aware of that. I just traveled on the bus with workers who told me they are nervous about their future. They're concerned. I am too. And therefore, we must have a President who understands that in order to keep jobs at home, America must be the best place to do business.

I'm here to tell you we can do more to make America job-friendly and America's workplaces more family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, our regulations must be reasonable and fair. To keep American jobs in America, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits that hurt our business and employers. If you want to keep jobs in America, the Government must not overspend your money, and the Government must keep

your taxes low. And that's how you keep jobs at home.

You also keep jobs at home by making sure American workers have a lifetime of learning. And you help them get training for the jobs of the future. And a great place to do that is in our community college system. The education and training they offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

I know there's great concern about trade in eastern Ohio. Let me tell you something about trade. I believe that America and Americans can compete with anybody, anyplace, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

We understand what currency valuations can do to manufacturing, particularly in eastern Ohio. We've been working with China to put fair policy in place. Just give us a chance to compete, is all we're asking. We've been enforcing our trade agreements. We're making sure that our workers and our manufacturers are treated fairly.

We'll help American families keep more of something they never enough of, time—time to play with their children, time to go Little League games or Girl Scout meetings, time to care for elderly parents, time to go to class to improve their lives. I believe that Congress should enact comp-time and flextime rules to allow American families to better juggle the demands of work and home. I think Government ought to be on the side of the American family. After 4 more years, there will be better paying jobs in America. After 4 more years, there will be more small businesses. After 4 more years, the American economy will continue to be the strongest in the world.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on 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.

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 terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is now a place where many young girls go to school for the first time.

Yesterday in Cleveland, Ohio, at the International Children's Games, I was able to hug and say hello to a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan. That wouldn't have happened 3 years ago. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

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

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 enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapon of mass destruction.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was the source of great instability.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th is we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. After September the 11th, we cannot fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America, who had ties to terror, had used weapons of mass destruction, might use those weapons

or share those capabilities with a deadly enemy.

We saw a threat. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion; they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, saw a threat, and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons and weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He continued to deceive the weapons inspectors.

And so I had a choice to make; this Nation had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and hope for the best and trust a madman, or take action to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world, when it comes to making America safer, when it comes to spreading the peace, we're turning a corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more work to do, more hard work to do. We'll continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters wherever they hide—in Afghanistan and Iraq or elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists. You can't negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. You must bring them to justice.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We will engage these enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere so that we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to lead the world with competence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition—a strong coalition joined together to defeat the terrorists. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we will continue to build alliances and work with our friends, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other countries.

We must keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. You see, these two nations are now governed by strong leaders who believe that there's a democratic future for their countries. These are courageous people who have stood up and led. And more and more of their citizens are joining them. More and more of the security needs in Iraq are being handled by Iraqis. It's their future. It's their responsibility. They understand that the men and women, the fathers and mothers of Iraq, want their children to grow up in a peaceful world just like the moms and dads of America want their children to grow up in a peaceful world.

When we acted to protect their own security, we promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to help them on the path to liberty. And when America gives it word, America will keep its word. And in these times, America's commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. 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 unselfish courage. The cause of liberty, the cause of freedom, is in really good hands.

And we must make sure that the men and women who wear our uniform have the very best—the best training, the best equipment. And so last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. This legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, for hazard pay, for health benefits, and ammunition and fuel and spare parts. In the Senate, only a handful, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority voted against the legislation. And two of those twelve Senators are on the ticket opposing us.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote this way: "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] Now, he's offering different explanations. At one time he said he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops, and then he 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 must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty, hopelessness, and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq, a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. Free countries listen to the hopes and aspirations of the people that live there. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others and making America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the values we believe in. Freedom is not America's gift to world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect America. An enemy still lurks, an enemy which hates what we stand for. And they're still plotting. The September the 11th Commission * had this interesting conclusion, which I agree with. It said our homeland is safer, but we are not yet safe. They're right. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses—or we're transforming our defenses, and we've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to track the terrorists. 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 are turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Listen, we've got more to do. Over the next 4 years, we'll better secure our ports and borders and train first-responders and dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capabilities. Reform is not going to be easy; I understand that. It never is. You see, there's a lot of entrenched interests around, particularly in Washington, a lot of people happy with the status quo. But it's not enough to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

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 improving our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing the homeland, to fighting the forces of evil and spreading peace, results matter. When it comes to choosing a President, results matter.

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

The President. This week, the other party gathered in Boston.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We heard a lot of—there were some clever speeches and some big promises. Their intentions, I think, are good. My opponent's intentions are good. But the problem is, intentions don't always translate into results.

After 19 years in the U.S. Senate, my opponent has thousands of votes but few signature achievements.

Audience member. He's a flip-flop.

The President. During 8 years in the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the budget—intelligence budgets, yet he had no record of reforming America's intelligence-gathering capability. He's had no significant record in reforming education or health care. As a matter of fact, he and his runningmate consistently oppose reforms that limit the power of Washington and leave power in the hands of the people.

He spent 20 years in Government—nearly 20 years; it appears he's concluded that Government just isn't big enough. [*Laughter*] He's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional spending, and the campaign is just getting started. [*Laughter*] The times of the big promise is coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] The problem is he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. If you look at his record, I think we can figure it out. [*Laughter*] He believes in higher taxes, at least that's how he's voted time in and time out—time in and time out. If I had to guess how we're going to pay for all these new promises, it's going to be: You get to pay.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said he's only going to raise the tax on the so-called rich. But you

* White House correction.

know how the rich is; they've got accountants. That means you pay. That means the small business pays. It means the farmers and ranchers pay. That's the wrong medicine for this economy, and we're not going to let him prescribe it.

There's a big philosophical difference in this campaign. Our opponents share an old Washington mindset: They'll give the orders, and you pay the bills. But we've turned a corner, and we're not turning back to that way of thinking.

Listen, we live in—we're living in a time of amazing change—amazing period of time, isn't it? In our parents' generation, moms usually stayed at home and fathers worked for one company until retirement. A lot of people are still doing that today, but it's changing times, when you think about it. The company provided the health care and training and pension, and Government programs reflected that way of life. That's just the way the Government was structured in those days.

Yet today, oftentimes workers change jobs and careers frequently, a lot of times both parents are working, a lot of times there's only one mom at home working. It's a different world we're living in. Government has got to reflect the different world. Government has got to work with America's working families. That's why workers need to own and manage their own health care accounts, so they can take them with them from job to job.

That's why our pensions and retirements systems must insist that the owners be the workers. You see, Social Security needs to be strengthened by giving younger workers the opportunity to manage some of their own money in personal savings accounts. Social Security will be strengthened by telling those who have retired or are near retired, "Nothing is going to change. The Government is going to pay your commitment." But younger workers—and a country will be benefited when younger workers have an opportunity to take some of their own money—their choice—and build up their nest egg so they can pass it from one generation to the next.

You see, my reforms are based on the basic conviction, the role of Government is not to control or dominate the lives of our citizens. The role of Government should help our citizens, help our citizens gain the time and tools they need to make their own choices and to improve their own lives.

That's why I'm working hard to usher in an era of ownership in America. See, we want more people owning something in our country. We want more people owning their own home, owning their own small business, owning their own health care accounts, owning a piece of their retirement plan. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

This is a world of change—a world of change. But some things will never change: our belief in liberty and opportunity for all and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose will not change, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values are fundamental to our lives. These institutions are necessary for a hopeful America; they deserve the respect of our Government.

Some things will not change in this changing world. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in our country. You know, the culture of the country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions you make in life.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. It's your responsibility. 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.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time where we need strong 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 I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember walking along and a fellow grabbed me—policeman or fireman, I don't know which one—but he had tears in his eyes and said, "Do not let me down." You see, all of them working through the rubble there took the incident personally, just like you did and just like I did. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every single morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in bringing justice to the enemy and protecting our country, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together; there's more to do. We've done a lot of hard work, and the world is getting better. During the next 4 years, we'll spread opportunity and ownership through every corner of this country. During the next 4 years, we'll continue to pass on enduring values to a younger generation. And during the next 4 years, we will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

Four years ago, I had traveled the great country and the great State of Ohio asking for the vote, pledging to our fellow citizens that if you honored me with the great responsibility of being President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at the Canton Memorial Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Regula, wife of Representative Regula; Mayor Janet W. Creighton of Canton, OH; former professional football player Chris Spielman; 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).

Remarks in Cambridge, Ohio

July 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming out today. Thanks for inviting me to Cambridge. It's an honor to be here. I always feel comfortable being in the middle of a ball diamond. I appreciate so many taking time out of your Saturday to come by and say hello and to welcome us on what we call the Heart and Soul of America tour.

There seems to be a difference of opinion about the heart and soul—I'm running against a fellow who thinks you can find the heart and soul in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, I know where you find the heart and soul of America, right here in places like Cambridge, Ohio.

Thanks for coming out. I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm ready to lead for 4 more years, and I want your help.

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

The President. I'm glad to be amongst my fellow Republicans, discerning Democrats, and wise independents. I'd like to ask you to volunteer to register voters. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. We have a duty in a land of free to exercise our individual choices in the ballot box. So please register your neighbors to vote. Make sure you tell them after they register to vote, and when you get them heading toward the polls, why don't you nudge them our way?

Thanks for coming. My regret is that Laura isn't with me today.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know. That's usually the reaction. I'm really proud of her. She's a great lady. Today I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you need to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura can be First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a really good man. I know he's not the prettiest face on the ticket.

[*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for that reason. I picked him because he's solid. I picked him because he's got good advice and great experience. I picked him because he's a good man. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney.

I'm proud to be traveling on this bus with Governor Bob Taft. Thank you for coming, Governor. Senator Mike DeWine and his wife, Fran. By the way, Voinovich was with me a little earlier. You need to put him back into office; he's a great United States Senator. He's a good man—he's a good man. I appreciate Congressman Bob Ney being with us today. Congressman, I'm proud you're here.

Mr. Mayor—I appreciate the mayor coming; Mayor Sam is with us today. I'm honored you're here, Mayor. Thank you, Mayor. I was walking by; he said, "You get a chance, put in a good word for me." He said he's going to fill the potholes. I said, "All right."

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I appreciate the chairman of the party, Bob Bennett. I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who are putting up the signs and manning the phones and getting your neighbors to show up to the polls on election day. And I want to thank you for your hard work; I really do. My job is to set the vision; your job is to get the people to the polls. And together, we're going to win Ohio and win the Nation.

Everybody running for office, every incumbent who asks for the vote has got to answer the question, why—why are you running again? Why should the American people give me the high privilege, the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? Let me tell you something. We've been through a lot together, and we have done a lot. We've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because there's a lot at stake, and there's more to do to move our country forward. I want to be your President, and I'll work hard to be your President and to keep your confidence to make this country safer, to make the economy stronger, and to make our future brighter and better for every single citizen. I'm ready to lead the country for 4 more years.

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

The President. Listen, we've got more to do. We've got more work to do to make sure our public schools are the center of excellence so no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of the children were being just shuffled through, grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we confronted the status quo. We're challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We expect better results. We're insisting on accountability. We're empowering parents. And we're making sure that local folks are in charge of the public schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress when it comes to learning to read and math. When it comes to improving our schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do; this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and a higher level of skill, and so we must reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We will expand math and education so our youngsters can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training to classrooms all across America with 4 years—with 4 more years. We will help raise a generation of young Americans to have confidence and the skills necessary to realize the American promise.

We've got more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. When we came to office, too many of our older Americans could not afford prescription drugs, and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember the old debates of Medicare: There was promise after promise, but nothing was ever done. We got it done. 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.

Listen, we've expanded community health centers so low-income Americans can get

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

Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. I understand that. Most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses. Many small businesses cannot afford to provide health coverage. We must deal with that. To help more American families get health insurance, small employers must be allowed to join together to purchase insurance at discounts available for big companies.

To make sure the health care system is available and affordable, we must limit the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs, that not only raise your costs, but they drive the good doctors of Ohio out of business. Listen, we'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent costly errors. We will expand research to find new cures for terrible diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

Listen, we've got more to do to make this country's economy stronger. We've come through a lot together. Think about what we've been through. We've been through a recession. We've been through attacks. We've been through a stock market decline. And we've been through corporate scandals. But we've overcome all these obstacles. We've overcome them together. I'll tell you why: We've got the greatest workers in the world in America; we've got the most productive, greatest workers in this country.

We're overcoming these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers. We're overcoming these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit of America is strong. The small-business sector of our economy is vibrant and alive.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts. Listen, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We had a fair attitude, I think, that says if you pay taxes, you ought to get relief.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. And so families with children got relief. People who are married got relief. Small-business owners got relief. And this time, the check really was in the mail. [*Laughter*]

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 over 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Look, I understand there are challenges here in eastern Ohio. This part of the country has lagged behind other parts of the country. But let me tell you something, raising your taxes isn't going to create jobs. Isolating America from the rest of the world isn't going to create new jobs. Voting against energy policy isn't going to create new jobs. We will not rest until every America who wants to find a job, has one. That's the policy of the Bush administration.

There's more work to do to make sure this country is job-friendly and our workplaces are family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations need to be fair and reasonable. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk and frivolous lawsuits that threaten employers all across the country. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money and we will keep your taxes low.

To keep American jobs in America, we need a reasonable energy policy. As you know in Cambridge, an important part of an energy strategy is clean coal technology. My budget for next year provides $447 million to encourage this vital technology. I'll tell you why: In order for us to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy, we must use American coal.

We have a difference of opinion on this. My opponent said—he called coal a dirty energy source.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He opposed my energy plan, which promoted clean coal technology and alternative sources of fuel. The other night in Boston, he said he wants America finally and forever independent of Mideast oil. Listen, I share that goal, and I know how to achieve it. To make sure we're independent, to make sure we're not dependent on foreign sources of energy, we must be

wise about how we use America's energy sources, including coal.

We'll offer America's workers a lifetime of learning and to help them get training for the jobs of the future at our community colleges. Listen, to make sure American jobs stay here, we must be wise and educate people for the jobs of the 21st century.

When it comes to keeping jobs in America, we must not isolate ourselves from the world. I know people around here are worried about trade. Let me tell you my view of trade. I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair. I believe—and my job is to make sure the rules are fair, holding countries to account that mistreat American manufacturers, holding countries to account that do not let their currency float, holding countries to account that close their markets. No, to keep jobs in America, you need a President who won't isolate us in the world, a President who's confident in the American worker, the American entrepreneur, the American manufacturer, and insists that foreign countries treat us just the way we treat them.

We'll help American families keep something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to go to Little League games or Girl Scout meetings, time to take care of the elderly, time to improve themselves by going back to class. Congress needs to join me in supporting what we call comp-time and flex-time to help American families better juggle the demands of work and home.

After 4 more years, there will be better paying jobs in America. There will be more jobs in America. Our farmers will be better off, and the small-business sector will be alive and well.

Listen, we've got more to do to wage and win the war on 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. That's not going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on that terrible morning in September. And since then, we have changed the world. We've done the hard work, and we're headed to peace. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Let me tell you something, what happened yesterday in Cleveland. I went to the International Children's Games. I was able to see a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan on American soil. Because we acted, the people are free. Because we acted, we have an ally in the war on terror in Afghanistan. Because we acted, America is safer, and so is the world.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, they're an ally in the war on terror. Their forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world is 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 abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the tyrant of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. You might remember, 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 had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a dangerous part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. See, a lesson of that fateful day was that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

And so we looked at the intelligence and saw a threat; that's what the intelligence said.

The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion, that Saddam was a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence and voted unanimously to demand a full accounting of Saddam's weapons, or he would face serious consequences. That's exactly what the world said. After 12 years of defiance, the dictator chose defiance again. He deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th, hope for the best, and trust a madman, or take decisions to defend this country. And given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. The dictator of Iraq sits in a prison cell, and America and the world are safer.

We have more to do. We've more to do. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these folks. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan and some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build on our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders. See, these people are committed to free societies. They understand, the moms and dads of Iraq and Afghanistan want the children there—want their children there to grow up in a peaceful world, just like moms and dads here in America do, just like Laura and I do. We want people to grow up in a peaceful society. We want them to be able to realize their dreams.

The people of these countries can count on our continued help. See, when we acted to protect our own security, when we took action to do our duty to protect our own people, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help them get on the path to liberty. And when America gives it 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 our country and around the world, I have had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. These are fine, fine people.

The cause of freedom is in really good hands, and those who wear our uniform deserve all the support from our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the United States Senate, only a small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 senators voted against the legislation. Two of the twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about his vote, Senator Kerry said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. Now he's got some different explanations. He said, well, he's proud of the vote, and further, he said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples for their neighbors. Free countries don't export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens. Free countries have governments which listen to the aspirations of their people.

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the values which make us great. We don't—America does not believe that freedom is our gift to the world. America believes freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

There are still enemies that want to do us harm. They still plot. Listen, I agree with the conclusion of the September the 11th Commission—says our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. But we've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed—we're transforming our defenses and created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the new tools to track and find the terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We've integrated intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. When it comes to protecting America, we're turning the corner, and we're not going back.

There's a lot more to do over the next 4 years to better secure our ports and borders and to train our great first-responders and to dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capabilities. Listen, reform isn't easy. There's a lot of entrenched interests in places like Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] Some people up there love the status quo.

It's not enough to advocate reform; you have to get it done, see, 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 defending America and spreading freedom and peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

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

The President. This week, the other party gathered in Boston. And they had a convention and there was a lot of clever speeches and some pretty big promises. Listen, I think my opponent has good intentions, but good intentions don't always translate into results. He's been there for 19 years in the U.S. Senate. He's had thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, for example, 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 on education or health care.

See, he and his runningmate consistently opposed reforms that limit the power of Washington, reforms that leave more power in the hands of the people. We have a different point of view. We have a different philosophy. He spent nearly 20 years in Government, in the Federal Government, and now he's concluded it's not big enough. That's why he's promised $2 trillion of new money. That's a lot of money, and the campaign is just getting started. [*Laughter*] He hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it, though. Yes, I know, we can figure it out looking at his record. In order to pay for all that new spending, you're going to have to pay for it. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. It's the wrong medicine for America. And the people understand, you're not raising taxes on the working people of this country. They share that same old Washington mindset: They'll give the orders, and you pay the bills. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. No way!

The President. We're turning that corner, and we're not turning back.

This is a world of rapid change, amazing times we live in. In order to make sure the American people are able to adjust to the change, I think people need to own something. I think you need to be owning your own health care account and managing it for your purposes. I think people, younger workers—I mean, young workers—need to have the opportunity to manage and own some of their own retirement accounts. I think—I know we need to keep working for people to own their own home, own their own small business. This administration understands that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, this is a time of amazing change. But some things will never change: our belief in liberty, our desire for opportunity to spread throughout this country, the nonnegotiable

demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for something. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundation of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

We stand for the Second Amendment, which gives every American the individual right to bear arms. I've got a good record on that issue. It stands in stark contrast to my opponent. As a sportsman, I understand that gun ownership carries serious responsibilities. I also know that when a person commits a crime with a gun, they need to be held to account. Over the past 3 years, Federal prosecutions of crimes committed with firearms have increased 68 percent. Our message is, law-abiding citizens should be allowed to bear and own a gun, and criminals who commit crime with guns ought to go to jail.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and 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 fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in 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.

You know, for Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is times that requires vision and strength and determination, resolute will.

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 I will never forget. I remember those guys in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember the firefighter grabbing me by the arm and looking me in the eye, bloodshot eyes and sweat pouring, and he said, "Do not let me down."

This fellow—and they all took what happened on that day personally. I know you did, as did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect America. I will never relent in bringing justice to the enemy. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work together to make this country hopeful and promising. During the next 4 years, we'll work to spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of the country—I mean every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to another generation. We will lead the cause—lead the cause of freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

With your support and your prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in this world of change. Listen, 4 years ago, when I traveled to your great State and traveled our wonderful Nation, I told our fellow citizens, if you honored me with the great responsibility of being the President, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I was elected. If you give me 4 more years—with your help, with 4 more years, I will continue to honor that pledge.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you all, and may God bless our great country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. at Don Coss Field in Cambridge City Park. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft of Ohio; Mayor Samuel A. Salupo of Cambridge, OH; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at Cabela's Retail Store in Triadelphia, West Virginia

July 31, 2004

General Manager Mike Boldrick. Mr. President, we'd like to welcome you to Triadelphia, West Virginia. It's a suburb of Wheeling. This is a new Cabela store. As you can see, it's 175,000 square feet. We're going to be bringing up to 1,200 new jobs to the area eventually. We currently have 450 people——

The President. Four hundred fifty good people, I might add.

Mr. Boldrick. ——on staff. We'll draw upwards of 5 or 6 million visitors a year to this location alone, making it the number one tourist attraction in the State of West Virginia.

Marketing Manager John Castillo. And the best news is, we're building two more of these down in Texas next year.

The President. Oh, that's great.

Mr. Boldrick. We'd like to present you with a Cabela's hat and a rain slicker.

The President. Okay, thanks so much. Thanks for having me. Listen, thanks for having me. I've come by because, first, I love to hunt and fish; secondly, because I heard you're expanding the job base here. Over 1,200 new jobs is really good news for this part of the country.

Mr. Boldrick. Absolutely.

The President. I want to thank you all for expanding your operations. You picked a great place in the world to come.

Mr. Boldrick. We love it here.

The President. Good, hard-working decent folks who are going to make you proud. So thanks for your hospitality. I love being here with you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:34 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

July 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Boy, it's great to be back in Pittsburgh. Thank you all for being here. I'm proud to be introduced by a great man, a great athlete, and a great adviser. He said, "When you ride your bike, don't fall off." [*Laughter*] I need to listen to him more. What a wonderful person Lynn Swann is, and I'm proud to have him on my team.

