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Minister Allawi and I have urged the U.N. to send more personnel to help ensure the success of the Iraqi elections.

The war for Iraq's freedom is a fight against some of the most ruthless and brutal men on Earth. In such a struggle, there will be good days, and there will be difficult days. But every day, our resolve must remain the same: Iraq, America, and our coalition will stand firm; and Iraq will be free; the world will be more peaceful; and America will be more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:45 a.m. on September 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 7821—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2004

September 25, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans have always answered the call to serve our Nation. Many brave American men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend freedom's blessings, and no one feels their loss more deeply than their mothers. On Gold Star Mother's Day, we remember these mothers who have suffered the loss of a son or daughter through service to our country. We honor their courage and perseverance and the memory of their children.

Across our Nation, these compassionate and generous women are volunteering to serve veterans, helping families of service members, supporting educational programs that promote patriotism and citizenship, and turning their grief into action. They inspire all Americans with their compassion and service. On this day, people across America join together to honor our Gold Star mothers and send our gratitude, prayers, and best wishes to them and to their families.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day," and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, September 26, 2004, as Gold Star Mother's Day. I call upon all Government officials to display the flag of the United States over Government buildings on this solemn day. I also encourage the American people to display the flag and hold appropriate meetings in their homes, places of worship, or other suitable places as a public expression of the sympathy and respect that our Nation holds for our Gold Star Mothers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:04 a.m., September 28, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 29.

Remarks in a Discussion on Education in Springfield, Ohio

September 27, 2004

The President. Thank you all for being here. Appreciate you being here. Thanks for coming. Thank you all.

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

The President. Okay, thanks. We got to get started here. Thank you. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. I'm honored so many came out. Thanks for the warm welcome here in Springfield. It's such a pleasure to be here. I'm excited to be here.

I've come to let you know that I've got a reason for seeking the vote again, that I'm

not only here to ask for your vote, I'm here to explain to you why I want to be President for 4 more years. See, I don't think you can just hold the office of President. I think you have to have a reason to hold the office. And so we're going to talk about some key issues about how to make sure America is a safer place, a stronger place, and a better place.

I'm also here to ask for your help. See, I understand you can't win a race for the Presidency alone. It requires the grassroots, those people who put up the signs and make the phone calls and register the voters. We have a—thank you all for doing that. First of all, I understand a crowd this big just doesn't happen. Somebody had to work to make it happen, so thanks for organizing this event. Thank you for coming.

You notice I've been joined by some of your fellow citizens here. We're here to talk about education, but before we do so, I've got some other things on my mind.

First thing on my mind is for you to get out and register friends and neighbors. Don't overlook discerning Democrats like Zell Miller. I know a lot of Democrats who want America to be a safer place. I know a lot of Democrats who want our schools to fulfill their promise. I know a lot of Democrats who are interested in having a health care system that works. I know a lot of Democrats who are going to vote for us. So when you get people going to the polls, make sure you remind your Republican friends, your independent friends, and your discerning Democrat friends to vote for Bush-Cheney.

So I woke up on the ranch this morning, and Laura said, "Tell everybody hello in Ohio." So, Laura says hello. She was a public school librarian when I met her—again. We went to seventh grade at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And so, years later, my friend O'Neill brought me over to his backyard for a barbecue, and there was Laura. I fell in love—love at first sight. So I said—eventually, I said—eventually, I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. People of this country got to see Laura in New York City give a speech. They saw a compassionate, decent, fine woman. Really proud of her. I hope you leave here realizing that I'm going to give you some—well, I know I'm going to give you some reasons why you should put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. He's a fine man. You know, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] Of course, I didn't pick him because of his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I want to thank my friend Mike DeWine, and Fran for joining us today. He's a great United States Senator. Proud you're here, Mike. He's on the bus. He said as we pulled in here, he said, make sure you remind everybody that he, Mike DeWine, was born right here in Springfield. He's what we call a home boy. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank my friend Dave Hobson, the Congressman from this district. I appreciate you, Dave. Proud you're here. Chairman John Boehner is with us today. Mr. Chairman, the Congressman from the district next door, thanks for coming. We're going to talk a little bit about education. I want you to understand he is the father of this fantastic reform we put in place. He carried the legislation in the House of Representatives. It would not have happened without his leadership—a great Congressman. Thanks for coming.

Congressman Mike Turner from Dayton, Ohio—appreciate you coming, Mike. Real proud of you. [*Applause*] Sounds like they've heard of you.

I want to thank Joe Deters, who is with us today, the treasurer of the State of Ohio. Thanks for coming, Joe. I want to thank all the State and local officials. I know the party chairman is here. I want to thank Bob Bennett for his leadership for the Ohio party. But most of all, I want to thank you all. I really do appreciate you coming. I want to thank you for giving me a chance to share some thoughts with you.

I like getting out amongst the people. I like sharing my philosophy with people. I like to tell people what I believe. First of all, I

want you to know I understand that we're living in changing times. Now, think about this. When our dads were coming up or our grandfathers were growing up, a person generally had one career and one job, with one pension plan and one health care system. And that person was usually a man.