We've had a great day traveling in Ohio and now in Pennsylvania, with a stop in West Virginia. The crowds are big, the enthusiasm high. We're on our way to 4 more years.

I'm here to ask for your help. I'm out traveling the country asking for people's vote. I have more I want to do to see that this country is safer, stronger, and better.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Make sure you get your friends and neighbors to register to vote. And then, come election time, tell them we all have a duty in this country to participate in the elections. And when you get them headed toward the polls, you might remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country with strength and vision and optimism.

I wish Laura were here. Man, did I luck out when she said yes. She's a great wife and wonderful, wonderful person and a wonderful First Lady. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons why you need to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason is so that Laura will have 4 more years as the First Lady. She sends her best.

I'm proud to be on the stage with Senator Arlen Specter. You need to put him back in to the United States Senate. I'm proud to be on the stage with Rick Santorum, the United States Senator. I thank Congressman—Congresswoman Melissa Hart and Congressman Tim Murphy for their service.

I want to thank everybody who is running for office. I particularly want to say thanks to the grassroots activists who are here. You're the people who are going to put up the signs and make the phone calls. Find those discerning Democrats and wise independents and get them to join our cause to make this country a great place for everybody.

I understand a fellow Texan was here, Lee Ann Womack. I want to thank her for her entertainment. Proud to call her friend.

Listen, I'm here to ask for the vote. And every incumbent who asks for your vote has to answer a question, and that is, why. Why—

why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving for 4 more years? In the past years, we have done a lot together. We've come through a lot. And we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm traveling Ohio and West Virginia and Pennsylvania asking for the vote because we have so much more to do to move this country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make the country safer, to make the economy stronger. We have more to do to make our economy stronger and more to do to make our future brighter and better for every single citizen. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made progress. And we still have more to do.

We have more to do to make sure our public schools are the centers of excellence so that no child is left behind in America. We came to office 3½ years ago, too many children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. We're now challenging what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We're insisting on higher standards. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in empowering parents. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving our public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. We've got to recognize this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills, so we're going to reform our high schools to make sure the high school diploma means something. We will expand math and science so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training in the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation gain the skills and the confidence necessary 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. Listen, leaders in both political party, year after year after year, made promises to our American seniors. We got it done. 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 the 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're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do. There's more to do. Most new jobs are created by small businesses, which have trouble affording private health insurance. To help more American families get health insurance at reasonable costs, we must allow small employers to join together to purchase insurance at discounts available to big companies.

To improve health care we must stop the frivolous lawsuits that raise the cost of health care.

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

The President. My opponent takes a different view.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He blocked medical liability reform 10 times, including twice in the past 3 years.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, I don't think you can be pro-doc, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time; I think you have to make a choice. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I'll stand with the docs and the patients of America and get medical liability reform.

We can do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We can do more to expand research and seek new cures for diseases. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made

by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make our economy stronger. Think about what we've been through. We've been through a recession and terror attacks and corporate scandals. We've overcome these obstacles because the spirit of America is strong. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got the best, most productive workers in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got great farmers and ranchers. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America and the small-business sector of our economy is alive and well.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of two well-timed tax cuts. We didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We had a fair view that said, "If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief." Families with children got relief. Married couples got relief. Small businesses that purchased equipment got relief. And this time, the check was actually 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. Because we acted, Pennsylvania has added more than 68,000 jobs over the past four months. When it comes to creating jobs for America's workers, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do. There's more to make sure America is job-friendly and America's workplaces are family-friendly. To keep American jobs in America, regulations should be reasonable and fair. To keep American jobs in America, we must lessen our dependence on foreign sources of energy. To keep American jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. To keep American jobs in America, we will not overspend your money and we will keep your taxes low.

We will offer American workers a lifetime of learning and help them get the training for the jobs of the future, at our community colleges. You see, the education and training they offer can be the bridge between people's lives as they are and people's lives as they want them to be.

In order to keep jobs here, in order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we will reject economic isolationism. We will insist on a level playing field when it comes to trade. You see, I believe this: We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

We'll help American families keep something they don't have nearly enough of, and that's time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your elderly parents, time to help yourself by education. Congress needs to enact what we call comp-time and flextime to help American families better juggle work and home duties.

After 4 more years—with your work, after 4 more years, there will be better and higher-paying jobs in America, more small businesses in America, and America will remain the greatest economic engine in the world.

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

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terrorism. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows weakness and uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we've 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 terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time. Because we acted, last night in Cleveland, I had the opportunity to meet a young girls' soccer team from Afghanistan, here to compete in the International Children's Games. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit place for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistan forces are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

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

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions of dollars on 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.

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

The President. 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 enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a dangerous part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. After September the 11th, this Nation needs to take threats seriously before they fully materialize. The September 11th Commission concluded our institutions of Government had failed to imagine the horror of that day. Well, after September the 11th, we could not fail to imagine—could not fail to imagine that a brutal tyrant who hated America and had ties to terror and had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his deadly capabilities with the terrorists.

We looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress—from both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations looked at the intelligence and demanded a full accounting——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply. He deceived the weapons inspectors, so I had a choice to make: either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. We have more to do. We have more to do. I'm seeking the office for 4 more years, because we must—we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. You see, you cannot talk sense to these people.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot negotiate with them.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot hope for the best and hope they change.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition of friends and allies to help defeat this enemy. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build our alliances and work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I'll never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other foreign countries.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. See, they know what I know: Moms and dads of those countries want their children to grow up in a peaceful world, just like the moms and dads here in America. They've got dreams for their children, just like the moms and dads in America have dreams for our children. The people of these countries can count on our continued help. You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments have been kept by the men and women of our military.

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

The President. I want to thank all of the veterans who are here, who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform today. 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 unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands. They deserve—those in the uniform deserve the full support of our Government.

Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. That legislation provided for body armor and for vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, in the United States Senate, only a small, what I would call out-of-the-mainstream minority——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. ——of 12 Senators voted against the legislation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. End quote. [*Laughter*] Then he went on to say, well, he's proud of the vote, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

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

By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others. And that makes America more secure in the long run, and it makes the world more peaceful. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the values of our country. We know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect our country, more to do to protect America. There are enemies out there that still hate us, and they're still plotting. Listen, the September the 11th Commission said our homeland is safer, but we're not yet safe. I agree with that assessment. We've started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses and are creating a new Department of Homeland Security, ably run by former Governor of Pennsylvania Tom Ridge. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement new tools to track and find terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating law and intelligence enforcement better than ever before. When it comes to better protecting our country, we're turning a corner, and we're not turning back.

There's more to do—there's more to do, to do our duty to protect the American people. We better—we've got to do a better job of securing our ports and borders. We've got to continue to train our first-responders. We've got to dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capability. It's not going to be easy. It never is. There's a lot of entrenched interests in Washington, DC. A lot of people got comfortable with the status quo. This administration isn't. It's not enough just to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

When it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education to 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 jobs, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and spreading freedom and peace, results matter. And when it comes to picking a President, results matter.

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

The President. They recently had a meeting in Boston.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We heard a lot of clever speeches and some pretty big promises. But intentions—good intentions of my opponent don't always translate into results. Listen, after 19 years in the Senate, he's had thousands of votes but few signature achievements. During 8 years on the Senate Intelligence Committee, he voted to cut the intelligence budget.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yet, he had no record of reforming America's intelligence-gathering capability. He's had no significant record of reforming education or health care.

We have a difference of opinion: He and his runningmate oppose reforms that limit the power of Washington and leave more power in the hands of the people; I believe in limiting the power of Washington and giving more power to the people. No, I'm running against an experienced Washington, DC-type Senator. He's spent nearly 20 years there, and it appears that he's concluded the Government just isn't big enough.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. After all, he's proposed more than $2 trillion of additional spending, and we're just getting started in the campaign. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. But the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. Yet, all we've got to do is look at his record to determine how he's going to pay for it. He's voted time and time and time again for higher taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You know how he's going to pay for his new programs? You're going to pay. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Listen, we have a difference of opinion in the campaign, a clear difference. My opponents share an old Washington mindset: They will give the orders; you'll pay the bills.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We're turning that corner, and we're not going back.

We have a time of change in this country, a time of real, rapid change. It's an exciting time to be an American. But we've got to make sure the Government responds to these times by standing on the side of workers and families. We want people owning things in America. We want workers to be able to own their own health care plans so they can take them from job to job. We want younger workers to be able to own a personal retirement account when it comes to Social Security, an account they can call their own and pass on from one generation to the next. We want more people owning their own home in America. We want more people owning their own small business. We understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, in this changing world, there are some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. Values won't change, the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose must not change, our families, our religious congregations. These institutions are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of the Government.

In this changing times, our values and strong beliefs will not change. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person counts and every person matters. We stand for judges who faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of ours is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture that says each of us is responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders

and your employees. And in this responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Today I met Fay Morgan, the executive director of the North Hills Community Outreach. It's a faith-based program, all aimed at feeding the hungry, providing clothes to those who need clothes in the winter, of helping people find a job. You know what it really is? It's a program that's heard a higher calling, that's going to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

The strength of this country—the strength of this country is not found in our halls of Government; the strength of this country is found in the hearts and souls of the American citizens. And over the next 4 years, I will continue to rally the armies of compassion to help change America one heart, one soul, one conscience 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. This isn't one of those times. It's a time where we need firm resolve, clear vision, strong determination.

None of us will ever forget that day 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 working the line, thanking people for their sacrifice and service, thanking people for their care, for their loved ones who had rushed into harm's way. A man grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people going through the rubble took that day personally. I know you took it personally, and so did I. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every day thinking about how better to protect our country and our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together—we've come through a lot together. And we've done the hard work. And the country is getting better, and the world is becoming more peaceful. That's what we long for, a peaceful world, a world where people can grow up and realize their hopes.

During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner—I mean, every corner—of this country. We'll pass the enduring values of America on to the next generation. We'll lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail.

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

The President. Four years ago, I traveled your great State and our wonderful Nation asking for the vote, and I made a pledge to my fellow Americans. I said if you honor me with this great responsibility, I will uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I have been elected, so help me, God.

And with your help—and with your help, I will continue to do so over the next 4 years. Thanks for coming. May God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to former professional football player Lynn C. Swann; country music entertainer Lee Ann Womack; 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).

Remarks on Intelligence Reform and an Exchange with Reporters

August 2, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. I appreciate the members of my administration joining me. Thank you all for being here.

My most solemn duty is to protect our country. It's our most solemn duty as well. In the 3 years since our country was attacked, we've taken steps to overcome new threats. We will continue to do everything in our power to defeat the terrorist enemy and to protect the American people.

Recently, the Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States came to a conclusion that I share, that our country is safer than it was on September the 11th, 2001, yet we're still not safe. The Commission members have worked hard and served

our country well. I speak for all Americans in thanking them for their fine work.

Their recommendations are thoughtful and valuable. My administration has already taken numerous actions consistent with the Commission's recommendations. Today we're taking additional steps.

Our Government's actions against the terrorist threat accelerated dramatically after the attacks on the country. Across the world, we've aggressively pursued Al Qaida terrorists, destroyed their training camps, and ended their sanctuaries. We're working closely with other countries to gather intelligence and make arrests and to cut off the terrorist's finances.

We've created a new unified Department of Homeland Security and gave it resources and the authority to defend America. We're employing the latest equipment and know-how to secure our borders, our air and sea ports, and infrastructure. We're bringing the best technologies to bear against the threat of chemical and biological warfare. Project BioShield will fund cutting-edge drugs and other defenses against a biological, chemical, nuclear, or radiological attack.

To track terrorists and disrupt their cells and seize their assets, we're using the tools of the PATRIOT Act. Congress needs to extend this important law. Congress needs to make sure law enforcement have the tools necessary to defend the country. We've transformed the FBI to focus on the prevention of terrorist attacks. We're continuing to expand and strengthen the capabilities of the Central Intelligence Agency. We established the Terrorist Threat Integration Center to merge and analyze, in a single place, foreign and domestic intelligence on global terror.

Yet, the work of securing this vast Nation is not done. The elevation of the threat level in New York and New Jersey and Washington, DC, is a serious reminder, a solemn reminder, of the threat we continue to face. All the institutions of our Government must be fully prepared for a struggle against terror that will last into the future. Our goal is an integrated, unified national intelligence effort. Therefore, my administration will continue moving forward with additional changes to the structure and organization of our intelligence agencies.

Many of these changes are specific recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Others will go further than the proposal of the Commission's report. All these reforms have a single goal: We will ensure that the people in Government responsible for defending America and countering terrorism have the best possible information to make the best decisions.

Today I'm asking Congress to create the position of a National Intelligence Director. That person—the person in that office will be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and will serve at the pleasure of the President. The National Intelligence Director will serve as the President's principal intelligence adviser and will oversee and coordinate the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community. Under this reorganization, the CIA will be managed by a separate Director. The National Intelligence Director will assume the broader responsibility of leading the intelligence community across our Government.

I want, and every President must have, the best, unbiased, unvarnished assessment of America's intelligence professionals. Creating the position of the National Intelligence Director will require a substantial revision of the 1947 National Security Act. I look forward to working with the Members of Congress to move ahead on this important reform.

The 9/11 Commission also made several recommendations about Congress, itself. I strongly agree with the Commission's recommendation that oversight and intelligence—oversight of intelligence and of the homeland security must be restructured and made more effective. There are too many committees with overlapping jurisdiction, which wastes time and makes it difficult for meaningful oversight and reform.

Today I also announce that we will establish a National Counterterrorism Center. This new center will build on the analytical work—the really good analytical work—of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center and will become our Government's knowledge bank for information about known and suspected terrorists. The new center will coordinate and monitor counterterrorism plans and

activities of all Government agencies and departments to ensure effective joint action and that our efforts are unified in priority and purpose. The center will also be responsible for preparing the daily terrorism threat report for the President and senior officials.

The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center will report to the National Intelligence Director, once that position is created. Until then, the center will report to the Director of the CIA.

Given the growing threat of weapons and missile proliferation in our world, it may also be necessary to create a similar center in our Government to bring together our intelligence analysis, planning, and operations to track and prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. I asked the Commission headed by Judge Laurence Silberman and Senator Chuck Robb to determine the merits of creating such a center. This Nation must do everything we can to keep the world's most destructive weapons out of the world's most dangerous hands.

Finally, we will act on other recommendations made by the Commission. In coming days, I'll issue a series of directives to various departments to underscore and further outline essential steps for the U.S. Government on the war on terror. All relevant agencies must complete the task of adopting common databases and procedures so that intelligence and homeland security information can be shared and searched effectively, consistent with privacy and civil liberties.

At the same time, the FBI Director will continue his restructuring of the Bureau to create a specialized workforce for collecting, analyzing domestic intelligence on terrorism. The Acting CIA Director will continue to increase efforts already underway to strengthen human intelligence and analytical capabilities.

The dedicated, hard-working men and women of our intelligence community are laboring every day to keep our country safe. I'm proud of their work—and so should our American citizens. We're in their debt. We're grateful for them. And the changes we're making are designed to help the professionals carry out their essential missions as best as they possibly can. I'll work closely with the Congress to ensure that reform does not disrupt their daily work. We've got good people working hard to protect America. We don't want these efforts to get in the way of their efforts to protect our fellow citizens.

We are a nation in danger. We're doing everything we can in our power to confront the danger. We're making good progress in protecting our people and bringing our enemies to account. But one thing is for certain: We'll keep our focus, and we'll keep our resolve. We will do our duty to best secure our country.

I'll answer a couple of questions today. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press], have you got one?

Congressional Action on Intelligence Reform

Q. First, I'd like to ask you what the level of urgency is here on those actions that require congressional approval. They're out on recess until Labor Day. Can you envision calling them back into special session? And also, you've got a terror warning, as you said, in three cities. How do you react without tipping the bad guys off and without turning the country into a fortress?

The President. Yes. Well, the first question is—listen, the Congress has been thinking about some of these ideas. They can think about them over August and come back and act on them in September. We look forward to working with them—not only in the creation of the National Intelligence Director, how to do it the right way, but also the 9/11 Commission had some very constructive suggestions for congressional reform. I think Tom told me one time he—how many different committees have you testified in front of?

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. Well, 140 times our leadership was up there last year.

The President. He testified 140 different times.

Secretary Ridge. Leadership.

The President. And——

Secretary Ridge. The leadership—Under Secretaries——

The President. Yes. I mean, it's a lot of—he's got a lot of jurisdictions up there, and so he goes committee, subcommittee, this committee, that committee. I mean, it seems like it's one thing to testify and, therefore,

to be oversight; it's another thing to make sure that the people who are engaged in protecting America don't spend all their time testifying. And so there's going to be some important reforms. We look forward to working with Congress on the reforms.

The second part of your two-part question?

Intelligence Information Sharing

Q. In a situation like this, where you have this new terror alert, how do you react without tipping off the terrorists and having them move to different targets, and how do you avoid turning the country into a fortress?

The President. Well, I appreciate that. I think we have an obligation to inform the people involved with protecting New York City, in this case, or parts of Jersey or parts of DC about what we know. We have an obligation. When we find out something, we've got to share it. What we're talking about here is a very serious matter based upon sound intelligence. And I would hope the people affected in New York realize that by sharing intelligence, we can better prepare in case something were to happen.

In other words, if we were just silent on the subject, I think people would be a lot more nervous. They would say, "What is Government withholding? Why weren't they sharing stuff with the people responsible, Commissioner Kelly or Mayor Bloomberg?" So our attitude is, we try to be as transparent as possible with the affected sites so that people can then take responses necessary to better protect the people.

But it's serious business. I mean, we wouldn't be contacting authorities at the local level unless something was real. And what this points up to is that there's an enemy which hates what we stand for. And it's a different kind of war. And it's one that we're just going to have to continue to work on—and will—do the very best we can to protect the country.

Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

Proposed National Intelligence Director

Q. Mr. President, some of your own advisers oppose creation of a National Intelligence Director. Why did you override their objections? And will you give the new Director sweeping budget authority?

The President. Because I thought it was the right thing to do, Adam. And the good thing about having an administration full of competent, capable intelligence people is that I get all different kinds of opinions. The best decisionmaking process is one where people have different opinions, and they bring them to me in a forthright way, and then I make the decision about what I think is best. And I think that the new National Intelligence Director ought to be able to coordinate budgets. I certainly hope Congress reforms its budget process too, so that it's a seamless process.

Secondly, the National Intelligence Director will work with the respective agencies to set priorities. But let me make it also very clear that when it comes to operations, the chain of command will be intact. When the Defense Department is conducting operations to secure the homeland, there'll be nothing in between the Secretary of Defense and me. I believe this system will serve our country well as we head into the depths of the 21st century. As I said in my remarks here—that this struggle against these thugs will go on for a while, and therefore we've just got to do everything we can to be better prepared.

Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News].

War on Terror

Q. Mr. President, thank you. All of this, as you know, is coming in the context of the Presidential election campaign. Your opponent has made a couple of charges that I would like your response to: One, essentially saying that 3 years after the 9/11 attacks, to go about the business of rehauling the intelligence community, is too long; second, there's been a suggestion from the Kerry camp today that this administration is actually responsible for fueling the recruitment of Al Qaida through some of its policies, particularly—they didn't say this directly—but the war in Iraq. Your response?

The President. Yes, that's a misunderstanding of the war on terror. Obviously, we have a difference of opinion—a clear difference of opinion—about the stakes that

face America. These people we face are cold-blooded, committed killers. They're interested in destroying our way of life. They were interested in destroying our way of life before I arrived in office. The only way to deal with these people is to bring them to justice.

See, evidently some must think that you can negotiate with them, you can talk sense to them, you can hope that they change. That's not what I know. I know in order to deal with these people, we must bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And so we're on the offense. We will stay—the best way to protect the American homeland is to stay on the offense. It is a ridiculous notion to assert that because the United States is on the offense, more people want to hurt us. We are on the offense because people do want to hurt us.

The other part of your question was what, sir?

Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Why wait 3 years after the 9/11 attacks to call for this kind of reform? Senator Kerry has said that's too long.

The President. Yes. We have implemented significant reforms since 9/11. The FBI is reformed, and Director Mueller has done a fabulous job. The communications between the FBI and the CIA have been enhanced by the creation of what's called TTIC, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center. We moved quickly to make sure that there is a seamless spread of information throughout our Government. We called for and worked with Congress to create the Department of Homeland Security. Not everybody in Congress agreed with how that Department ought to be set up. But we got it set up, and not only that, under Secretary Ridge, we have implemented the integration of multiple agencies to better protect the homeland. We've done a lot since September the 11th.

Let's see here. Jay Newton-Small [Bloomberg News]. How are you?

Q. Good, and you?

The President. I'm fine.

Proposed National Intelligence Director

Q. Mr. President, the 9/11 Commission originally recommended that the National Intelligence Director be part of the Executive Office, part of the executive branch. Why the change? Why make it part of—with congressional oversight?

The President. Well, I don't think that person ought to be a member of my Cabinet. I will hire the person, and I can fire the person, which is—any President would like. That's how you have accountability in Government. I don't think that the office ought to be in the White House, however. I think it ought to be a stand-alone group to better coordinate, particularly between foreign intelligence and domestic intelligence matters. I think it's going to be one of the most useful aspects of the National Intelligence Director.

Let's see. John—or Mike [Mike Allen, Washington Post], why don't you, and then John Cochran [ABC News].

Situation in Afghanistan/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You saw that Doctors Without Borders pulled out of Afghanistan because it was too dangerous. You've seen reports about the re-formed Taliban. Why is the security situation there so poor? What do you see as the trajectory of it? And Mr. President, do you worry that you should have given more attention to Iran earlier?

The President. First, let me address Afghanistan. I did see that the Doctors Without Borders left, and I'm sorry they did, because they were providing a important function for the people who want to live in a free society. I also saw, at the same time, that there's over—I think it's 9 million Afghan citizens have registered to vote. That's an unbelievable statement, isn't it? Do you remember when we were here—I can't remember, at one of my press conferences—we had a discussion about this, but there was some concern that, well, maybe they're not going to get even the 3 million people registered to vote in Afghanistan. Or maybe it was—some minimal threshold. I think we're over 9 million now?

Secretary Ridge. Yes, just about 9 million.

The President. Nine million people have said to the world, "We love freedom, and we're going to vote." Now, the Taliban still roams in parts of the country, and we're

working with the Afghan Government to bring them to justice. These are similar to the killers in Iraq; they'll lurk in shadows and come out and kill indiscriminately. Do you remember they pulled the women off the bus? They got the bus; they stopped and said, "Everybody—the women with voter registration cards step up," and they killed them. Nevertheless, the Afghan people refuse to be intimidated. They're showing up in droves to vote. A free society is emerging in that part of the world.

In Iran, we are paying very close attention to Iran. We have ever since I've been in office here. We are working with our friends to keep the pressure on the mullahs to listen to the demands of the free world. And we're working with the—hold on a second, please. Excuse me. We're working with the IAEA to keep the pressure on Iran, and the Secretary is working very closely with the foreign ministers of France, Great Britain, and Germany, who are taking it upon themselves to make it clear that the demands of Europe are also equal to—the same as the demands of the United States, that we expect for there to be full disclosure, full transparency of their nuclear weapons programs.

Yes, Suzanne [Suzanne Malveaux, CNN]. Suzanne.

Q. Do you think the intelligence was——

The President. Suzanne.

Response to Terrorism Threats

Q. Mr. President, your opponent, John Kerry, has called for a complete endorsement of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. How do your actions today differ from his own in ensuring national security? And what can the American people see in the days to come, either feel or see, to know that they are better protected?

The President. Well, when we put out a threat alert like we did yesterday and then work with folks at the local jurisdictions to respond, the American people need to know that, one, our intelligence gathering is doing its job—the intelligence gatherers are doing their job. And secondly, the response mechanism is fast. And they need to know their Government—there are thousands of people working overtime to not only find data but analyze data and then take the steps necessary to protect, as best as we possibly can. This is a big country. We're a free country. And as I've said many times, we've got to be 100 percent correct; they've got to be correct once. But the people need to know that we're taking action on actionable intelligence.

First part of the—the 9/11—listen, my job is to take a look at what I think is right and to build on that which we've already done. We've already done a lot. Take a good look at what has taken place since 9/11, and I think you'll be, as a citizen concerned about your own safety, I think you'll be pleased. And the question is, how do we do more? We're more than happy to do more.

Last question. Deans [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers].

Proposed National Intelligence Director/ Decisionmaking on Iraq

Q. Yes, sir. Mr. President, can you say what you regard as the model for this National Intelligence Director? Is it the Fed? Would it be the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

The President. Yes.

Q. And in what way would this new structure prevent the kind of intelligence failings that preceded the war in Iraq with respect to weapons, difficulty of the opposition faced, and those sorts of things?

The President. Not like the Fed. More like the Joint Chiefs, because the Joint Chiefs have got a—even though not a part of the chain of command, they are affected by the chain of command.

And the second part of the—oh, why would this—listen, let me talk about the intelligence in Iraq. First of all, we all thought we would find stockpiles of weapons. We may still find weapons. We haven't found them yet. Every person standing up here would say, gosh, we thought it was going to be different, as did the Congress, by the way, members of both parties, and the United Nations. But what we do know is that Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons.

And let me just say this to you: Knowing what I know today, we still would have gone on into Iraq. We still would have gone to make our country more secure. He had the

capability of making weapons. He had terrorist ties. The decision I made was the right decision. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. And I find it interesting, in the political process, that some say, "Well, I voted for the intelligence," and now they won't say whether or not it was the right decision to take Saddam Hussein out. It's the right decision, and the world is better off for it.

Listen, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting CIA Director John E. McLaughlin; and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City. The President also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission); and the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman/Robb Commission).

Remarks on Signing the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act

August 3, 2004

The President. Welcome. Please be seated. I'm honored to welcome you all to the White House this morning, as I sign the legislation implementing the historic free trade agreement between Australia and the United States.

For nearly a century, our two nations have been allies in war and partners in peace. Prime Minister Howard's superb leadership has helped ensure that the friendship between our two peoples remains strong, that our commitment to political and economic freedom remains firm.

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a milestone in the history of our alliance. It expands our security and political alliance by creating a true economic partnership. It will create jobs and opportunities in both our nations. It will fuel economic growth throughout the Pacific Rim, and it will strengthen our common ties of family and friendship.

I appreciate so very much those in my Cabinet who have worked hard to make this agreement come true: Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, and, of course, Ambassador Bob Zoellick, who is the U.S. Trade Representative.

Just as an aside, Zoellick has done heroic work, as has his staff, to see to it that the world trades more freely and America is treated fairly when it comes to trade.

I appreciate Ambassador Michael Thawley, the Ambassador of Australia to the United States, for his tireless efforts in representing his country's best interests as we negotiate this trade agreement. Mr. Ambassador, you are a credit to your country.

I'm also proud that Senator Orrin Hatch is with us. Senator, I appreciate you taking time to come and represent the United States Congress. This agreement received strong bipartisan support. It represents that members of both parties understand the benefits of trade to our country. Welcome, Senator, I appreciate you coming.

We support free and fair trade. I support free and fair trade, because it has the power to create new wealth for whole nations and new opportunities for millions of people. Sound policy can help unleash the initiative and talent of free people. Open trade is sound policy. It has a record for creating jobs and raising living standards and lowering consumer prices.

My administration is working with the Congress to extend the benefits of free trade throughout the western hemisphere, in Africa, and into the Middle East. We renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which promotes economic reforms and reduces trade barriers on goods from the nations of sub-Sahara Africa. Working with Congress, we entered into a new free trade agreement with Morocco and Chile. We're encouraging the free flow of trade across the Pacific. Last year I had the honor to sign a free trade agreement with Singapore, America's first with an Asian Pacific nation. Today I'm honored to sign legislation enacting the second.

The total annual two-way trade in American and Australian goods and services stands at $28 billion. Australia is America's 10th

largest export market. Our trade with Australia is important to every American. It is vital to our economy. The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a recognition of that importance and a commitment by both our nations to work in partnership for common prosperity. This agreement will immediately eliminate duties on 99 percent of all U.S.-manufactured exports to Australia. That is the largest immediate reduction of tariffs on manufactured goods ever achieved in an American free trade agreement.

America's manufacturers estimate that eliminating these tariffs will increase the export of manufactured goods by nearly $2 billion per year. That will mean new jobs for American workers. This agreement will also be good for America's farmers. It will eliminate all duties on American agricultural products entering Australia. Today, American farmers export almost $700 million worth of goods to Australia. And because of this agreement, that total will rise.

Free and fair trade means more than eliminating tariffs on existing trade. We must also work to open up new sectors of our economies to competition and trade. This agreement opens important sectors of Australia's economy, such as telecommunications, government procurement, express delivery, computers, tourism, energy, construction, financial services, and entertainment. And the agreement strengthens protections for intellectual property and promotes electronic commerce.

One of the great economic achievements since the end of the cold war has been the success of free and fair trade in raising up the world's poor, bringing hope to the world's hopeless, promoting freedom among the world's oppressed, and creating jobs at home and abroad. The same advantages that this agreement will bring to the United States and Australia can and should be available to the developing world. Our two nations are committed to the reduction of trade barriers and other restrictions that are keeping too much of the world from the kind of prosperity and opportunity that the developed world takes for granted.

On Saturday, that commitment yielded an important result that will benefit manufacturers and farmers from America, Australia, and the world. For the last several days, our trade ministers in Geneva have worked tirelessly to achieve an agreed framework for the WTO's Doha's negotiation. This framework provides a roadmap for these ongoing talks. Among other things, it commits WTO members to the elimination of export subsidies on agricultural products. And it commits them to start new work on the overhaul, streamlining, and transparency of customs rules. There is more work to be done, but Prime Minister Howard and I remain committed to the success of the Doha negotiations.

The United States and Australia have never been closer. We're allies in the war on terror. We're partners in the effort to help democracy take root in Afghanistan and Iraq and throughout the world. We understand that free societies will be peaceful societies. We long for peace. I appreciate Prime Minister Howard. He's a strong partner in peace. We understand that over the long term, the only way to create a safer world is to create a better world. We share a belief in the need to help others.

This trade agreement serves the interests of our countries. It serves the interests of the United States and Australia. It serves the interests of citizens with ambition and initiative and entrepreneurial instincts in both our countries. It advances the principle of free and fair trade. I am grateful to the Prime Minister, John Howard, for his good work and his vision and his friendship.

And it's now my honor to sign the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Implementation Act.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. H.R. 4759, approved August 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108–286.

Remarks to the Knights of Columbus Convention in Dallas, Texas

August 3, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Welcome to Texas. And thanks for inviting me so I can

come home. [*Laughter*] I really appreciate the Knights of Columbus. This strong organization believes in families and faith and compassion for those in need. And I'm honored you'd invite me to the 122d Convocation of this great organization.

I appreciate Carl Anderson and his leadership. I've gotten to know Carl because, you see, he's more than just an introducer of Presidents. [*Laughter*] He's a person who works with Presidents—at least this President. And I'm proud to have his help. It's good to see my family friend Virgil Dechant. Virgil, it's good to see you, sir. Thank you for such a warm greeting in the photo op line and reminding me of some great days gone past.

I'm proud to be here with Cardinal McCarrick. It's good to see you, sir. He's a neighbor in my temporary residence. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Cardinal Egan. I appreciate Cardinal Rigali of the great city of Philadelphia, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore, Maryland. I'm honored you all are here. I thank you for your presence. I'm honored to be in the presence of Cardinal Macharski, the Archbishop of Krakow, who succeeded the Holy Father in that role. Welcome to the United States. Appreciate you coming, sir. I appreciate Bishop Wilton Gregory's leadership of the Conference of Catholic Bishops.

I appreciate Your Eminences and Your Excellencies, reverends, monsignors, fathers, and deacons. *Nuestros amigos de Mexico*. I appreciate the officers and directors, State deputies, board of directors, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Knights, and my fellow Americans. Thanks for having me.

Two months ago, I had the privilege of visiting His Holy Father Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. It was my third meeting with His Holy Father since I took office, and for those of you who have ever met him, you know I'm telling you the truth when I tell you being in his presence is an awesome experience. He is a true presence. On the occasion, I had the special honor of presenting him with America's highest civil award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It was my chance to express our Nation's respect for a devoted servant of God and a true hero of our time.

Pope John Paul II has been a unique and commanding voice for the cause of the poor, the weak, the hungry, and the outcast. He has challenged our Nation and the entire world to embrace the culture of life. He's called upon us to uphold and affirm the dignity of every person, rich and poor, able and disabled, born and unborn. He's called us to love and serve our neighbors in need. Few organizations have worked harder and done more and met this challenge than the Knights of Columbus. I know you're proud of your organization, and you should be.

The Knights were born in New Haven, Connecticut. Come to think of it, so was I. [*Laughter*] From your foundations in a small church basement, you have raised up one of the great America organizations dedicated to charity and mutual assistance and the fight for civil liberties.

I'm proud to say that my family has contributed to your ranks. A few years ago, Governor Jeb became a Knight. [*Applause*] And he—yes—and he recently took his Third Degree. I'll see him this weekend. His son is getting married. I'll pass on the word, aim for the Fourth. [*Laughter*] Jeb knows, as I do, that your works of mercy are making our society more compassionate, changing the lives of millions of citizens. Compassionate work changes our society one heart and one soul at a time.

Last year, the Knights raised and donated a record $130 million to charity. That's a phenomenal record. You also volunteered for an unprecedented 61 million hours of community service. You obviously have heard the call.

I was pleased to hear this story about the Knights in Corpus Christi, Texas, at the Mother Teresa Day Shelter. They're a daily presence there. They're mopping the floors, collecting laundry soap, blankets, and food for 130 homeless men and women. They're not giving the orders; they're serving the people. Patricia Henry, the shelter director, put it this way: "If I need help, I just give the Knights a call"—such a powerful example. Americans across this great land know that they can do the same, that they can serve our country by helping someone in need.

We're grateful for your service to the men and women in uniform and to our Nation's veterans. You've sent hundreds of thousands of prayer books to those working to make our country more secure and to bring freedom in parts of the world that are desperate for freedom. You bring comfort and strength to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. I want to thank you for taking time to visit our wounded and disabled veterans, for providing comfort to their families, to give them a word of thanks.

See, you're—the Knights are soldiers in the armies of compassion. You're foot soldiers. You've heard the call. You're helping this Nation build a culture of life in which the sick are comforted, the aged are honored, the immigrant is welcomed, and the weak and vulnerable are never overlooked. You have a friend in this administration. You have somebody who wants to work with you to change America for the better.

We have a responsibility in Government to do things to help overcome recession and corporate scandal. It's easier to be a hopeful society when people are working. That's why I put forth an economic stimulus plan to encourage small-business growth, a plan that will help get jobs moving so people can work and do their duty as a mom or a dad and put food on the table. And we're making progress.

When I came to Washington, I was concerned about a school system that simply shuffled children through grade after grade, year after year, and hoped for the best. Oftentimes, what we found out was kids with great hearts were graduating from schools but couldn't read. I challenged the soft bigotry of low expectations by raising the bar, insisting on high standards, by making sure the money we spent—and we did spend more money—went to help those who needed extra help early, before it was too late. I believe you've got to measure in order to know. If you believe a child can read, you've got to measure to determine whether or not that child is reading, and if not, get them help early, before it's too late.

Because we measure, we know that now more minority children are learning to read at grade level, and that's good for America. I want to thank the Knights for their help in—helping low-income parents in Washington, DC, escape from schools—have their children escape from schools that will not teach and will not change. Because of the work of the Knights of Columbus and other concerned citizens in our Nation's Capital, poor parents now have a choice. They will have a $7,500 scholarship so they can afford to send their school—their child to a private school or parochial school—their choice to make.

You know, one of the great statistics of this modern era is the fact that more people are owning their own home. It seems like to me an optimistic society is one that encourages ownership, more people owning their own business, people being able to own and manage their own health care account, people being—own a piece of their retirement policy that they can pass on from one generation to the next, and people owning their own home. I love a society in which more and more people are able to say, "Welcome to my home; come to my home." This country has added more than 1.6 million minority homeowners in the past 2 years. Today, the American homeownership rate is the highest ever—and the highest ever for minorities. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of your country.

I want to work with the Knights for reasonable and compassionate immigration reform, to bring good, hard-working people out of the shadows of American life and to ensure that America is always a welcoming nation. I recognize, like you recognize, that amidst the great prosperity of America, amongst our great wealth, there are pockets of despair in this country, and we've got to do something about it. We must address despair so America is hopeful for every single person. See, we got fellow citizens who are trapped in the misery of drugs and gang violence, collapse of the family.

Our society and our Government have a responsibility. You have a responsibility. Those of us honored to hold high office have a responsibility. We're doing some practical things. We've got a community-wide effort to help educate kids to the dangers of using drugs. We believe in collaborative efforts; people all throughout society must work to reduce the demand for drugs. Listen, we'll

do all we can to bust the thugs, interdict the drugs coming in from foreign—overseas. But we've got to work on demand. And teen use of drugs is down by 11 percent from 2001 to 2003. That's a hopeful sign. A hopeful America is where our children are learning—[*applause*].

There's a lot of work to be done on health care, but one place I know we can continue to work together on is health care for the poorest of the poor. We've expanded and built over 600 community health centers in America. I want to double the number so the 16 million poor Americans can get primary health care without putting a strain on the emergency rooms of our hospitals, whether they be public or private.

We've got to pay for—we've got to work on additional welfare reforms to help people find a job, help them have the skills necessary to work so they realize the dignity that comes from being independent from Government and, at the same time, strengthen marriage and the family as part of welfare reforms.

But I believe one of the most effective ways our Government can help those in need is to help the charities and community groups that are doing God's work every day. That's what I believe Government ought to do. I believe Government needs to stand on the side of faith-based groups, not against faith-based groups, when they come to saving lives.

Government can hand out money, and of course there will be arguments whether we're handing out enough or not. But what Government can never do is put love in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. You see, in order to heal—help the lonely, it works every time when a loving soul puts their arm around and says, "What can I do to help you? How can I help you in your life? What can I do to make your life better?" Many are called by God to do so, and Government must stand on the side of those millions of acts of mercy and kindness that take place on a daily basis.

And so the Faith-Based Initiative that I've launched recognizes the need there be separation of church and state. The state should never be the church, and the church certainly should never be the state. But the state should never fear the good works of the church. And the truth of the matter is, there's a culture inside Government which resents and fears religious charities and has discriminated against them. We're changing that. I want to thank the Knights for their help in changing that attitude in Washington, DC.

Our goal is to end the unfair discrimination against faith-based charities by the Federal Government. And we're making substantial progress. In December 2002, I issued an Executive order—I was hoping, frankly, that Congress would pass a law. I got tired of waiting. [*Laughter*] I got tired of the process debate. See, I'm focused on results. I want there to be positive results. I want lives to be saved as best as possible. The process bogged down. For those of you who pay attention to Washington, you know what I'm talking about when I say the process bogs down.

So I signed an Executive order mandating equal treatment for faith-based charities in the Federal grantmaking process. What that means is, is that faith-based groups ought to be allowed to apply for Federal grants just like everybody else should be allowed to apply. Faith-based groups will not be allowed to discriminate against who they serve, and they won't use the Federal money to proselytize. But they're allowed to use the money to change hearts and souls, to help save lives, to embetter the world we live in.

And so here's the principle we've established: Religious charities that are effectively helping the poor should have a fair and equal chance to compete for Federal money. That's the new—those are the new rules. And this—in 2003, discretionary grants to faith-based programs was over a billion dollars. We're making progress. We're using Federal taxpayers' money for effective use in helping to save lives. We're providing a social network of loving—helping loving souls interface with people so they can realize a better tomorrow.

Three years ago, I established the Compassion Capital Fund. It's an innovative idea. It was a—the fund gives money to intermediary organizations that provide faith-based and community organizations with training, technical assistance—what it is, is like a little incubator: "If you want to access Federal money, here's how you do it. If you

want to start up a faith-based program, here's some of the lessons learned." In other words, what we're trying to say is not only are we going to allow those faith-based programs that already exist to access Federal money, we want to help others spring up and understand the pitfalls to succeed. The fund provides grants to faith-based and community organizations as well to help them fund their programs for the poor and the hungry and the homeless. We've awarded $56 million under this program. Today I release another $43 million to the compassionate Federal grant program.

We're moving forward on another initiative, which is mentoring for the children of prisoners. I mean, if the job of Government is to try to set priorities, a priority is to help children of prisoners find love. Imagine what a tough life it is for a young boy or girl to go see his or her mom or dad behind prison bars. These are children who need help. They're vulnerable to gangs and crime and despair. They're desperate for responsible adults in their life who can give them what many of them long for, which is love and tenderness.

The best way to do that is to encourage all groups, including faith-based groups, to provide mentors. And it's happening in America. For those of you who are mentoring the children of prisoners, thank you for what you're doing to make America a more welcoming place. We've awarded grants—today we've unleashed another $45.5 million of grants to programs, all aimed at doing this.

I'll tell you another program that's important is to help the addict, is to help the person so stuck on drugs that they can't realize the great human potential that God has given them, and they need desperate help. I believe that some counseling programs work, no question about it. But I also know programs that change the heart works. When a person changes their heart, they change their habits. Government is not good at changing hearts. The Almighty God is good at changing hearts, which happens to be the cornerstone of effective faith-based programs. And therefore, when it comes to spending Federal money to help addicts, I've asked the Congress, and the Congress has agreed to allow us to use vouchers to go to the person who is seeking help. That person can use that voucher at any kind of program he or she chooses, including faith-based programs, to help heal hearts and save lives.

In other words, some of these are the ways that—what I'm telling you is, things are changing in the Nation's Capital when it comes to invigorating the Faith-Based Initiative, and the Knights have helped a lot. I appreciate your efforts to level the playing field when it comes to grantmaking. And because of your efforts, America is changing for the better.

I needed someone to lead this program, so guess who I turned to? The Knights. I found Towey. Jim Towey is the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. He's with me. You know what his job is? His job is to help the faith community—by the way, all faiths—all faiths, Christian, Jew, or Muslim—all faiths understand what is possible now. His job is also to make sure the Federal Government is a hospitable place for faith programs to work with. Let's be frank about it. Many faith-based programs don't want to interface with Government. You know why? They're afraid of losing the ability to practice their faith. How can you be a faith-based program if you're not allowed to practice your faith? Towey's job—so Towey has got a big job. It's to change a culture, a suspicious culture, and we're making progress—a suspicious culture in Washington, a suspicious culture in the grassroots.

Here's Towey's story. He goes to meet Mother Teresa for the first time. He shows up at one of her homes for the dying in India, and the sister who greeted him assumed he was there to work. [*Laughter*] That's what I assume every day that Towey shows up. [*Laughter*] So she gave Jim some cloth and said, "Go clean the sores of a dying man." He says it changed his life, that experience. He went on to work full-time for the Missionaries of Charity. Incredibly enough, Jim Towey, Director of the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in the White House, was Mother Teresa's lawyer. I ask you, what kind of society is it where Mother Teresa needs a lawyer? [*Laughter*] It's a society that needs tort reform. [*Laughter*] I appreciate your good work, friend. Thanks for coming today.

The Knights of Columbus are transferring lives with works of compassion, and, just as importantly, you're defending the values of faith and family that bind us as a nation. I appreciate your fight to protect children from obscenity. I appreciate your working to protect the Pledge of Allegiance, to keep us "one Nation under God." I want to thank you—I want to thank you for the defense of the traditional family. That is a most fundamental institution for our society. I appreciate the fact you're promoting the culture of life.

We're making progress here in America. Last November, I signed a law to end the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion. This law is constitutional. This law is compassionate. This law is urgently needed, and my administration will vigorously defend it in the courts. I was pleased to sign the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. I want to thank the Knights on that piece of legislation. I signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. Common sense and conscience tells us that when an expectant mother is killed, two lives are ended, and the criminal should answer for both crimes.

I was pleased to sign legislation supporting maternity group homes. We'll continue to work to help crisis pregnancy centers. We'll work together to strengthen incentives for adoption and parental notification laws. The Knights have been helpful, and I appreciate your help. My 2005 budget, I proposed to more than triple Federal funds for abstinence programs in schools and community-based programs above 2001 levels.

I'll continue to work with Congress to pass a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning. Human life is a creation of God, not a commodity to be exploited by man.

I look forward to working with the Knights to defend the sacred bond of marriage. A few activist judges have taken it upon themselves to redefine the institution of marriage by court order. I support a constitutional amendment to protect the sanctity of marriage by ensuring it is always recognized as the union of a man and woman as husband and wife. I appreciate the Knights' stand on this issue.

I also appreciate the Knights of Columbus' stand on the Federal judiciary. I have a responsibility as President to make sure the Federal judicial system runs well. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal benches who will strictly and fully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench.

In all these areas, caring for the poor and protecting the vulnerable, affirming life, and defending the family, we're depending on the goodness and compassion of the American people. And that's good, because the American people are good and compassionate. See, the strength of this country is not our military might. It's not the size of our wallet. The strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people. And it is an incredible honor to be the President of such a nation, a President of a nation of compassion and decency and honor and such powerful values that we're able to bring people from all walks of life under the rubric of being an American.

I appreciate the prayers of the people of this country. People I'll never get to say thanks to in person, lift Laura and me up in prayer. It's a remarkable aspect of the Presidency. More significantly, it's a remarkable aspect of the life of the United States of America. I'm grateful for your prayers. I'm grateful for your great service and the example you set for our country.

Thanks for having me today. May God bless your organization, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Dallas. In his remarks, he referred to Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight, and Virgil Dechant, Past Supreme Knight, Knights of Columbus; Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, DC; Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York; Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, PA; Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, IL; William Cardinal Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, MD; Franciszek Cardinal Macharski, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland; and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks in Davenport, Iowa

August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all so very much for coming. Thanks for having me. It's great to be back here in the Quad Cities area.

It's a great place to work and raise your family. It's what I would call the heart and soul of the country. We have a little difference of opinion about the heart and soul—some of them think you can find it in Hollywood.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I think you find it right here in Davenport, Iowa.

I'm looking forward to the race. I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help. Everywhere we're going, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will have 4 more years.

I regret that Laura is not here to see this significant crowd. She is a fabulous First Lady. She is a great mother and a wonderful wife. Today I'm going to give you some reasons for you to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest one on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment and his experience. Dick Cheney is a great Vice President.

I want to thank my friend Jim Nussle. I appreciate his leadership in the United States Congress. He's the budget man. He's looking out after your money. He and I understand when we spend money in Washington, it's not the Government's money; it's the people's money.

I appreciate my friend Jim Leach joining us today. What a fine, fine citizen of the State of Iowa. I want to thank my friend Tom Latham for joining us, the Congressman from the other part of the State. Thanks for inviting him here to eastern Iowa. It's good for your Congressmen to get a taste for the decency of the folks that live in this part of the State.

I want to thank Chuck Gipp, David Vaudt, all the State officials here. I appreciate the mayor coming. Mr. Mayor, we're proud you're here. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Mayor Freemire of Bettendorf as well. I'm proud you're here. I want to thank my friend David Roederer, who is the campaign chairman for this great State of Iowa. I appreciate my friend Larry Gatlin. We were both raised in west Texas together. I was in Midland; he was in Odessa. I can't sing; he can. [*Laughter*]

Listen, I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank you for what you are going to do, which is to register the voters. We have a duty in this country to vote. Make sure you register people. Don't worry about what party they're in; we want everybody voting in America. However, now when you're convincing them who to vote for, don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents. [*Laughter*] When you get them headed toward the poll, nudge them our way. I'm counting on your help, and together we're going to win not only Iowa, but it's going to be a great victory in November nationwide. We were close in Iowa last time—not this time; we're going to carry it.

Every incumbent who's asking for the vote has to answer a question why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past years we've been through a lot together. We've been through a whole lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead our Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. We have more to do. We must work to move America forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer.

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

The President. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our economy stronger. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our future brighter and better for every one of our citizens. From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and there is still more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we know that 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've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We believe in making sure local folks are in charge of public schools. We believe in empowering parents. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

Listen, we've got more to do. The world we're in is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and a higher-level skills, so we've got to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science so young people can compete in our 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 they need to realize 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 for years had promised prescription drug coverage for our seniors; we got it done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. 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.

I remember campaigning with Nussle and Leach and Latham and your fine United States Senator, Charles Grassley. I said, "We're going to strengthen Medicare to make sure rural hospitals in Iowa get the help they need," so we provided more funds to hospitals healing—handling a low volume of patients. We've increased payments for ambulance providers and suppliers in rural areas. We're giving better bonuses to physicians, so we can keep good doctors practicing in rural America. In other words, we delivered on our promise to the people of Iowa. The other folks talk a good game; we deliver.

To help people get access to quality care, 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 health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not going to turn back.

This world is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work. Most of 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 companies.

To improve health care, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive doctors out of medicine. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I will continue to work with Congress to pass medical liability reform for the patients of America.

We can do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We can do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make our economy stronger. Listen, we've come through a recession and terror attacks and corporate scandals and a stock market decline. We overcame these obstacles because of the hard work of Iowa's small-business people, because we've got the best workers in the world. We've overcome these obstacles because we've got the best farmers in the world.

And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax relief for the American people. Listen, we didn't pick winners and losers when it came to tax relief. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal income taxes. We gave tax relief for families with children. We gave tax relief for married couples. What kind of Tax Code is it that penalizes marriage? It's a Tax Code that needs to be changed. We gave tax relief

for every small business that purchases equipment. And this time, the check really was 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. Because we acted, Iowa has added more than 11,000 jobs over the past year. Because we acted, Iowa's unemployment rate now is 4.3 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for American workers, we are turning the corner, and we're not going back.

We worked to strengthen our farmers and ranchers. We passed a good farm bill; I was proud to sign it. We phased out the death tax so America's family farmers can stay in the family. We've opened up foreign markets for Iowa's and Illinois farmers. You see, if you're good at something, you ought to have the opportunity to sell that which you're good at around the world.

Listen, this country needs an energy strategy. We must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want to keep jobs here in America. And one way to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy is to promote alternative sources of fuel like biodiesel and ethanol. I told the people of this State when I was running in 2000, I support ethanol. I have kept my promise to Iowa's farmers. In the last 3 years, America's farmers have posted record net-cash farm income—record—record exports, record farm equity and land values. I have made the success of America's farmers and ranchers a priority, and America is better off for it.

To keep jobs in America, regulations need to be reasonable and fair. To keep jobs in America, we must end the junk lawsuits which threaten our small businesses. To keep jobs in America, we will not overspend your money, and we will keep your taxes low. To keep jobs in America, we will offer our workers a lifetime of learning and to make sure they get training for the jobs of the future, at 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.

And we're going to make sure America's families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your parents, time to go to class to improve yourselves. Congress needs to work with the administration to enact comp-time and flextime to help America's families better juggle their home needs and their work needs.

What I'm telling you is, after 4 more years, the economy will be better, more small-business owners will be in America, better and higher paying jobs will exist here, and our farmers will be able to put something aside for the future generations.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to 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 for Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is a place where many young girls now go to school for the first time. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against terror, and America and the world are safer.

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

In Saudi Arabia, before September the 11th, terrorists were raising money and recruiting and operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida. 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.

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 enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He had harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized families of suicide bombers. He had murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats in a new light. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, this country 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 our enemies. We saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and saw a threat to America. The United Nations looked at the same intelligence, and it saw a threat and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons and weapons programs or face serious consequences. That's what the free world demanded.

After 12 years of defiance, the tyrant refused to comply. He continued to deceive the world. He deceived the weapons inspectors that the world had sent into Iraq. Now, I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman——

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. ——or do I take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country.

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

The President. Because the dictator sits in a prison cell, the people of Iraq are better off. America and the world are safer.

When it comes to fighting the threats of our world, when it comes to making America safer, when it comes to spreading peace, we're moving forward, and we're not turning back.

We've got more to do. I'm running for 4 more years because we've got more to do. We must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot negotiate with them.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage the enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help us defeat terror, and that's necessary. Over 60 nations are involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Nearly 40 nations are involved in Afghanistan. Some 30 nations are involved in Iraq. We will continue to build our alliances. We will continue to work with our friends for the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful, democratic societies. These two nations are now governed by strong leaders, people who want the boys and girls of their respective countries to grow up in peace. They know what we know in America: Moms and dads long for a peaceful society; they long for their children to be able to be educated and realize their dreams. The people of these countries are stepping up, providing security for their own people. After years of brutality, they see a glimmer of hope, a chance to live in a free society. And these people can count on our help and the help of our coalition.

You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver

them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, to help set them on the path to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

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

And our men and women in uniform deserve the full support of our Government. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support our military and its mission. This legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 voted against the legislation. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how my opponent tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] End quote. [*Laughter*] Then he went on to say, he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against it, and he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror—that's poverty and hopelessness and resentment. A free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be a powerful example to their neighbors in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams and aspirations 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 making the world a more peaceful place. By serving the ideal of liberty, we serve the deepest ideals of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

We have more to do to protect us. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. Those who claim that America's war on terror is to blame for terror threats against the United States have a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy. See, the 9/11 Commission said something wise: Our homeland is safer, but we are not yet safe.

Beginning immediately after September the 11th, we've started the hard process of reform. We transformed our defenses. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to help make America more secure. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We've taken action on a large majority of the Commission's recommendations.

We have more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, to dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capability. That's why this week I called on Congress to create a position of National Intelligence Director, so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and here at home.

These reforms are not going to be easy. I understand that. You see, reform is never easy in Washington. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests there. People don't like to have the status quo challenged. It's not enough, though, to advocate reform; you have to be able to get it done.

And we're getting it done on behalf of the people of this country. When it comes to reforming schools to provide an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms that 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 a strong farm economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and promoting the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

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

The President. No, there's a lot of big talkers in the Nation's Capital. We just like to be known as the people who can get the job done. We're living in a time of great change. And it's an exciting time—it really is—to be an American. We got to make sure Government responds to these times by standing side by side with people, side by side with our workers, and side by side with our families.

The best way to do so, in my judgment, is to encourage people to own something, to encourage people to own their own homes. Listen, the homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high, and that's good news for our country. We want our workers to be able to own their own health care accounts so they can take them from job to job. We want younger workers to be able to own a Social Security personal retirement account that they can call their own and pass on from one generation to the next. We want people owning their own farm and their own small business. See, we understand when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of this country.

The world is—times have changed, but some things are not going to change. Our belief in liberty will not change. Our belief in the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity will not change. Our desire to make sure opportunity, the great American experience, is spread throughout every corner of this country, will not change. The individual values we try to live by won't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose are important, our families, our schools, our religious congregation. They are so important and so fundamental; they deserve the respect of Government.

We stand for things. We stand for something. 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.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in America. This culture of ours 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 fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are 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 are responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

Listen, the strength of this country is not our military. The strength of this country is not our wallets. The strength of this country is the heart and soul of the American people.

I want to be your President for 4 more years so we can continue to rally the armies of compassion, so we can help change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires strength and firm resolve. This is a time that requires courage and our willingness to lead.

Audience member. That's why we love you!

The President. None of us will ever forget that era—that week when one era ended and another one began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." A guy grabbed me by the arm. He had tears in his eyes; he was exhausted from searching through the rubble to find his friend. He said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people searching through the rubble took that day personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

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

The President. No, we've come through much together. We've done hard work. During the next 4 years, we will spread ownership and opportunity all throughout our land. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. And during the next 4 years, we'll continue to lead in the cause of freedom so the world will be a more peaceful place.

You know, 4 years ago I traveled your great State asking for the vote, and I made a pledge 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 during the next 4 years.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. at LeClaire Park and Bandshell. In his remarks, he referred to Iowa State Representative Chuck Gipp; Iowa State Auditor David A. Vaudt; Mayor Charles W. Brooke of Davenport, IA; Mayor Michael J. Freemire of Bettendorf, IA; country music entertainer Larry Gatlin; 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).

Remarks on the Conservation Reserve Program in Le Sueur, Minnesota

August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be on a farm. [*Laughter*] American farm and ranch families embody the best values of our country, don't they—love of family, love of the land, love of their country. These are good, hard-working people. Farming is what I like to call America's first industry, and that industry feeds us, and it clothes us. It's now providing more energy for us.

The success of America's farmers and ranchers is essential to the success of our country. That's why it's fitting we're here on a farm to talk about the success of America. I'm going to talk about another role that farmers play today, and that's the essential role of being good stewards of our land, and how the Federal Government can help. See, I like to tell people every day is Earth Day if you make a living off the land, because people care more about the land if the person has to make a living off the land.

And so today I'm going to talk about some initiatives where the Federal Government can help the best stewards of the land be better stewards of the land. I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate the Governor. Thank you for being here, sir. Thank you for your introduction. I particularly want to thank Mark and Shirley Katzenmeyer; they're the host family here. Little did they realize—where is Mark?

Mr. Katzenmeyer. Right over here, sir.

The President. Oh, there you are. Good, you got a good seat. That's good. [*Laughter*] And Karen as well, their sweet daughter. Thanks for coming, Karen.

Guess what we talked about? Mountain biking. [*Laughter*] Mark is a mountain biker, and gosh, what a special place to mountain bike, isn't it? I'm sorry I didn't bring mine. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Katzenmeyer. You can borrow one.

The President. I could borrow one, yes. Well, I'm not that sorry. Anyway—[*Laughter*]. But I really appreciate your hospitality. Senator Norm Coleman is with us, and the Governor. We were on the same helicopter. He said, "I wonder if the Katzenmeyers really understood what was about to happen"—[*laughter*]—four choppers heading into their farm. But thanks for having us. I also want to thank your neighbors for putting up with us, and I appreciate you all coming. I want to thank Norm. He's a good friend, a fine United States Senator.

I appreciate Gil Gutknecht. And the Congressman for this area, John Kline, is with us too. Thank you both for being here. I'm honored you guys are here. I also want to thank—I want to thank Vicky, who is John's wife. I appreciate you coming, Vicky.

I thank the mayor of Le Sueur for being here. Mr. Mayor, appreciate you coming.

Mayor Bob Oberle. You're welcome.

The President. Yes, thank you. It's an honor for us to be here. I want to thank the other local officials who've come. I want to thank the conservation groups. I see some of my friends from the conservation groups,

the people who want to make sure that the land is taken care of so wildlife can flourish. We're going to talk about something today that I think you'll appreciate. As a matter of fact, you've been instrumental in helping to construct the policy. I want to thank—and the farmers and ranchers who are here. It's really good to be here.

Bryan—there's Bryan. Yes, today when I landed—by the way, I always like to greet somebody in the community who is serving the community by volunteering. And Bryan Comstock is a volunteer firefighter for this part of the world. I want to thank you for being here. I told him I was a supporter of the Crawford Volunteer Fire Department. I know something about it. It's—these volunteer fire departments are really important for rural America, and I want to thank Bryan and others who are volunteering time to help these farmers and ranchers who might get in trouble because of a sudden or instant fire.

At any rate, we—this country better appreciate our farmers and ranchers. I mean, it's—really the cornerstone of good economic policy is good farm policy, isn't it? And I'm—I appreciate the effects of the farm bill that we worked on and passed. It's a good bill. And it's making a difference. It has helped farmers because it helped them plan and operate on market realities, not based upon Government dictates. It's important any bill that deals with economics to understand the markets, and that we view the markets as important. And a market-oriented approach to farming is good, and it's working. It's making a difference for people right now.

One reason it is, is because we recognize there's a lot of consumers for American farm products outside the United States. Good farm policy is good trade policy. Listen, if you're good at something—and we're really good at growing things; we ought to be selling what we grow, not only here at home but elsewhere. I'm committed to making sure that markets are open and we're treated fairly. I like to explain trade to our people this way, that we've opened up our markets here in the United States, and it's good for consumers. We do. Think about it. When you get more products coming into the country, you can shop. You can make decisions. The more opportunities you have to decide, you're going to get better quality at a better price. That's just the way it is. That's the way the market works. We want to be treated in other countries the way we treat people here at home. That's good trade policy. And so we're opening up markets. The more markets we open up, the better it is for farmers and ranchers because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere just so long as the playing field is level.

And as a result—we also, by the way, cut taxes on our farmers and ranchers as well as everybody else who paid taxes. That helps. I like to tell people I think the people in southern Minnesota can spend their money better than the Federal Government can. Now, we'll set priorities; don't get me wrong. [*Laughter*] We got a war to win. We've got a homeland to protect. We got people to take care of that can't take of themselves. But by setting priorities, I believe that you can meet obligations and let people have more of their own money. It helps this economy grow; I'm telling you. When you got more money in your pocket, you demand an additional good or a service. And when you make that demand, somebody is going to produce it. And when somebody produces it, somebody is likely to find a job.

We also put the death tax on its way to extinction. In order to have a vibrant agricultural economy, it must be so that people can pass their farm from one generation to the next without the Federal Government getting in the way. We're going to have to make the death tax—the elimination of the death tax permanent. In order to get it out of the Congress, it's—it was a decision to say, "Okay, we're going to put it on its way to extinction," and then it comes back after 10 years. That's the way we had to get it out, which means in the year 2011, there's going to be some unusual decisions by people when the death tax comes into being. I'm pledged to eliminate it totally. I don't think it makes any sense. I don't think you ought to—[*Applause*].

Anyway, we've taken action. And the productivity of our farmers are—it really means we can compete anywhere. And therefore, America's farmers have posted record net-cash farm income. I'm not talking about good—I'm talking about record. Our exports

are way up. Farm equity and land values are strong. In other words, we got a good farm economy, and I intend to keep it that way as best as I possibly can.

I'm going to talk about conserving the land. The best thing from the farm bill was the conservation title. It encouraged people to put aside lands for the right reasons: to protect the soil, protect the water, provide habitat for wildlife. The conservation title was doubled from the previous farm bill to this one. It's up to about $40 billion over a 10-year period of time. The Katzenmeyers understand it. Here's what Shirley said. She said, "You're giving back to nature when it comes to putting money—land aside for the CRP. You're giving back to nature. You're giving back something to the soil so it doesn't get depleted. All around, it's a good practice." I agree, and so do farmers all across America.

So the main reason I've asked you all to come, besides being in a beautiful part of the world, was to talk about three initiatives I think you'll find interesting; three initiatives important for our country; three initiatives which enable our farmers and sportsmen to continue their roles as citizen-stewards of the land. This initiative I think is good for the environment. It's good for the agricultural sector.

First, we're going to expand and extend the Conservation Reserve Program. The Conservation Reserve Program is the largest public-private conservation partnership in the Nation. Approximately 800,000 farmers participate in this program. In return for an annual payment from this program, farmers retire some of their land, letting it turn back to its natural state. As I told you, it's good for the soil. It's good for habitat. Interestingly enough, one of the things I like to ask is, does it work? The question we need to ask more often in Washington, DC, is it actually working? In this case, this program has helped reduce soil erosion by more than 40 percent since 1986. That is a positive development for America.

Right now we have 35 million acres of farmland in the CRP, the Conservation Reserve Program. Contracts covering roughly two-thirds of the existing land in the program are scheduled to expire in 2007 and 2008. To make sure these farmlands stay protected, I directed the Secretary of Agriculture to offer early reenrollments and extensions of existing contracts.

The farmers no longer need to worry about whether or not this—they'll be reenrolled in the program, as of this moment. You will be. We're taking action now rather than waiting so that there's certainty when it comes to planning. I'm also directing the Secretary to enroll farmers for an additional 800,000 acres of land.

Secondly, we're going to expand the conservation program to cover vital grasslands that often serve as borders of farmlands. I'm ordering the Secretary of Agriculture to help protect 250,000 acres of grasslands, which are the home of several species of birds, including the northern bobwhite quail. By expanding this program, our goal is to increase the quail population by about 750,000 birds a year.

Thirdly, we're going to expand the conservation program to cover wetlands that are not in—the CRP now covers wetlands that are in a flood plain. But if you're out of a flood plain—if your wetlands are out of a flood plain, you're not currently eligible for the program. These wetlands are what the farmers around here call "prairie potholes," and offer a home for pheasants and ducks and other birds. These prairie potholes will now be a part of the CRP, and that's good for wildlife. I'm also making available resources needed to help farmers protect 250,000 acres of such wetlands. This is part of an initiative that I outlined last Earth Day which was to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million wetland acres over the next 5 years.

Audience member. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And that's what I'm here to announce. I'm here to announce we can do a good job of conserving nature by empowering our farmers and ranchers. I want to thank the wildlife people that are here. I want to thank you for your practical way of approaching important issues for our country. I particularly want to thank the farmers and ranchers who are here for doing what you were raised to do, which is feed us and help clothe us and, in the meantime,

protect your land, which is good for the country.

I'm honored to be here. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. It's great to be in a part of the world where people work with their hands and make a living off the land.

God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Katzenmeyer family farm. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota.

Remarks in Mankato, Minnesota

August 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. It's good to be in Mankato. I understand I'm the first President to have visited here since Harry Truman. I don't know what took the others so long to get here. [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm also here to ask for your help. I appreciate you coming. I understand I'm not the biggest deal in town. After all, the Vikings practice here. [*Laughter*] But it is great to be in a place where people work hard and make a living off the land, raise their families. It's what I call the heart and soul of the country. The other folks believe the heart and soul can be found in Hollywood. I think it's found right here in southern Minnesota.

I'm excited about the race. I'm looking forward to the contest. Everywhere we go, the crowds are big, the enthusiasm is high, the signs are good. With your help, Dick Cheney and I will be reelected for 4 more years.

I'm sorry Laura is not here. I know you are too. You probably wish I had stayed at home and she was the speaker. [*Laughter*] She is a great wife, a fantastic mother, and a wonderful First Lady for our country. Today I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important reason of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Admittedly, he's not the prettiest Vice Presidential candidate in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him for his judgment, his sound advice.

I'm proud to be with Norm Coleman. He's doing a fine job as a United States Senator. And I'm proud of the job Governor Pawlenty is doing as well. He's a good man. Plus, I appreciate working with Congressman Gutknecht and Congressman Kline, two really fine people, as well. I appreciate you guys being here. Thank you.

I want to thank all the State people who are here and the local people who have come out. Thanks for being here today. I particularly want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. Those are the people who put up the signs and make the phone calls. These are the folks who go out and get people to register to vote. Let me tell you something, here's what I believe: I believe all of us have a duty in our country to vote. We have a duty to exercise our right as free citizens. I want to thank you for registering people and encouraging them to vote. Don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents. Get them to the polls, and when you get them headed our way, make sure they—give them a little nudge toward the Bush-Cheney ticket.

We came close in Minnesota last time. This time, we're going to win it. Every incumbent who asks for your vote has got to answer one central question, and that's why—why should the American people give me the high privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years. In the past few years, we've done a lot, and we've come through a lot together. But there's only one reason to look backward, and that is to determine who best to lead the Nation forward.

I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake in this election. We have much more to do to move America forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to make our country safer, to make our economy stronger, and to make the future brighter and better for every single citizen.

From creating jobs to improving schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace, we have made much progress, and we have more to do. We have more to do to make America's public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that not one single child is left behind in our 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've raised the bar. We believe in accountability. We trust the local folks to run the schools of America. 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're not going back.

We have more to do. Listen, this world of ours is changing. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher-level skills. So that's why we need to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We're going to expand math and science education so our young people can compete in a high-tech world. We'll 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 they need 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 the job done. Already, more than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real and meaningful savings. 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.

You see, when we reformed Medicare, we did so with rural hospitals in mind as well. We provided more funds to hospitals handling low volumes of patients. We increased payments for ambulance providers and suppliers in rural areas. We're giving better bonuses to physicians so we can keep good doctors practicing in rural America. We made a difference for the older citizens of this country, and we made a difference for those who seek health care in rural America.

To help people get access to quality care, 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're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

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

To improve health care, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that raise health care costs and drive good doctors out of medicine. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice, and on behalf of the patients and doctors of America, I will continue to urge Congress to pass medical liability reform.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and to prevent health care mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures for terrible diseases. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we'll make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

We have more to do to make sure our economy is stronger. Listen, we've come through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through terror attacks. We've been through a market decline. Listen—and we've overcome the obstacles. We've got great workers in America, is one reason we've overcome them. We've got great entrepreneurs. We've got great farmers and great ranchers in this country.

We've also overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts. Listen, when we cut the taxes, we didn't pick winners or losers. We said if you pay Federal income taxes, you get tax relief. Families with children got tax relief. Married couples got tax relief. It's an amazing Tax Code where we say we're going to have a marriage penalty.

Why do we want to penalize marriage? We need to encourage marriage in the country.

A lot of the tax relief went to help small businesses, and the small-business sector of our economy is strong today. We promised all this. We delivered, and this time the check was actually in the mail. Because we acted, our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added more than 1.5 million new jobs since last August. Minnesota has added 32,000 jobs over the past year. Because we acted, the unemployment rate in this State is now 4.4 percent. When it comes to creating jobs for America's workers, we've turned the corner, and we're not turning back.

I also told the people when I was running for President the last time, I said, "I understand the need to have a healthy farm economy." A good farm economy is good for the American economy. We passed a good farm bill. We're phasing out the death tax so farmers can pass their land from one generation to the next.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to make sure our farm economy is strong. And one way to make sure the farm economy is strong is to open up markets for Minnesota farm products. We want you selling your soybeans all around the world. We want you selling your corn all around the world. We want to be selling that Minnesota beef and hogs all around the world.

In order to make sure jobs stay here at home, we've got to have an energy strategy. See, we need to be better at conserving things, and we've got to be exploring for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. But for the sake of energy security, for the sake of economic security, we need more ethanol and biodiesel. I envision a day where sometime, somebody walks in and says, "Well, Mr. President, you'll be happy to hear the corn crop is up and we're growing more soybeans in America, and we're less dependent on foreign sources of oil as a result of it."

And when you're out gathering the vote, remind the folks that in the last 3 years American farmers have posted record net-cash farm income, record exports, and record farm equity and land values. Our farm program is working.

Listen, we can do more to keep jobs here. You know, I'm sure the small-business owners will tell you they've got to fill out a lot of paperwork. I can't guarantee whether Government has read it or not. [*Laughter*] We need less regulation. In order to keep jobs here in America, we need tort reform. In order to keep jobs here in America, we've got to make sure American workers have a lifetime of learning, and we've got to help them training—help them have training for the jobs of the 21st century. And a good place to start is at our community colleges.

And you know what else we need? We need to make sure that American families have something they never have enough of, and that is time—time to be with their kids, time to go to the Little League game or work in a Girl Scout troop, time to take care of an elderly parent, time to go to class to improve themselves. And that's why I think Congress ought to pass comp-time and flex-time rules.

In other words, what I'm telling you is Government needs to stand side by side with families. After 4 more years, this economy is going to be strong, more people will be working with better jobs. After 4 more years, there will be more small-business owners. After 4 more years, our farmers are going to be doing better. You know why? Because we've got a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-agricultural economic agenda.

We've got to do more to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If we show uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch. The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we've changed the world.

Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers who set up terror cells around the world, including our own country. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Today, Afghanistan is a firm ally in the war against terror. And today, many young girls go to school for the first time. Afghanistan is free, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against Al Qaida. Pakistani forces are helping to round up the terrorists, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, in Saudi Arabia, terrorists were raising money; they were recruiting; they were operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking 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.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. Remember, he was firing weapons at American pilots which were enforcing the world's sanctions. The tyrant had pursued and used weapons of mass destruction. He'd harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. And he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He murdered tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in a volatile part of the world.

After September the 11th, we looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. The lesson of September the 11th is that America 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 the capability of those weapons with terrorist enemy. In other words, we saw a threat. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties, including my opponent, looked at the intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence and unanimously demanded that Saddam Hussein disclose, destroy weapons or weapons programs, or face serious consequences. The world spoke.

After 12 years of defiance, after 12 years of ignoring the demands of the free world, he once again refused to comply. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the weapons inspectors. So I had a choice to make: forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman who is a sworn enemy of this country, or take action necessary to defend our people. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. Because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell, the Iraqi people are free, and America and the world are safer.

We have more to do. I'm seeking the office for 4 more years because I know we have more to do. We must continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You cannot negotiate with them. You cannot hope for the best. We must engage them so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition to help defeat the enemies of freedom. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations in Iraq, and over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build alliances and work with our friends in the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn America's national security decisions over to leaders of other nations.

We'll keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become democratic, free, and, therefore, peaceful societies. These two nations are now governed by strong people, people who are willing to listen to the hopes and aspirations of the people. You know what the hopes and aspirations of mothers and dads are in Iraq and Afghanistan? They want their children to grow up in a peaceful world just like in—American moms and dads do. They want there to be hope for their kids. They want them to be able to realize their dreams. These leaders understand that. More and more Iraqis are now stepping up

to defend the peace, to defend their freedom.

And my message to those people is that they 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 help set them on the road to liberty. And when America gives its word, America will keep its word.

In these crucial times, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. First, I want to thank all the veterans who are here. I appreciate the example you've set for our troops today. I've had the privilege of meeting those who wear our Nation's uniform. I've seen their great decency, their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

We owe our troops best pay, best training, best possible equipment. That's why last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. The legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 senators voted against that help. Two of those twelve are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how my opponent tried to explain his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] That doesn't sound the way they talk here in southern Minnesota. I suspect the people around here, when they say something, they mean it. Now my opponent is offering a different explanation. He said he was proud he voted against it, and then he further said the whole thing is a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. Free countries do not export terror. Free countries listen to the dreams of their citizens. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're bringing hope to others, and that makes our country more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're spreading peace. And by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving a basic understanding of our country, a basic value of America. See, freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I'm running for 4 more years because I understand we have more to do to protect America. See, there are enemies who hate us, and they're still plotting to harm us. Those who claim that America's war on terror, our efforts to defend ourselves, is to blame for terrorist threats against the United States have a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the enemy we face. The 9/11 Commission said America homeland is safe, but—safer, but we're not yet safe. I agree. There's more to do here at home.

Immediately after September the 11th, we started the hard process of reform. We transformed our defenses and created the Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which was necessary to give law enforcement the tools necessary to defend the American people. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're already taking action on a large majority of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. And they did good work, and I thank them for their work.

We've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders, and to dramatically improve our intelligence-gathering capability. That's why, this week, I called on Congress to create the position of National Intelligence Director, so that one person is in charge of coordinating all intelligence overseas and here at home. These reforms are not going to be easy, particularly in Washington. [*Laughter*] Reform is never easy there. See, there's a lot of entrenched interests that love to defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform. You have to be able to get it done.

And that's what we have done. When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for all our children, we got

the job done. 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 jobs, results matter. When it comes to having a strong farm economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland, fighting the forces of terror, and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

We live in an exciting time. It's a time of change. But we ought to make sure Government responds to these times by standing side by side with people. You know how I think the best way to do that is to promote ownership society. You see, if you're a worker and you're changing jobs, you've got to be able to own your own health care plan so you can take it from job to job. We want people to own their own home in America. We want people to be able to say, "Welcome to my house. This is my piece of property." And more and more are, under this administration. We want younger workers to be able to own a Social Security personal retirement account they call their own, so they can pass it on to future generations. We want tax policy such that younger Americans can own their own farm. We want people owning their own small business. We understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

No, this world is changing, but there are some things that aren't going to change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The individual values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that give us direction and purpose must not change, our families, and our schools, and our religious congregation. These institutions are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our 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.

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in America. Listen, our culture is changing from one that 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 fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving that child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education here in this community, do something about it. You're responsible for taking action. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

In a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved yourself. I understand that the strength of this country is the hearts and souls of the American people. I'm seeking 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion so we can help change our country, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. We need firm resolve, clear vision, a willingness to lead. And 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 I'll never forget. I remember workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I'll never forget the guy that grabbed me by the arm—I don't remember if he was a firefighter or a policeman. I do know he had been in the rubble searching for a loved one. His eyes were bloodshot. He said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took it personally. Folks searching the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We've come through much together. We've done hard work. During the next 4 years, there's more to do, more to spread

ownership and opportunity for every corner of this country—I mean every corner. We'll pass the enduring values of our country to another generation. During the next 4 years, we'll lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace.

When I was campaigning in your great State in 2000, I said if you honored me with the great responsibility, I would uphold the honor and the dignity 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.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. at the Southern Minnesota Construction Co. quarry. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; 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).

Remarks on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

August 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated.

America and our allies are fighting a new kind of war against a different kind of enemy. This conflict places great demands on the men and women of our Armed Forces, including our Guard and Reserve. They have met every test. They've risen to every challenge.

The war also places demands on those of us in Government. We took an oath to protect our country. We have a solemn responsibility to support the service men and women who defend us in the field of battle. The Defense appropriations bill I will sign today commits $391 billion toward meeting that responsibility. With this legislation, America's military will know that their country stands behind them as they fight for our freedom and as they spread the peace. No enemy or friend can doubt that America has the resources to prevail, and we will.

I want to thank the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, for his steadfast and strong leadership of our Pentagon. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

Secretary Rumsfeld. Thank you, sir.

The President. I appreciate Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz for joining us today. I appreciate the other members of the Pentagon team who are here. I appreciate Jim Roche and Les Brownlee representing the Air Force and the Army. General Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, is with us. I appreciate the Chairman. I want to thank all the military generals who are here, who run their respective branches of the services. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for your leadership.

I appreciate Senator John Warner representing the United States Congress. Senator Warner is a strong leader when it comes to matters of defense. He's the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. This bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. I want thank you for that, sir.

America's military is fighting in many theaters, yet always for the same cause. We seek to preserve freedom and peace for ourselves and for our friends.

In the last 3 years, our military men and women have struck a series of decisive blows against the enemy. They have relentlessly attacked the Al Qaida network. They've killed or captured many of its leaders. They've destroyed its terror camps. We're disrupting its plans. We're doing our duty.

We've ended regimes in Kabul and Baghdad that supported and harbored terrorists and threatened America. They have helped to launch the nations of Iraq and Afghanistan on the path to lasting democracy and liberty. They have helped friendly nations build the strength and institutions necessary to fight terror. At this hour, our troops are staying on the offensive against Al Qaida. We're taking the fight to the enemies, those who can't stand the thought of a free Iraq and free Afghanistan. Our troops are making America safer, and we're grateful for their sacrifices.

These great achievements have come at a cost of human life and grief. America is grateful for the families of those who mourn a loved one. We will honor their memory by completing the mission and making the world a more peaceful place. We have made a commitment to the men and women of our Armed Forces. We will support them. We

will provide them fair pay and good treatment. We will continue to ensure they have the tools they need to defeat the enemies of today. We will develop the weapons and systems to meet the threats of tomorrow.

The bill meets these commitments: first, by providing more than $103 billion to the greatest source of American strength, our servicepeople and their families. This appropriation is the fourth of my administration to include a pay raise for our troops. This year's raise of 3.5 percent brings the total pay raise over the last 4 years to nearly 21 percent. This money is well earned, well deserved, and well spent. The bill also fulfills my pledge to eliminate the costs that too many servicepeople have had to pay for off-base housing. It's a real boost to the quality of life for our military families. The excellence and professionalism of an all-volunteer force has never been higher. America must do all we can to encourage these special Americans to stay in uniform. And that starts with taking care of their families.

Second, this bill meets our commitments by making sure that our Armed Forces have every tool they need to meet and defeat the threats of our time. This bill provides $25 billion in emergency appropriations to support current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the frontlines in the war on terror. This money will buy more armored Humvees, more ammunition, more fuel, more spare parts. It will upgrade our helicopters with the latest equipment, allowing them to fly more safely in the dangerous theaters.

This bill helps America maintain the peace around the world and keep our commitments to our allies. It funds construction of three new state-of-the-art guided missile destroyers to patrol the seas, 42 new F/A–18 fighter aircraft to guard the skies. It provides $4 billion for new C–17 strategic air lifters, which will increase our ability to move forces quickly over long distances. And $200 million will buy more Predator unmanned surveillance aircraft to track and hunt our enemies.

This bill provides $10 billion for systems to defend against the threat from ballistic missiles. Later this year, the first components of America's missile defense system will become operational. This will fulfill a pledge I made to the American people more than 4 years ago. America and our allies face a deadly threat from ballistic missiles armed with the world's most dangerous weapons. And we will deploy the technologies necessary to protect our people.

Recent history has shown that threats to our shores can emerge from failing states half a world away. By acting early to end a crisis, we can make our world safer. That's why this bill provides $95 million to help the people of Darfur in western Sudan. Brutal militias there are causing human suffering on an immense scale. The new funding will provide famine relief, assistance for refugees, and other humanitarian aid. Yet no amount of aid can substitute for true and lasting peace. The Government of Sudan must stop the violence of Janjaweed militias, and all parties must respect the cease-fire and allow the free movement of humanitarian workers and supplies.

Third, this bill meets our commitment to America's Armed Forces by preparing them to meet the threats of tomorrow. Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we. We must never stop thinking about how best to defend our country when we all must always be forward-thinking.

Over the past few years, new ideas and new technologies have increased the precision of our weapons, reduced battlefield casualties, and lessened the toll of war on innocent life. This bill continues that progress by funding the technologies that are changing the way we fight wars in order to keep the peace, technology such as the Army's Future Combat System, which will give every soldier precise tactical information in the heat of battle; the Littoral Combat Ship, which will increase the reach of our Navy into hostile shores and waterways; the versatile and cost-effective Joint Strike Fighter; and wideband satellite laser communications that will improve the ability of our forces to communicate over great distances.

I appreciate the solid and bipartisan support of this bill. I appreciate both people—people of both parties coming together to support our troops. We're doing our duty to the people who are out doing their duty to

defend us and make the world a more peaceful place. The message is clear: In a time of conflict and challenge, America stands behind our military.

By taking care of our servicepeople in uniform, by addressing the threats of today, by preparing for the threats of a tomorrow, this bill will help make America a safer place.

And so I'm pleased to sign the Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 4613, approved August 5, was assigned Public Law 108–287.

Statement on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

August 5, 2004

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4613, the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005." The bill provides funds to pursue the war on terror, advance other United States interests around the globe, and support our Armed Forces.

Sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 of the Act prohibit the use of funds to initiate a special access program, a new overseas installation, or a new start program, unless the congressional defense committees receive advance notice. The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that the President's authority to classify and control access to information bearing on the national security flows from the Constitution and does not depend upon a legislative grant of authority. Although the advance notice contemplated by sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 can be provided in most situations as a matter of comity, situations may arise, especially in wartime, in which the President must act promptly under his constitutional grants of executive power and authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces while protecting certain extraordinarily sensitive national security information. The executive branch shall construe sections 8007, 8011, and 8106 in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

Section 8064 of the Act provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds available to the Department of Defense for FY 2005 may be used to transfer defense articles or services, other than intelligence services, to another nation or an international organization for international peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or humanitarian assistance operations, until 15 days after the executive branch notifies 6 committees of the Congress of the planned transfer. To the extent that protection of the U.S. Armed Forces deployed for international peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or humanitarian assistance operations might require action of a kind covered by section 8064 sooner than 15 days after notification, the executive branch shall construe section 8064 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief.

A proviso in the Act's appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide" purports to prohibit planning for consolidation of certain offices within the Department of Defense. Also, sections 8010(b), 8036, 8041(b), 8110, and 8116 purport to specify the content of a portion of a future budget request to the Congress for the Department. The executive branch shall construe these provisions relating to planning and making of budget recommendations in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to require the opinions of the heads of departments and to recommend for congressional consideration such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient.

Section 8005 of the Act relating to requests to congressional committees for reprogramming of funds shall be construed as calling solely for notification, as any other construction would be inconsistent with the principles enunciated by the Supreme Court of the United States in *INS v. Chadha*.

A proviso within the appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Air Force" earmarks funds for a grant to a college for the purpose of funding minority aviation training, a proviso within the appropriation for "Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide" earmarks funds for a program for Asian American/Pacific Islander students,

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

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Remarks in a Discussion in Columbus, Ohio

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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

you're out registering voters, please don't overlook discerning Democrats and wise independents because, like you, they want a safer and stronger and better America.

Every incumbent who asks for the vote has to answer a central question, why—why should the American people give me the great privilege of serving as your President for 4 more years? In the past few years, Americans have 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 best to lead our Nation forward.

I'm here asking for the vote because there's so much at stake. We have much more to do to move our country forward. I want to be your President for 4 more years to create more jobs, improve our schools, to spread the peace. We have made much progress; there is still more to do.

We have more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be so that no child in our country is left behind. When we came to office 3½ years ago, too many of our children were being shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. We raised the bar. We believe in setting high standards. We believe in accountability. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in empowering the parents of America. Today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving America's public schools, we're turning the corner and we're not turning back.

We have more to do. The jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills. We're going to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We'll expand math and science education so our young people can compete in the high-tech world. We will expand the use of the Internet to bring high-level training in the classrooms. With 4 more years, we'll help a rising generation gain the skills and competence they need to realize the great promise of our country.

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. Medicare didn't pay for them, either. Leaders in both parties had promised prescription drug coverage for years. You remember all the promises. We got it done. More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings for them. 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.

To help more people get access to quality care, 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 health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving America forward, and we're not turning back.

Listen, this world we're in is changing. Most Americans get their health care coverage through their work, but most of today's new jobs are created by small businesses, which too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. And so, to help 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, to make sure health care is available and affordable for our citizens, we must end the frivolous lawsuits that run up the cost of health care. You cannot be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm going to continue to push Congress to pass real, meaningful medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

We'll do more to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent health care mistakes. We'll do more to expand research and seek new cures for 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 this economy stronger. We've come through a recession.

We've come through a terror attack. We've come through corporate scandals. We've come through a lot. And we've overcome those obstacles because our workers are great, because the farmers are good at what they do, because the entrepreneurial spirit of this country is strong. We've overcome these obstacles as well because of well-timed tax cuts.

Listen, when it came time to cutting taxes, we didn't pick winners or losers. We did it the fair way. We gave tax relief to every American who pays Federal taxes. The child credit went up to help families with children. We're reducing the marriage penalty. Imagine a Tax Code that penalizes marriage.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. We need to be encouraging marriage in America.

We helped our small businesses with tax relief, 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 1.5 million new jobs since last August.

Listen, I understand we face serious challenges in part of our country. The recovery here in Michigan has lagged behind other parts, but we've got a plan in place. The economy is improving; it's getting better. Factory orders are on the rise. Manufacturing jobs are coming back. Your unemployment rate has fallen a full percent. And we're not going to rest until everybody who wants to work can find a job.

To keep this economy strong, to keep jobs here at home, we need to end the endless regulations that strangle America's employers. To keep jobs here at home, we need tort reform in America. To keep jobs here at home, we need a reasonable energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To keep jobs here at home, we'll be wise about how we spend your money, and we will keep your taxes low. Listen, to make sure this economy is strong we will 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 to be.

Let me tell you something else I believe. In order to keep jobs here, we've got to reject economic isolationism. I believe that the American worker, the American farmer, the American entrepreneur, the American manufacturer can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level.

And you know what else? We're going to help American families keep more of something they never have enough of, and that's time—time to be with your kids, time to take care of your parents, time to go back to school. Congress must enact comp-time and flex-time rules to give American families more opportunities to choose their time.

After 4 years, our farm economy will be strong. After 4 years, there will be more small-business owners. After 4 years, there will be better and—paying jobs under the Bush administration.

We have more to do to wage and win the war against the terrorists. 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. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. The world changed on a terrible September morning. And since that day, we've 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 terror cells in dozens of countries, including our own. Today, because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is going to have Presidential elections this fall. Because we acted, many young girls now go to school for the first time in their life. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war against terror. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistani troops are aggressively helping to round up the terrorists, 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. 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 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.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued, and he had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He harbored the terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He had 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 looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. You see, one of the lessons of that fateful day was that 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, who had ties to terror, who had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his capabilities with the terrorists. We saw a threat.

I went to the United States Congress, which looked at the same intelligence I did. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, including my opponent, and they reached the same conclusion. And in the United Nations, they looked at the same intelligence and unanimously demanded a full accounting of Saddam's weapons programs, or face serious consequences. After 12 years of defiance, he again refused to comply with the demands of the free world. He deceived the weapons inspectors. And so I had a choice to make: Either forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust the actions of a madman, or take measures necessary to defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. Because we acted, the dictator sits in a prison cell, and America and the world are safer.

I'm seeking the vote; I'm running for 4 more years because I understand we must continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to the terrorists. You cannot negotiate with the terrorists. We must engage the enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. See, we put together a strong coalition to help defeat terror: over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan; some 30 nations involved in Iraq. Over the next 4 years, I will continue to build alliances and work with our friends in the cause of security and peace. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

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

The President. We must keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. Those two nations are now governed by strong leaders. See, these leaders care deeply about the future of their nations. They care deeply about the aspirations of their people. These are strong people, and many in their country are now stepping up because they realize the great promise of a free society. And the people of those countries, those who love freedom, can count on continued help from America and our allies. You see, when we acted to protect our own security, we also promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, 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. I want to thank the veterans who

are here for setting such a fine example for those who wear our uniform. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and sacrifice for our security. I've seen their unselfish courage. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And those of us in Government have a duty to support those who wear the uniform. Last September, while our troops were in combat in both Afghanistan and in Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their missions. The legislation provided funding for body armor and other vital equipment, hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, spare parts. In the Senate, only a small, out-of-the-mainstream minority of 12 Senators voted against the legislation.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of them are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him about his vote, and he said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Now he's offering a different explanation. He said, you know, he was proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding, and then he further went on to say 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 must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples for their neighbors. Free societies do not export terror. Societies which listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people are peaceful societies. We long for peace. I want your children growing up in a peaceful world. And I understand that by serving the ideal of liberty, we will spread freedom and peace. By serving the ideal of liberty, we'll also represent the values of this country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

Listen, we've got more to do to protect this country. Enemies who hate us are still plotting to harm us. My opponent says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. It's a fundamental and dangerous misunderstanding of the enemy we face. As the 9/11 Report shows, terrorists had attracted recruits in the 1990s, long before America was at war with them. Now we're on the offense. We're striking the terrorists where they plot and plan before they can come and get us here. By taking—by staying on the offense, we have captured information that has proved critical to improving the security here at home. Listen, I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11. They said because of the actions we have taken since September the 11th, our homeland is safer, yet we're not totally safe. I understand that. The way to make America more secure is to continue fighting this war on the offense, continue bringing justice to our enemies.

Right after September the 11th, we started the hard process of reform. We've transformed our defenses and created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act to give law enforcement the tools they need to fight and find the terrorists. The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terrorism. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than we ever have before. We're taking action on a large majority of the recommendations of that important Commission.

We've more to do. We've got more to do to secure our ports and borders, to train our first-responders, to dramatically improve intelligence-gathering capability. That's why I called on Congress this week to create the position of National Intelligence Director so that one person is in charge of coordinating all our intelligence efforts overseas and here at home.

Listen, these reforms are not going to be easy, particularly in Washington. There's some entrenched interests up there, people who defend the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform, you have to be able to get it done.

You see, when it comes to reforming schools and making sure we have an excellent education for all our children, results matter. When it comes to health care reforms to give our families more access and more choices, results matter. When it comes to improving

our economy and creating jobs, results matter. When it comes to seeing to it we have a healthy agricultural economy, results matter. When it comes to better securing our homeland and fighting the forces of terror and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter.

Listen, we have—we're in changing times, and they're exciting times. The Government has got to stand on the side of people during changing times. That's why I will continue to promote what I call an ownership society. See, if you change jobs, you want to be able to own your health care plan so you can take it from job to job. If you're a younger worker, you're probably concerned about whether or not you'll see a dime from Social Security. Therefore, younger workers ought to be given the option of managing some of their own money in personal retirement accounts.

We want more people in this country owning their own business. And you know, we want more people owning their own home. I love it when somebody says, "Welcome to my home. Thanks for visiting my home." See, we understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of the United States.

In this world of change, there are some things that will not change: our belief in liberty, opportunity, and the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. The values we try to live by will not change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. There are institutions in our society that give us direction and purpose, our families and our schools and our religious congregations. These values are fundamental to our lives. They deserve the respect of our Government.

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

And we stand for a culture of responsibility in this country. The 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 you make in life.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you don't like 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 are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. In a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

I'm seeking the office for 4 more years because I want to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. The great strength of this Nation is the hearts and souls of our citizens. By rallying the love and the hearts and souls of our citizens, we can change America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

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

The President. For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires clear vision, firm resolve. 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. People in hardhats were screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I was working a ropeline, and a guy grabbed me—I don't know if he was a firefighter or a policeman; I do know that he was looking through the rubble for one of his buddies—and he said, "Do not let me down."

He took it personally. The people in that site took it personally. You took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how best to protect our people. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We have done hard work. We're moving America forward by extending freedom and peace around the world and by expanding opportunity here at home. During the next

4 years, we will spread ownership throughout our country. We want everybody realizing the American Dream. We will pass enduring values of our country to another generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace, and we will prevail. With your support and prayers, I will be a leader America can count on in a world of change.

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

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. at Wendler Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land; Myrah Kirkwood, candidate for Congress in Michigan's 5th congressional district; country music entertainers the Gatlin Brothers; 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).

Remarks to the UNITY: Journalists of Color Convention and a Question-and-Answer Session

August 6, 2004

The President. Thank you, Ernest. Thank you for having me. I appreciate the invitation. It's good that—Ernest tells me that there's nearly 10,000 members of your organization. I congratulate you for reaching out and including a lot of people. You represent a very important profession. It's one that I'm quite familiar with. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the chance to—I deal with my press corps on a regular basis. It's a beneficial—it's a mutual beneficial society, see. I need them to get the message out, and they need me to be a messenger. And we're working hard to make sure that our relationship is cordial and professional. And that's how I feel about coming here too—to establish a cordial and professional relationship with people who help spread the news.

You believe there ought to be diversity in the newsroom. I understand that. You believe there ought to be diversity on the editorial pages of America. I agree. You believe there ought to be diversity behind the managing editor's desk. I agree with that too. I also believe there ought to be diversity in the political parties in America, and that's why I'm going to work hard to tell people my message, to tell people what I believe. And I believe that Government should stand side by side with people and help them gain the tools necessary to realize the American Dream, not just some people but everybody.

I believe those of us who have been given the high honor of representing the people must work to reform parts of Government that are stagnant and don't stand side by side with people to give them the tools necessary to perform. I believe it's more important to be a doer than a talker. I believe it's important to say to people, "Judge me by my results." And so today I want to talk about some of the results of this administration, and then I look forward to answering some of your questions.

First, I want to thank the board of directors of this august organization. Thank you for having me. Thank you for greeting me behind stage. I want to thank the sponsor for providing the opportunity for people from all around the globe to come here—all around the country—to come here to talk about important issues.

I think one—you know, look, you can't read a newspaper if you can't read. And so one of the most important initiatives of this administration was to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. You know what I mean by that. If you lower the bar, guess what happens? You get lousy results. And that's the way it was in American public schools 3½ years ago. That's why you had kids just shuffled from grade to grade, year to year, without learning the basics of education. That's the way it was, because there was no accountability. See, we weren't measuring.

If you believe that every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, which I believe, then you must be willing to measure to determine whether or not the children are learning to read and write and

add and subtract. No, here in this Capital there's a lot of focus on funding but very little focus on the result. We increased for funding for K through 12 by 49 percent since 2001. We increased funding for Title I by 52 percent since 2001. But now, in return for increased funding, we're saying to local districts, show us whether or not a child can read, early, before it's too late. We're measuring.

And when there are schools that aren't teaching, there's extra help to make sure the children learn early, before it's too late. We've raised the bar. We believe in local control of schools, and we're insisting on accountability. And you know what? It's beginning to work.

There is a reading gap in America. We can play like there's not a reading gap in America, but there is. Too many of our African American kids cannot read at grade level by the 3rd and 4th grade, and that's not right for America. Too many Latino youngsters can't read. And one of the reasons why is because it's so easy to quit on a classroom full of inner-city kids and kids whose parents maybe can't speak English as a first language. It's easy to walk in and say, "These kids are too hard to educate, let's just move them through." We've stopped the practice in America, and the schools are better off for it.

I'll tell you one other thing we've done, which I think is important, is we've started the process of giving parents more choice in schools. If your public school fails after a period of time, you ought to be allowed to move your child to another school. Why should a parent have their child trapped in a school that won't change? That doesn't make any sense to me.

Here in the District of Columbia, we've given $7,500 scholarships to the parents of low-income children so that they can move their kid from school to school—to another school if the public school is failing. I appreciate working with the Mayor of this city. See, my attitude is, if public—or school choice is good enough for the middle class and the upper class, it ought to be good enough for low-income Americans. And this is going to make a difference in Washington, DC.

No, we're making a difference here in the public schools of America. In a recent study of 61 urban school districts, 73 percent of African American 4th graders narrowed the achievement gap with white students in reading. See, that's how you—you know how you know that? Because you measured, because we say show us whether or not a child can read, and, if not, let's correct problems early, before it's too late.

We're making progress in this country. About 60 percent of Hispanic 4th graders narrowed the achievement gap. So long as there's an achievement gap, we've got more work to do. But we're making substantial progress toward achieving what we want to do, and that is every child reading at grade level by the 3rd grade and remaining at grade level throughout their entire public school career.

There's more to do. We've got to make sure our higher education is available for everybody. We've increased the number of students receiving Pell grants by a million since I've been President. We've got historic levels of funding for our black colleges. I told the Native Americans we will see that their school systems were modernized. We spent $1.1 billion of Indian school construction repair since 2001, more than double spending in the previous 4 years. I told people we'd focus on schools, and we are. And we're making progress in America.

You know, when I came into office we had a problem with our economy. It was in a recession. In order to make sure this country is hopeful and people have a better chance to realize their dreams, we need economic growth. That's why I cut the taxes on everybody. I didn't cut them; the Congress cut them. I asked them to cut them. It was to stimulate the economy. It was to help people have more money in their pocket so they would demand additional goods or services.

And the economic growth is strong and it's getting stronger, and that's good for everybody in America. I want you to remember the tax relief and how it worked. We didn't play favorites in the Tax Code. We said if you're paying taxes, you ought to get relief. Seems to make—a fair way to me to make policy. If you're paying taxes, you're going

to have tax relief, and the Government ought not to pay favorites.

So everybody who paid taxes got relief. We paid special attention to parents with children. We raised the child credit. We provided relief for the marriage penalty. It's an unusual Tax Code that penalizes marriage. Seems like we ought to be trying to encourage marriage in America, not penalize it. A lot of our tax relief was aimed at small businesses. Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses. Most small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax level. That's just a fact. By far, the majority of small businesses in America are what they call sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations.

Since most new jobs in America are created by small businesses, it makes sense to provide relief for small-business owners. And so when you cut the taxes on individuals, you're cutting taxes on by far the vast majority of small businesses in America. And that's good for the economy.

It's also good to encourage an ownership society. I came to Washington aiming to help people own something. I want there to be more owners in America. The role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur can flourish. At least, that's my philosophy. And as a result of tax relief and a good economic environment, there are more small minority owners—businessowners today than ever before. More and more people are realizing their dreams by owning their own business, and that's healthy for this country. It's important for this country.

And there's more work to do. You've heard me talk about tort reform. Tort reform is necessary to make sure the business environment is such that people have the confidence necessary to start their own business. Good trade policy will help small businesses. We regulate a lot here in Washington, DC. I can't promise you whether or not any regulator has ever read the reports that we ask small-business owners to file in Washington. I suspect they haven't. But reasonable regulatory policy will help small-business owners.

Small-business owners must be able to afford health care. That's why I strongly urge the Congress to pass association health plans, which will allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can get the same purchasing power that big businesses have. I have got a plan that will help all small businesses thrive in America. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of this country. Judge me on homeownership in America. I believe it's—I can't tell you how exciting it is to know more people in America can now say, "Welcome to my home. I'm glad you're here to visit me in my home." To me, those are hopeful words for our country.

I set a goal two summers ago to have 5.5 million new homeowners by the end of the decade—minority homeowners by the end of the decade. We're meeting that goal—1.6 million new minority homeowners in the last 2 years. You know, they talk a good game up here sometimes in Washington; we're delivering. More minority families own their home today than ever before in the history of the United States of America. And that's a positive development for this country. A lot of it has to do with low interest rates. A lot of it has to do with good tax policy. A lot of it has to do with downpayment assistance, counseling out of Housing and Urban Development. Listen, if you're a first-time homeowner and you take a look at the contract, that fine print looks a little small; people get a little nervous. And so we're providing counseling to help people understand what it means to be a first-time homebuyer. And it's paying off.

Medicare—there's been a lot of talk about Medicare here in Washington, DC. You might remember that issue. At every single political campaign, people said, "I want to help our seniors; I'll help our seniors"—nothing got done. We got it done. We reformed a very important part of our health care system by enabling seniors to have choices of their own and providing prescription drug coverage for seniors for the first time, in Medicare. They talk a lot up here. I want the people of this country to remember who actually has got the work done.

Now, let me tell you about the Medicare bill, the reform bill. It started off first by the distribution of drug discount cards, which provide real savings for our seniors. Over 4 million seniors have signed up so far. Low-

income seniors get a $600 credit as well as the discount on their card. Next year, for the first time, there will be preventative screenings provided for in Medicare. Medicare has never done that before. I mean, it makes sense, doesn't it, to say in Medicare, we want to diagnose problems early, before they become acute, in order to save taxpayers money and, more importantly, in order to save lives.

In 2006, there will be a prescription drug coverage available in Medicare for seniors, with low-income seniors getting substantial help in the payment of—help in their prescription drugs. In other words, the system is better. Imagine a system where the Government would pay a $100,000 hospital stay for heart surgery but wouldn't pay the medicines necessary to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place. We're changing that, for the good of our seniors.

We've added community health centers all across the country. These are primary care facilities for low-income Americans to get help. We want people to get help in primary care facilities, not in emergency rooms. It's one way to help hold down costs. We provided health savings accounts, which will be beneficial for people from all walks of life. These are tax-free health savings accounts that make sure the patient and the doctor are the center of the decisionmaking process in health care.

I'm concerned about the fact that doctors all across America are leaving the practice of medicine. And one reason they are is because of the frivolous lawsuits that plague the medical profession. I think everybody ought to have their day in court when they've got a legitimate injury, but these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine, and they're making medicine harder for people to access. We need tort reform in Washington, DC, medical liability reform. And I will continue to work so on behalf of the patients and doctors of America.

Look, I understand Washington; you understand Washington. There's a powerful group up here in the trial lawyers. I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you've got to make your choice, and I've made my choice.

I believe strongly that the Justice administration ought to enforce the civil rights laws, and we are. I'm the first President to have banned racial profiling in Federal law enforcement. I believe that the benches ought to reflect as best as possible the diversity of our country. And I believe my administration ought to, too, and I've fulfilled that commitment. I've got people from all walks of life who advise me.

My Cabinet is diverse. The people who walk into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, you're not looking so good today," they're diverse. [*Laughter*] And I'm better off for it. I'm better off for listening from people from different walks of life. And our bench will be, too, if we can get people to have a fair hearing on the floor of the United States Senate. They need to stop playing politics with my nominees for the sake of good justice, for the sake of diversity, and for the sake of unclogging some of these Federal courts that have got loaded dockets because the Senate won't approve some of my nominees.

Finally, I believe a compassionate America is one that taps into the strength of the country. Those are the hearts and souls of our people. I like to remind our citizens, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart. That happens when a loving soul puts their arm around somebody in need and says, "What can I do to help you?" That's the whole crux of the Faith and Community Initiative—Faith-Based and Community Initiative that I have worked with Congress on and worked with my administration on to spread compassion in America. Oh, I know there's a big debate here in Washington about separation of church and state, and I accept that debate. And I think it's important. The church should never be the state, and the state should never be the church. No question about it.

But when we find effective programs that are helping to save people's lives, the Government ought to open up Federal money to those programs for competitive bidding. We ought not to fear faith-based programs. We ought not to fear those who are willing to love their neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Excuse me—excuse me. I think it's very important for the Faith-Based Initiative to continue on, because I know we can save America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

One of the most important initiatives is the drug rehabilitation initiative I've asked Congress to work with me on. Let me tell you how it works. They appropriated $100 million to help those who are hooked on drugs. A lot of times the Government counseling program can work. But a lot of times it requires a change of heart in order to change habits. And so therefore, a person who is desperately seeking help will be able to take a voucher and have that voucher redeemed at a program of his or her choice, faith-based or not. We need to give people who need help the opportunity to interface with those fantastic healers and helpers that literally are saving our country, one heart and one soul at a time.

I've got a duty as your President to work as hard as I can to secure our country. It's a duty that goes on. September the 11th changed the world. It changed how we must look at our internal security. There is some thinking here in America that says, "If you go on the offense against the terrorists, you're creating more terrorists." That is a woeful misunderstanding of the nature of the terrorist threat.

These were the people who were training for years to bring harm to freedom-loving people. These were the people who took—who gained confidence because there was no response when they wantonly killed around the world. These are people who you cannot negotiate with, you cannot bargain with. And these are people that you must not hope for the best, see. They're coldblooded killers; they will kill you just like that in order to create fear and intimidation. My most solemn duty is to protect our country. I will continue to do so by hunting these killers down around the world and bringing them to justice before they hurt us here at home. And as we do so, we will continue to spread freedom and peace.

I want to tell you a story about an event that took place in the Oval Office. Seven men came to see me from Iraq. They had had their right hands cut off by Saddam Hussein. You know why? Because his currency had devalued and he needed a scapegoat. In this case, he needed seven scapegoats. I asked one of the fellows who came in to see me, he said—I said, "Why you?" He said, well, because he happened to have sold dinars to buy euros, I think he said, to buy gold so he could manufacture the jewelry that he was making. He made this transaction on—evidently on the wrong date, because the dictator picked him out and said, "You're one of seven, and I'm cutting off your hand and burning an X in your forehead." And these were the fellows that came to see me.

They came to see me because their story was documented and Marvin Zindler—I don't know if there's any Houstonians here, but you know Marvin Zindler. He's a—[*applause*]. Yes, you know Big Marv——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Yes, sir, born and raised in Houston; he knows—he was brought up by Marvin Zindler, Big 2 News. He flew them over to Houston, and they got new hands. And they were coming to see me in the Oval Office. And it was a very emotional moment for all of us. A guy took a Sharpie, folded it in his new hand, and wrote "God bless America" in Arabic. You see, he said "God bless America" because he had been liberated from the clutches of a brutal tyrant who whimsically could cut off a hand.

The contrast was sharp to me, about the nature of freedom, a free society and a tyrannical society. Free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies help people realize their dream. Free societies are compassionate societies.

In the Oval, I told them, I said, "You know, I'm glad you're here. It's very important for you to know that a successful President is one who realizes he's not bigger than the office, that the office of President is always bigger than the person, and that as we help you build a free Iraq, the institutions must be bigger than the people so that never happens to you again."

While we pursue the terrorists to protect ourselves, we must also be confident in the ideals of liberty and how freedom can change societies. You might remember—you cover the news—you might remember a while back where there was some doubt as to whether or not anybody would show up to register

to vote in Afghanistan. Expectations were quite low as to how many people would dare take risk to exercise their God-given right. You might remember the incident when the Taliban pulled four women off a bus. They saw that they had voter IDs and killed them. Since that time, millions of people in Afghanistan have registered to vote. I think the total now is over 8 million people are lining up to exercise their right as a citizen to participate in a free society.

The long-term solution to the world is to spread freedom and liberty, and America must continue to lead. We're the home of liberty. We believe in freedom. Deep in my soul, I know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world. And I believe the United States of America must lead, must lead the world toward a more peaceful tomorrow by spreading hope and liberty in places that are desperate for freedom.

I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come today. It's my honor to be here. I look forward to answering some questions. I'm off to shake a few hands in New Hampshire. But what the heck, it's the season, isn't it? [*Laughter*] God bless you all.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We appreciate you being here this morning.

The President. By the way, it's Big 13 News, not Big 2. [*Laughter*] Thank you—yes, 11 numbers. [*Laughter*] Excuse me.

Civil Liberties/War on Terror

Q. A little addition. [*Laughter*] Good morning, Mr. President. I'm Joie Chen with CBS News and the Asian American Journalist Association. [*Applause*]

The President. You've got quite a following out there.

Q. It is, after all, the season, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

I wanted to ask you about protecting all Americans as well. There are many Arab Americans and Muslims in this country who find themselves unfairly scrutinized by law enforcement and by society at large. Just yesterday we had arrests in Albany, New York. Immediately afterwards, some neighbors in the community said they feared that the law would come for them unfairly next. We have a new book out today that suggests perhaps we should reconsider internment camps. How do we balance the need to pursue and detain some individuals from not-well-known communities while at the same time keeping innocent people from being painted by the broad brush of suspicion?

The President. Yes, I appreciate that. First, we don't need intern camps. I mean, forget it. Right after 9/11, I knew this was going to be an issue in our country. I knew that there would be people that say, "There goes a Muslim-looking person; therefore, that person might be viewed as a terrorist." I knew that was going to be a problem. That's why I went to a mosque, to send the signal, right after the attacks, that said let's uphold our values. People are innocent until judged guilty. Religious people, people that go to mosques, you know, need to be—Americans need to be viewed as equally American as their neighbor, be tolerant, let law enforcement, to the best of their ability, determine guilt or innocence, but our fellow citizens need to treat people with respect.

By far, most Americans in this country did that, not because I asked them to, just because by far the vast majority of Americans are decent people. They care about their neighbors. I don't care where you're from or what your walk of life is, by far the vast majority of our citizens are willing to reach out to somebody who is different. And that needed to be done. As a matter of fact, the anecdotal stories of neighbors helping neighbors across religious lines were heartwarming.

Now, in terms of the balance between running down intelligence and bringing people to justice obviously is—we need to be very sensitive on that. Lackawanna, for example, was a—there was a cell there. And it created a lot of nervousness in the community, because the FBI skillfully ferreted out intelligence that indicated that these people were in communication with terrorist networks. And I thought they handled the case very well, but at the time, there was a lot of nervousness. People said, "I may be next." But they weren't next, because it was just a focused, targeted investigation. And by the way, some were then incarcerated and told

their stories, and it turned out that the intelligence was accurate intelligence.

I guess my answer to your question is, is that we've always got to make sure that people are judged innocent before guilty; that's the best insurance policy for law enforcement overstepping its bounds. I will also tell you, however, that the threats we're dealing with are real, and therefore we must do everything we can to ferret out the truth and follow leads.

We cannot—again—it's interesting, these recent threats, you know, they're becoming more and more enriched, as you're finding out. There was more than one thread line—threat line. People are now seeing there was other reasons why we took the action we took. When we find out intelligence that is real that threatens people, I believe we have an obligation as Government to share that with people. And imagine what would happen if we didn't share that information with the people in those buildings and something were to happen; then what would you write, what would you say?

And so we have a—in terms of law enforcement, we have a duty to uphold innocence and guilt. In terms of a Government, we have the solemn duty to follow every lead we find and share information we have with people that could be harmed. And that's exactly what we've done, and I will continue to do as the President.

This is a dangerous time. I wish it wasn't this way. I wish I wasn't the war President. Who in the heck wants to be a war President? I don't. But this is what came our way. And this is our duty, to protect our people. It's a solemn duty, and I'll continue doing it to the best of my ability.

Native American Tribal Sovereignty/ Federal Aid to Tribes

Q. Good morning. My name is Mark Trahant. I'm the editorial page editor of the Seattle Post Intelligencer and a member of the Native American Journalists Association. Most school kids learn about the government in the context of city, county, State, and Federal. And, of course, tribal governments are not part of that at all. Mr. President, you've been a Governor and a President so you have a unique experience, looking at it from two directions. What do you think tribal sovereignty means in the 21st century, and how do we resolve conflicts between tribes and the Federal and the State governments?

The President. Tribal sovereignty means that: It's sovereign. You're a—you've been given sovereignty, and you're viewed as a sovereign entity. And therefore, the relationship between the Federal Government and tribes is one between sovereign entities.

Now, the Federal Government has got a responsibility on matters like education and security to help, and health care. And it's a solemn duty. And from this perspective, we must continue to uphold that duty.

I think that one of the most promising areas of all is to help with economic development. And that means helping people understand what it means to start a business. That's why the Small Business Administration has increased loans. It means, obviously, encouraging capital flows. But none of that will happen unless the education systems flourish and are strong, and that's why I told you we've spent $1.1 billion in the reconstruction of Native American schools.

Diversity in College Admissions/Diversity in the Administration

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. Thanks for coming. I'm Ray Suarez, a member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and—[*applause*]—there's a couple of others here too—and senior correspondent for The News Hour with Jim Lehrer on PBS.

The President. Yes, I recognize you. [*Laughter*]

Q. In one of the most closely watched cases of the 2003 term, the Supreme Court split the difference on affirmative action, allowing *Bakke* to stand but rejecting the numerical formulas used by the University of Michigan undergraduate schools. I'd like to hear your own view about when and if race and ethnicity are admissible as factors for consideration both in college admissions and in hiring in the workplace.

The President. Yes. I think—I agreed with the Court in saying that we ought to reject quotas. I think quotas are discriminatory by nature. They discriminate—I think they discriminate on the bottom, and I know they discriminate on the top. And so I agreed

with their assessment that a quota system was an unfair system for all.

As you might remember, we also agreed with the finding that, in terms of admissions policy, race-neutral admissions policies ought to be tried. If they don't work to achieve an objective, which is diversification, race ought to be a factor. I agree with that assessment. I think it's very important for all institutions to strive for diversity, and I believe there are ways to do so.

When I was the Governor of Texas, there was concerns that our big institutions were not—big educational institutions were not diversified enough. So I went to the legislature and said, "Why don't we work together and say that there's automatic admission to our universities if you finish in the top 10 percent of your high school class, no matter what high school you go to." And it worked. It worked because the student bodies began to diversify at the University of Texas and at Texas A&M. And—that's an inside joke up here. [*Laughter*] You're about to hear why.

You know, I have a responsibility to work for diversity as well in the administration. I've met the obligation. If you look at my administration, it's diverse. And I'm proud of that. Condi Rice is there because she happens to be a very competent, smart, capable woman. She's also African American. And she is my closest foreign policy adviser. I see her every day. When I see Condi, I think, brilliant person. And I'm glad she's there. Colin Powell—he was here yesterday, evidently. Rod Paige—Rod Paige was the superintendent of schools in Houston. I wanted somebody who knew what it meant to run a school district, not a theorist; somebody who knows what it means to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. He had. He's there. Alphonso Jackson, Elaine Chao, Norm Mineta—Mel Martinez was in my Cabinet—we've got a diverse Cabinet. I've got a diverse administration. Hopefully, that sets an example for people when it comes to hiring, including news organizations.

College Admissions in Texas

Q. Mr. President, Roland Martin.

The President. Tell them what it's about, Martin.

Q. Oh, I will—nationally syndicated columnist with Creators Syndicate and also the editorial consultant for the Chicago Defender, the Nation's only daily Black newspaper.

The President. Give them what——

Q. I will—and representing the National Association of Black Journalists, the world's largest minority media organization, and—the inside joke—a 1991 graduate of Texas A&M University. And Mr. President, before I ask the question, I hope you'll give our Governor, Rick Perry, a call. I know you spend a lot of time in DC, Mr. President, but they're trying to cap the top 10 percent in Texas, so that may have an impact on those students going to college.

The President. Yes, but I appreciate your recognizing that it's working in the first place.

Q. It is, but they actually—the percentage of white students increased as well.

The President. See, sometimes——

Q. I understand.

The President. ——they talk; sometimes they deliver.

Q. I understand. It's okay. I'm working with the A&M president on that. I also hope that you would take a second round of questions from Texan to Texan, so we can ask a second question. If you would do me that favor.

The President. All right, just ask your two questions.

Fairness in the Voting Process/Voter Participation

Q. Mr. President, you remarked—in your remarks you said that 8 million people in Afghanistan registered to vote and, as you said, exercised their God-given right to vote.

The President. Right.

Q. That may be a right from God, but it's not guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. In 2000, an estimated 2 million people—half African American—had their votes discounted, from Florida to Cook County, Illinois, to other cities. [*Applause*] Come on, that cuts into other questions. Are you going to order Attorney General John Ashcroft to send Federal election monitors to Florida and other southern States? And in this age of new constitutional amendments, will you endorse a constitutional amendment guaranteeing

every American the right to vote in Federal elections?

The President. First of all, look, I can understand why African Americans, in particular, are worried about being able to vote, since the vote had been denied for so long in the South, in particular. I understand that. And this administration wants everybody to vote.

Now, I—the best thing we did was to pass the Helping America Vote Act with over—I think it's $3 billion of help to States and local governments to make sure the voting process is fair. And it's not just the South, by the way. The voting process needs help all over the country to make sure that everybody's vote counts and everybody's vote matter. I understand that. And that's why I was happy to work with the Congress to achieve this important piece of legislation.

Just don't focus on Florida. Now, I'll talk to the Governor down there to make sure it works. [*Laughter*] But it's the whole country that needs—voter registration files need to be updated; the machines need to work. And that's why there's $3 billion in the budget to help, Roland. And obviously, everybody ought to have a vote. And what was your other question?

Q. Should we put it in——

The President. The Constitution amendment?

Q. Should we guarantee it in the Constitution?

The President. I'll consider it—I'll consider it. And what's your second question?

Q. Well, but you said it should be guaranteed in Iraq; why not America?

The President. Well, it's not guaranteed in Iraq. People have got to show up to vote in the first place. This is—the thing about democracy is people need to step up and decide to participate in the first place. There's no guarantees people are going to vote. They should be allowed to vote. But the problem we have in our society is too many people choose not to vote. And we have a duty in the political process and you have a duty as journalists to encourage people to register to vote, to do their duty. I'm not saying every—I'm saying people are choosing. It's not guaranteed they're going to. That's part of the problem we have in America: Not enough people do vote. And you have a duty on your radio stations, on your TV stations to encourage people to register to vote. I have a duty to call them out to vote. Of course, I'm going to try to call them out to vote for me. [*Laughter*]

Second round.

Q. All right, come back around, sir.

Immigration Reform/Free Trade Agreements

Q. Early in your administration, you talked a good deal about immigration reforms and possibilities there. I have not heard you talk to that issue so much recently. I wonder what you still think is possible, given the circumstances that we find ourselves in today. What is doable, particularly in the short term?

The President. Actually, I have talked about it lately. I talked about it this winter, because I think it's necessary that we reform our immigration laws. I believe where there's a willing worker and a willing employer, and they can't find work here in America, the people ought to be allowed to be here legally to work; that's what I believe. And I believe there ought to be a process that allows a person to work here legally and go home and come back without fear of being arrested.

I think there needs to be a—first of all, this will help bring people out of the shadows of our society. This will help kind of legalize a system that takes place everyday without employers feeling like they have got to be subjected or employees feeling like they're going to be arrested—subjected to fines or arrested. And so we need to reform our immigration laws.

Now, the issue there is whether or not people automatically get to step in the front of the line when it comes to citizenship. I don't think they should. I think those who have been waiting in line to be a citizen ought to be allowed to keep that priority in line. I think people ought to—in this process ought to be allowed to apply for citizenship, but I don't think they ought to be treated specially in relation to those who have been in line for quite a while. And in order to solve the logjam for citizenship, Congress has got to raise the quotas on who can become a citizen. And I support raising the quotas on

certain population groups, like the Mexican nationals, on who can become a citizen.

The long-run solution, particularly to Mexican immigration, is going to be to help Mexico develop a middle class. That's why free trade is so important between our countries. That's why we better be careful about rhetoric that begins to unwind a free trade agreement that is making an enormous difference in the lifestyles of people in Mexico. See, trade, to me, is the great hope for developing nations. That's why I was a strong supporter of AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act. It gives people a chance to have a job that's a meaningful job, because of the trade between the world's largest market and their countries. NAFTA has made a big difference in lifting lives of people. It has improved the living standard in Mexico.

Listen, people are coming to the United States to work from Mexico because they want to make a living for their families. And if they can't make a living for their families at home, they'll come here to work. And therefore, we must work with Mexico to develop a middle class in the long run, so people can do their duty as a parent at home. That's what they want. And we need to change our immigration laws. Will it get done? Probably not this year. This is an election year; not much gets done, except for a lot of yelling and elbowing. But I would like to see reasonable immigration reform come out of the Congress.

Payroll Tax

Q. A few minutes ago you mentioned the—every American received a tax cut that's working. The most onerous tax for many Americans, particularly on the low end of the scale, is the payroll tax. What can be done about payroll taxes?

The President. Well, obviously, I chose to provide tax relief by income tax cuts, not by payroll taxes, and the reason why is payroll taxes relief will affect the solvency of Social Security. So I chose not to deal with the payroll tax.

U.S. Mission in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, this week, General Tommy Franks, your former CENTCOM commander, has been on tour, talking about his book, talking about his Iraqi experience. And he conservatively estimated 2 to 4 more years of a large-scale American presence in Iraq. This morning there is fresh fighting in Najaf, Nasiriyah, Samara. What is the mission at this point, for 140,000 American forces? And how will we know when they're done?

The President. The mission is for there—the mission is there to be a democratic Iraq where they have elections to elect their government. That's the mission, to help them achieve that. And that's important. And that's necessary work. The tactics to achieve that are, one, we help provide security to the Alawi government as they move toward elections. Obviously, there are people there that are still trying to disrupt the elections process. They can't stand the thought of a free society in the midst of a part of the world that's just desperate for freedom. These people don't like freedom. You know why? Because it clashes with their ideology. We actually misnamed the war on terror. It ought to be the struggle against ideological extremists who do not believe in free societies who happen to use terror as a weapon to try to shake the conscience of the free world. [*Laughter*]

No, that's what they do. They use terror to—and they use it effectively, because we've got good hearts. We're people of conscience. They aren't. They will cut off a person's head like that, and not even care about it. That's why I tell you, you can't talk sense to them. Maybe some think you can; I don't. I don't think you can negotiate with them. Let me——

Q. That 2 to 4 year projections——

The President. No, let me finish. Let me finish, please, sir. Thank you, though.

We will stay there until the job is completed and our commanders on the ground tell us. See, I think it's very important for those of us in the political arena to listen to the commanders on the ground. Tommy was a great commander on the ground. I listened to him. And now I'll listen to General Casey as to—and Ambassador Negroponte as to when they think we've achieved our mission.

The second stage, by the way, Ray—he's trying to get me to put a timetable out there. I'm not going to do it, see. And when the

timetable is busted, they'll say, "I told you." [*Laughter*] Anyway——

Q. We've got to try. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes, A for effort.

It's still dangerous there, no question about it. The dynamics have changed, however, because Prime Minister Alawi, who's now in charge of the Interim Government—he's a tough, strong guy who believes that Iraq can be free and democratic. And that's an important step. It was—he's willing to step up and say clearly to the Iraqi people, "Let's reject this violence and terrorism that is threatening a better way of life." He's the fellow who woke up in bed one night in London to confront an axe-wielding thug—thugs from Saddam Hussein that tried to hatchet him to pieces, axe him to pieces. And so he's seen firsthand what tyranny can do, and he's made a decision, obviously, to take risk on behalf of a free society.

The key to success, to answer your question about when, is how quickly the Iraqis are trained and prepared to take action themselves. The ultimate success of our venture in Iraq, which is a free and democratic country, will depend upon how quickly we can help the Iraqis defend themselves. The will is there, and now they must have the training and equipment to provide them what is necessary to do their duty in a free society.

One of the biggest fears many Iraqi citizens have is that we're not a country of our word. People don't want to take risks. They understand that at this point in time, if a vacuum were created, anarchy would reign and there would be mayhem and bloodshed. And they're fearful that the United States will once again say something and not mean it. I say "once again" because you might remember at different times during Iraqi history they were—they believed they heard something in terms of U.S. support, and it didn't happen. And then there was a lot of death as a result of unfulfilled expectations. We've got to stay with them until they achieve the objective.

Nice try.

Diversity and Legacy in College Admissions

Q. Mr. President, you say, quote, "Quotas are an unfair system for all," with regards to your opposition to affirmative action.

The President. No, no, no, whoa, whoa, whoa—with regard to my opposition to quota systems.

Q. To quotas, okay. But I've never heard you speak against legacy. Now, the president of Texas A&M, Robert Gates, said that he would not use race in admissions, and then he later said he would not use legacy. If you say it's a matter of merit and not race, shouldn't colleges also get rid of legacy? Because that's not based upon merit; that's based upon if my daddy or my granddaddy went to my college.

The President. Yes. I thought you were referring to my legacy. [*Laughter*]

Q. That's why I allowed you to go ahead and bring it out.

The President. Well, in my case, I had to knock on a lot of doors to follow the old man's footsteps. [*Laughter*] No, look, if what you're saying is, is there going to be special treatment for people—in other words, we're going to have a special exception for certain people in a system that's supposed to be fair—I agree. I don't think there ought to be.

Q. So the colleges should get rid of legacy.

The President. Well, I think so, yes. I think it ought to be based upon merit. And I think it also ought to be based upon—and I think colleges need to work hard for diversity. Don't get me wrong—don't get me wrong. You said "against affirmative action," is what you said. You put words in my mouth. What I am for is——

Q. I just read the speech, Mr. President.

The President. What speech?

Q. In terms of when you came out against the Michigan affirmative action policy, and——

The President. No, I said was I against quotas.

Q. So you support affirmative action but not quotas.

The President. I support colleges affirmatively taking action to get more minorities in their school.

Q. That's a long headline, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

The President. I support diversity. I don't support quotas. I think quotas are wrong. I think quotas are wrong for people, and so do a lot of people.

Q. Just to be clear, you believe that colleges should not use legacy.

The President. I think colleges ought to use merit in order for people to get in, and I think they ought to use a merit system like the one I put out.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:21 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ernest Sotomayor, president, UNITY, and Long Island Editor, Newsday.com; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel R. Martinez; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte. Discussion participant Roland Martin referred to Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

Remarks in Stratham, New Hampshire

August 6, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Listen, there's no better way to spend a Friday afternoon than at a picnic in New Hampshire. Thanks for coming. Gosh, what a fine gathering. Thanks for coming. I'm thrilled to be here.

I'm here to ask for your vote. I'm back in your important State one more time, saying I've got something to do on behalf of your country. I'd like your vote, and I'd like your help. We won New Hampshire last time; we're going to win it this time. We're on our way to a great victory in November.

I'm sorry Laura is not here.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That's generally the reaction: Why didn't you send her instead of yourself? [*Laughter*] But what a great First Lady she is. She is a wonderful mother, a wonderful wife. She's doing a wonderful job for the American people. I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in office, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura has 4 more years as the First Lady.

We're working our way up the coast here. Brother Jeb's son, George P., who spent a lot of time here in New Hampshire, is getting married tomorrow.

Audience member. Oh.

The President. Yes, so we're having a little family wedding. My brother Marvin is with me today. I can't wait to say—see old number 41. You might remember him. He's got a lot of friends in New Hampshire. And Mother, of course, will be there. She can't wait for me to arrive so she can tell me what to do. [*Laughter*] I'm still listening too.

I want to thank Doug Scamman and Stella Scamman for their beautiful hospitality. Thanks for opening up your farm. What a beautiful place. You know, the amazing thing about the Scammans is they're both candidates for the statehouse. They're not running against each other; that's the good news. Otherwise Stella would win. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate Doug, a onetime speaker of the house, going back into office. It's such a good example for somebody willing to serve. And I appreciate Stella serving as well. I wish them all the best in their race. If they want my help, they can have it. If it helps me—not to be for them, I'll try there too. I just want them to win.

But I do appreciate their hospitality. I love families, and this is a great farm family. I say every day is Earth Day when you own a piece of the land. These people are taking care of their property, and you can see it when you look around at what a beautiful spot.

I appreciate my friend Judd Gregg. You know, he is an amazing Senator. He gets the work done. He is a serious-minded guy who I find a lot of fun to be around. He is a——

Audience member. Six more years!

The President. That's right, 6 more years; you need to put him back up there. [*Laughter*] You're lucky to have had him representing you; you really are. He's a good, sound man, as is Sununu, Jr. John Sununu is doing a great job as well. I enjoy working with the two United States Senators from New Hampshire.

I appreciate your Governor, Craig Benson, being here. I'm honored that he has agreed to serve. He's a good fellow, as is Congressman Jeb Bradley, running for the United States Congress. We've got to make sure you put him back in. And I know his mother,

Helen, is here. That's good, Jeb, you listen to your mother too. [*Laughter*]

And then my friend Charlie Bass is with us today. He's a congressman—the other congressman from New Hampshire who's doing a great job for the people of this State. I'm proud they're here.

It's good to see my friend Ruth Griffin and "Wiz" Wieczorek. These are people I've known for—you might remember, I was knocking on doors here a while ago—like, 4 years ago. [*Laughter*] And I met a lot of good folks in New Hampshire, people that I've never forgotten. The Scammans, for example, hosted a deal for Laura and me here. It's kind of like old home week, and it's very nostalgic for us to come back and—for me to come back and look around and see many of the folks that worked so hard in 2000. I appreciate you staying with it.

We've got work to do. There's a reason I'm running for office. I want this country to be safer, stronger, and better for the American people.

I want to thank all the State folks who are here, the elected officials. I want to thank Cheryl McGuiness, the widow of American Flight 11 pilot. Cheryl is a woman of deep faith who has taken on, you know, an incredible burden on that day of September the 11th, and has dealt with it in such a strong fashion that she shines in her courage and strength. We love you, Cheryl. Thank you for being here.

I want to thank Jayne Millerick and Nancy Merrill and my old buddy Tom Rath for being in charge of the grassroots organization. These are the people who put up the signs, people who do all the heavy lifting in a political campaign. I want to thank you for what you're doing. I want to thank you for what you're going to do. It's really important we turn the vote out. And I'm counting on you. I'm counting on your help.

Every incumbent who comes to ask for the vote has got to answer one sensible question of why—why should the people put me back in office for 4 more years? In the past few years, we've been through a lot together and we have accomplished a lot. But the only reason to look backward is to best tell who to lead us forward.

And that's what I'm here to tell you. We've got more to do for our country. I'm running for a reason. I want to make our country the best country it can be by improving jobs and improving our schools. I will continue to fight the war against terror. But you've got to know I'm going to continue to push for the peace. I'm going to continue to make this world a more peaceful place.

We have done a lot. I'm here to ask for your help, because there's more to do. I'm running with a good Vice President, a really good Vice President. I admit, he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I'm sure Lynne got a little upset with me when she hears me say that. I didn't pick him for his looks. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of sound judgment and great experience and a man who can do the job.

Dick Cheney and I understand we have more to do for our country to achieve big goals and big objectives. We've got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. When we came to office 3½ years ago—remember back—too many kids were getting shuffled from grade to grade, year after year, without learning the basics. So we challenged what I've called the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract, and we expect every child to learn the basics.

So we believe in accountability. We believe in empowering parents. We believe in local control of schools. And today, children across America are showing real progress in reading and math. When it comes to improving our public schools, we're turning the corner, and we're not turning back.

We've got more to do. See, the jobs of the future will require greater knowledge and higher level skills. And so we've got to reform our high schools to make sure a high school diploma means something. We want to make sure math and science education are spread throughout our schools to give our kids the skills necessary to compete. We'll use the Internet to bring high-level training into classrooms. What I'm telling you is, is that after 4 more years, a rising generation will have more skills and more confidence

so they can realize the great promise of our country.

We've got more to do to make quality health care available and affordable. Remember, when we came to office, too many older Americans had trouble with prescription drugs and Medicare didn't pay for them. You might remember previous campaigns where you heard, time in and time out, "Oh, don't worry, I'll do something about Medicare," and nothing happened. We got the job done.

More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. You need to sign up if you're eligible. It will make a difference for you. Beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and will give—and that gives them prescription drug coverage. To help people have access to quality care, we've expanded community health centers for low-income Americans. We want those citizens getting health care in these centers, not in emergency rooms. We've created health savings accounts so families can save tax free for their own health care needs.

Let me—hear this: When it comes to giving Americans more choices about health care and making health care more affordable, we're moving forward, and we're not going backwards.

Most people get their health care coverage through their businesses. Most new jobs are created by small businesses today. And many small businesses too often cannot afford to provide health coverage. So to help our families get health coverage, we must allow small employers to join together to be able to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

Let me tell you what else we need to do to make sure you've got affordable health care and available health care. We need to get rid of these frivolous and junk lawsuits. You can't be pro-patient and pro-doctor and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [*Laughter*] I made my choice: I'm standing with the docs and the patients. I strongly support medical liability reform.

Listen, we're going to harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures for terrible disease. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

There's more work to do to make this economy stronger. Remember what we've been through. We've been through a lot. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a terrorist attack. But we've overcome these obstacles because our workers are great, because our farmers are really good at what they do. We've overcome these obstacles because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong. And we've overcome these obstacles because of well-timed tax cuts.

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

The President. Listen, we didn't pick winners or losers when it came to tax relief. We felt that if you're paying Federal income taxes, you ought to get relief. It's the only fair way to do it. And so families with children got relief. We provided relief for married couples. You know, we've got a Tax Code that says there is a marriage penalty.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. No, that's not—we ought to be encouraging marriage, not penalizing marriage.

We helped our small-business owners. That tax relief helped small-business owners. And this time, the check was really in the mail. [*Laughter*]

Our economy has been through a lot. Today's employment report shows our economy is continuing to move forward. And it reminds us that we're in a changing economy, and we've got more to do. I'm not going to be satisfied until everybody who wants to work can find a job. I'm running because I understand how to take a strong economy and make it stronger. I say we have a strong economy, and it's getting stronger. Our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years.

In the last year, we've added about 1.5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is down to 5.5 percent. Here in New Hampshire, your unemployment rate is 3.9 percent. Listen, when it comes to creating jobs for

American workers, in places like New Hampshire you've proved that we're moving Americans forward, and we're not turning back.

Let me tell you what else we need to do. We need to make sure our regulations are reasonable on our employers. I know some of you file out—file a lot of paperwork. I can't promise anybody in Government has ever read it. [*Laughter*] We need tort reform if we want to keep our jobs in America. We need a fair and balanced legal system. If we want to keep our jobs in America, we need an energy policy that is wise, that encourages conservation, that encourages renewable sources of energy, that encourages exploration in environmentally friendly ways. To keep jobs here, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we need reasonable trade policy. See, here's what I believe. I believe America's workers, farmers, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. We're going to be opening up markets for the good people of New Hampshire. We want you selling New Hampshire goods not only in the United States of America but all around the world. And my administration will give you a chance to compete in a fair way.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money. We've got to set priorities and not overspend it. You know how to start? The best way to start with understanding fiscal responsibility in Washington is to understand we're not spending the Government's money. You listen closely to the rhetoric of these campaigns, you hear, "Well, we're going to spend the Government's money." That's not what I think. I know whose money we spend. We spend the people's money.

In order to make sure jobs stay here, we're going to keep your taxes low. This campaign is just getting started, and the other fellow has already promised over $2 trillion of new programs. Imagine what's going to be coming down the stretch. [*Laughter*] And the problem is, he hasn't told us how he's going to pay for it. But given his record, I bet we can figure out how he's going to pay for it. He's going to raise your taxes. But we're not going to let him.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I'll tell you what else we've got to do to make sure jobs stay here, is to make sure our workers have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to offer American workers a lifetime of learning. We're going to make sure our community colleges are accessible and affordable so people who need to can be retrained for the jobs which will exist. Listen, education is crucial to making sure the jobs stay here at home.

I'll tell you what else we're going to do. We're going to make sure American families keep more of something they do not have enough of, and that's time—time to coach your kids. I want to thank the football coaches, the youth football coaches who are here today. I told the coaches, I said, "Thanks for passing on values to our children." I want to thank those of you who work with the kids in the community here. Thanks for being good moms and dads. I want to thank the 4–H Clubs that were here, doing good work to help others.

See, I'm going to work with Senator Gregg. He's proposed legislation to allow workers to have flex-time. That means they can adjust their schedules to meet their needs so they can do their duty as a mom or a dad or as a community activist. Senator Gregg makes good sense in his legislation; I strongly embrace it. Government needs to stand side by side with the families of America.

I'm running for 4 more years because I want this economy to be stronger. I want our farm economy stronger. I want the entrepreneurial spirit stronger. I want there to be higher and better paying jobs. I'm running for 4 more years to continue to work for a pro-growth, pro-entrepreneur, pro-small-business economic agenda that is good for America.

We have more to do to wage and win the war on terror. America's future depends on our willingness to lead in this world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

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 terror cells around the world, including our country. Today, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Afghanistan is an ally in the war against these thugs. Many young girls now go to school in Afghanistan for the first time. Afghanistan is becoming free, and America and the world are safer for it.

Before September the 11th, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists. Today, Pakistan is an ally in the war against terror. Pakistani forces are aggressively to—helping round up Al Qaida and their friends and associates, and America and the world are safer.

In Saudi Arabia, before September the 11th, terrorists were raising money and they were recruiting and they were operating with little opposition. Today, the Saudi Government is taking 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.

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 which were enforcing the world's sanctions. He had pursued and he had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized families of suicide bombers. He had 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 looked at all the threats of the world in a new light. I want you to remember, a lesson of September the 11th was that we must take threats seriously, before they fully materialize. The September the 11th Commission concluded 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, who had ties to terror, who had used weapons of mass destruction might use those weapons or share his capabilities with enemies.

See, we saw a threat. We looked at the intelligence of the day and saw a threat. The United States Congress—members of both political parties, including my opponent—looked at the same intelligence and came to the same conclusion. The United Nations looked at the intelligence and recognized Saddam was a threat. They unanimously passed a resolution—unanimously passed a resolution—which said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." After defying the free world for 12 years, he did so again. He deceived the weapons inspectors. And so I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Do I trust a madman? Or do I take action necessary to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

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

The President. And because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell, America and the world are safer.

Even though we did not find the stockpiles that we thought we would find, we did the right thing. He had the capability, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies.

Now, there are some questions that a Commander in Chief needs to answer with a clear yes or no. My opponent hasn't answered the question of whether, knowing what we know now, he would have supported going into Iraq. That's an important question, and the American people deserve a clear yes or no answer. I have given my answer. We did the right thing, and the world is better off for it.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, you can't talk sense to these people. You can't negotiate with them. You can't hope for the best with people who take airplanes and killed thousands of our citizens. We must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

America will continue to lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We put together a strong coalition. We're working together—there's over 60 nations involved with the Proliferation Security Initiative, 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, nearly 30 nations involved in Iraq. These are good people leading these countries. Our friends and allies will continue to work together for the cause of security and peace, but I will never turn America's national security decisions over to the leaders of other countries.

We will keep our commitments to help Afghanistan and Iraq become peaceful and democratic societies. This is important work; it's hard work, to go from being brutalized by a tyrant to having confidence enough to live in a free world. These two countries are now governed by strong leaders. Prime Minister Alawi in Iraq and President Karzai in Afghanistan are strong leaders who believe in the hopes and aspirations of their people. They want freedom, and so do the people of their countries. More and more of their folks are stepping up and taking responsibility. More people are becoming trained to defend their country against those who hate freedom. And the people of those countries can count on the United States and our coalition. 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, our commitments are kept by the men and women of our military. I want to thank the 94th Military Police Army Reserve Unit of New Hampshire for their service. I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country. I've seen their unselfish courage and their great decency. The cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And I have an obligation and our Government has an obligation to make sure those who defend us have the very best pay, training, and equipment. Last September, while our troops were in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, I proposed supplemental funding to support them in their mission. This important legislation provided funding for body armor and vital equipment, for hazard pay and health benefits, for ammunition, fuel, and spare parts. Only a handful of United States Senators voted against the help to our military.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Two of those twelve Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Here's how he tried to explain his vote—[*laughter*]—"I actually did vote for the 87 billion, before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] Listen, I've spent a lot of quality time in New Hampshire. That's not how the people of New Hampshire talk. Now he's offering a different explanation. He said he's proud of his vote, and he said the whole thing is a complicated matter. [*Laughter*] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in harm's way.

No, as Commander in Chief of these folks, I'm proud to stand with them. I'm proud of the veterans who have served so well and set such a great example to those who serve.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror: poverty and hopelessness and resentment. See, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples to their neighbors. They live in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. We believe in America—we know in America that free societies are peaceful societies. Free societies do not export terror. See, by serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving our own national interests. As freedom spreads, America becomes more secure, and the world will be more peaceful. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're serving the deepest beliefs of our country. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I'm running for 4 more years to make our country more secure and to help spread peace throughout the world. And we've got to do more to protect our country. You've read recently the threats. They're real, because there's an enemy that still wants to harm us. My opponent said something the other day I strongly disagree with. He said that going to war with the terrorists is actually

improving their recruiting efforts. No, it's upside-down logic. It shows a misunderstanding of the enemy. During the nineties, these people were recruiting and training and preparing long before—long before—we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred, and it is wrong to blame America for the anger and the evil of the killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back. We defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

I agree with the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission that said the homeland is safer because of the actions we've taken, but not yet safe. And so we've got work to do to make this country more secure. We'll stay on the offense, but we've got work here at home. And we've started the process of reform. We've transformed our defenses. We've created a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed the PATRIOT Act. It's a very important piece of legislation to give law enforcement the tools necessary to disrupt and find terrorist cells.

The mission of the FBI is now focused on preventing terror. We're integrating intelligence and law enforcement better than ever before. We're taking action on a lot of this important Commission's recommendations. We've got more to do to better secure our ports and borders, to train first-responders. I want to thank the first-responders who are here, by the way—those are your police and firefighters and emergency teams.

I called on Congress to create a position of National Intelligence Director to dramatically improve our coordination and gathering efforts. Listen, these reforms aren't going to be easy. It's never easy in Washington. [*Laughter*] There's a lot of entrenched interests, a lot of people defending the status quo. It's not enough to advocate reform; you've got to be able to get the job done. And that's what we've done in this administration.

When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education, we got the job done, and 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 our homeland and spreading the peace, results matter. When it comes to electing a President, results matter. This world we're in is a——

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

The President. This is an exciting time to be an American, in many ways. It's a changing world, and Government has got to understand that. You know, you've got workers—when most of our dads were coming up, they worked for the same company, didn't change jobs, and so the pension plans or the health care plans were adjusted for that. Now it's a different world. People are changing jobs; people are working out of their homes. Oftentimes, moms and dads are both working. And policy has got to reflect these changing times, which means, it seems like to me, the best way to do so is to encourage an ownership society. For example, we want people owning and managing their own health care accounts that they can take with them job to job or go from job to home.

In terms of pensions, you know, older guys like me are set for Social Security, but younger workers needed a different approach for Social Security. We ought to allow younger workers to manage their own personal retirement accounts that they can pass from one generation to the next.

When people tell me the number of small-businesses owners in America are increasing, that's really good news. I want people to own something in our country. I'm going to continue to work for an ownership society. Homeownership is at an alltime high now in America. That's fantastic news. Isn't it wonderful to have somebody for the first time be able to say, "Welcome to my home. I'm glad you're here at my piece of property."

This administration understands that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. Now, in times of change, some things will never change: our belief in liberty, our belief in opportunity for every citizen, our nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. We believe in the individual values that we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We believe in the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These are fundamental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of Government.

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

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

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion. See, I understand Government can hand out money. We do a pretty good job of it in Washington. [*Laughter*] But what Government cannot do is put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That's done when a loving soul puts his arm around somebody in need and says, "Brother," or "Sister, I love you. How can I help you?"

Listen, we can rally the armies of compassion. The great strength of America is the heart and soul of our people, and we can change this blessed country one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. It's a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, dedication to freedom and peace.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. As Judd said, I stood in the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I'll never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember a guy grabbing me by the arm—I don't know if he was a firefighter or a policeman; I do know that he had been searching in the rubble for a loved one. He looked at me with bloodshot eyes and said, "Do not let me down."

These are vivid impressions I will never forget. Obviously, he took it personally. The people searching through the rubble took that day personally. You took it personally. I took it personally. I have a duty that goes on. It is a solemn duty to defend our country, which I will do, whatever it takes.

We have come through much together. We have done a lot of hard work. But there's more to do. There's more to do to spread opportunity and freedom and peace. During the next 4 years, I will work to make sure the American Dream shines brightly for everybody and that we encourage an ownership society. We will pass enduring values of our country to the next generation. We will lead the cause of freedom and peace. And we will prevail.

Four years ago, I traveled your great State. I said if you gave me the honor of serving, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. And with your help—and with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. at Bittersweet Farm. In his remarks, he referred to Jayne Millerick, chairman, Nancy Merrill, national committeewoman, and Tom Rath, national committeeman, New Hampshire Republican State Committee; 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).

Memorandum on Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance With Respect to the Republic of the Congo

August 6, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2004–41

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance with Respect to the Republic of the Congo

Consistent with the authority vested in me by section 2007 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002 (the "Act"), title II of Public Law 107–206 (22 U.S.C. 7421 *et seq.*), I hereby:

- Determine that the Republic of the Congo has entered into an agreement with the United States pursuant to Article 98 of the Rome Statute preventing the International Criminal Court from proceeding against U.S. personnel present in such countries; and
- Waive the prohibition of section 2007(a) of the Act with respect to this country for as long as such agreement remains in force.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress, and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Notice—Continuation of Emergency Regarding Export Control Regulations

August 6, 2004

On August 17, 2001, consistent with the authority provided me under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), I issued Executive Order 13222. In that order, I declared a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 2401 *et seq.*). Because the Export Administration Act has not been renewed by the Congress, the national emergency declared on August 17, 2001, and renewed on August 14, 2002, and on August 7, 2003, must continue in effect beyond August 17, 2004. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13222.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
August 6, 2004.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:07 a.m., August 9, 2004]

NOTE: This notice will be published in the *Federal Register* on August 10.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Notice on Continuation of Emergency Regarding Export Control Regulations

August 6, 2004

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

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended, is to continue in effect beyond August 17, 2004, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

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.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Export of Certain Items to the People's Republic of China

August 6, 2004

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

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

1. One linear accelerator for Huanggang Customs, for inspection of cargo entering the Port of Shenzhen, People's Republic of China.
2. Fifty-thousand pounds of fine-grained graphite, for Shanghai Carbone Lorraine Chemical, located in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, to use in manufacturing temperature-resistant industrial machinery components.
3. One linear accelerator for Harbin Boiler Company, Ltd., located in Harbin, People's Republic of China, to use in nondestructive testing and inspection of utility boilers and valves for conventional power and auxiliary equipment.
4. One hot isostatic press, for Guizhou Anji Foundry Company, located in Anshun City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China, to use in consolidation of titanium and aluminum castings for chemical equipment parts.
5. Two environmental test chambers, for Flextronics Industrial Company, Ltd., located in Jingan, Doumen Zhuhai, People's Republic of China, to test Xbox game consoles for the Microsoft Corporation.
6. One environmental test chamber, for Hon Hai Precision Industries Company, Ltd., located in Guangdong, People's Republic of China, to test personal computers and peripheral equipment for Apple, Compaq, and Dell.
7. One filament winding machine, for Weifang Dongming Extinguisher Equipment, located in Weifang, Shandong, People's Republic of China, to use in manufacturing 600,000 carbon dioxide fire extinguisher bottles per year.

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.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 31

In the morning, in Cleveland, OH, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Canton, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Cambridge, OH. Later, he traveled to Triadelphia, WV.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Pedro Santana Lopes of Portugal to congratulate him on taking office and to discuss counterterrorism efforts. He then had an intelligence briefing and met with the Homeland Security Council.

Later in the morning, in the Cabinet Room, the President had a Cabinet meeting.

In the afternoon, in the Residence, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview with Redbook magazine. Later, he met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

August 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Dallas, TX, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Larry Hawkins.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a Victory 2004 luncheon at a private residence. Later, he traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on May 13–June 17.

The President declared a major disaster in Kansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes beginning on June 12 and continuing.

August 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Moline, IL. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing. Upon arrival at the Quad City International Airport, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Peggy Schaefer. He then traveled to Davenport, IA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where, upon arrival at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Bryan Comstock.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Le Sueur, MN, where he toured the Katzenmeyer family farm. Later, he traveled to Mankato, MN.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Columbus, OH, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Jack Lehr.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Saginaw, MI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Charlie Wargel.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Stratham, NH, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Kennebunkport, ME.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on July 13–15.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and landslides beginning on July 22 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on August 1 and continuing.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Advisory Committee on the Arts: Joy Bollinger; Sandra S. Brock; Jennifer Compton Corton; Peter Cummings; Judith Waite Freeman; Janet Hendren; Christine Hughes; Mark B. Hutton; Mary Joann Jundt; Kathy Kelly; Deanna Kirchman; William Lamb; Sandra K. Meyers; Gary Michael; Mary Mohs; William D. Mounger; Oscar Persons; Kay Phillips; Jean Rolles; Fred Sands; Masako H. Shinn; and Susan W. Simons.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan, Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card, Jr., and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice

Statement by the Press Secretary on the fire in an Asuncion supermarket in Paraguay

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1303, H.R. 4363, S. 741, S. 2264, and S.J. Res. 38

Fact sheet: Making America Safer by Strengthening Our Intelligence Capabilities

Released August 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4759

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kansas

Fact sheet: Compassion for Americans in Need

Released August 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan and a senior administration official on new conservation initiatives

Fact sheet: Supporting America's Farmers and Conserving America's Land

Released August 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: America's Changing Workforce: Ready for the 21st Century

Released August 6

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1572, H.R. 1914, H.R. 2768, H.R. 3277, and H.R. 4380

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Kentucky

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to West Virginia

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Pennsylvania

Acts Approved by the President

Approved August 2

H.R. 1303 / Public Law 108–281
To amend the E-Government Act of 2002 with respect to rulemaking authority of the Judicial Conference

S. 741 / Public Law 108–282
To amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with regard to new animal drugs, and for other purposes

S. 2264 / Public Law 108–283
Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act

S.J. Res. 38 / Public Law 108–284
Providing for the appointment of Eli Broad as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution

H.R. 4363 / Public Law 108–285
Helping Hands for Homeownership Act of 2004

Approved August 3

H.R. 4759 / Public Law 108–286
United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act

Approved August 5

H.R. 4613 / Public Law 108–287
Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005

Approved August 6

H.R. 1572 / Public Law 108–288
To designate the United States courthouse located at 100 North Palafox Street in Pensacola, Florida, as the "Winston E. Arnow United States Courthouse"

H.R. 1914 / Public Law 108–289
Jamestown 400th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act of 2004

H.R. 2768 / Public Law 108–290
John Marshall Commemorative Coin Act

H.R. 3277 / Public Law 108–291
Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act

H.R. 4380 / Public Law 108–292
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4737 Mile Stretch Drive in Holiday, Florida, as the "Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith Post Office Building"