Today, we live in a different world, when you think about it. The workforce has changed dramatically. People tend to change jobs and sometimes careers, often. And the workforce not only has men in it, but it has got women who work both in the house and outside the house. We have time—times have changed, yet the fundamental systems of our Government have not changed. The fundamental systems of Government were designed for yesterday, not for tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to help redesign the systems of Government so people have a chance to realize their dreams.

The job of Government is to help people realize their dreams, not to dictate to people. There's a fundamental philosophical difference in this campaign about the role for Government in people's lives. We believe Government ought to help people. My opponent believes Government ought to tell people how to live their lives.

And so they said, "What do you mean?" Well, I'll tell you what I mean. I mean, for example, labor laws ought to be changed. There ought to be flex-time in the labor laws. That will allow moms to be able to do their work at the workplace and the home. The labor laws ought to be family-friendly. They ought to change with the times.

The Tax Code needs to change. The Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. In a new term, I'll bring people from both parties together to simplify the U.S. Tax Code, the Federal Tax Code, that will reflect the changing times and make the code more fair.

The pension plans—we need to think differently about pension plans. Listen, times have changed, but the Social Security system hasn't. Now, listen, if you're on Social Security, you're going to get your check. I remember the 2000 campaign. They all said, "Well, if George W. gets in, you're not going to get your check." You got your check, didn't you? You'll probably hear it again. You'll probably hear it again: "Oh, he's got some plan to take—he'll take the money away from you." It's just not the case. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to think about our kids and our grandkids when it comes to Social Security. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account so Social Security has a chance to meet its promise, a personal savings account you call your own, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away.

The health care system ought to reflect changing times. I mean, if you're changing jobs, it makes sense to have a health care system that enables you to carry with you a health savings account. See, I believe we ought to continue to expand health savings accounts, which gives people a chance to save tax-free, earn money tax-free, spend money on health care needs tax-free, that you own. It's a new way of looking at health care, but it's a way to make sure that the decisions are made between doctors and patients, not between bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

A couple of other points I want to make on health care. It makes sense to take care of those who can't help themselves. We need to help the poor and the indigent when it comes to health care. That's why I'm for expanding community health centers to every poor county in America. We want people to get good primary care and good preventative care in places other than the emergency rooms of hospitals. So we'll continue to take care of those who need help here in America. We'll make sure the children's health care program for low-income families is expanded and families take advantage of that.

We'll continue to make sure Medicare fulfills its promise. You might remember those old Medicare debates. They called them "Mediscare." They tried to lure you into talking about Medicare, then they tried to whip you in the political process if you did. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents. I saw a problem in Medicare, and I'll tell you what it is. Medicare would pay, for example, nearly $100,000 for heart surgery. It would not pay a dime for the prescription drugs that could

prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense to the senior citizens, and it made no sense to the taxpayers. We've strengthened Medicare for our seniors, and in 2006, seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage in Medicare. And the system is better, and we're not going to turn back to the old days of not making sure our seniors have got good health care.

Now that you got me cranked up, on health care, I've got a few other things to tell you. Most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses have trouble affording health care. One of the reasons why is there's no purchasing power. I think small businesses ought to be allowed to join together so they can purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies are able to do.

No, I got a lot of ideas on how to make sure health care works. I understand what's causing some of the cost of health care to rise, and these are these frivolous lawsuits. You ask your docs what it's like to try to practice medicine, ask your ob-gyns what it's like to try to practice medicine when they're getting sued and sued and sued by frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors, the hospitals, and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

As you can tell, I'm ready to go. What I'm telling you, there's a big philosophical difference in the campaign. There really is, when it comes to health care. My opponent believes the Government ought to decide for you. I don't. I believe the best health care system is when we take care of the poor, make sure seniors have got good health care, and make sure the decisions in the health care are made by patients and doctors, not by bureaucrats in the Nation's Capital.

See, I believe that we're recognizing the world is changing, and make sure the systems of Government change with the world so people can realize their dreams. We've created—will help to create a hopeful society, but you can't be a hopeful society unless this economy grows.

Now, listen, I want you to remind your friends and neighbors what we've been through when it comes to this economy. We went through a recession. As a matter of fact, the stock market started to go down months before Vice President Cheney and I showed up in Washington, and then we had a recession. We started to recover from the recession, and we found out some of the citizens of this country forgot what it meant to be a responsible person. In other words, they didn't tell the truth. And those corporate scandals shook our confidence, make no mistake about it. By working with Members of Congress and in the Senate, we passed tough laws, and we made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us, and it cost us jobs.

These were mighty obstacles to overcome. But we've overcome those obstacles. One, we got great workers in America. We got great farmers in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. We also overcame it because of well-timed tax cuts. The economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

I understand you've been hit hard in Ohio. I know that. That's why I proposed what's called opportunity zones, a place where counties like Clark County can apply to become an opportunity zone and be able to have—be able to get—attract business with better tax treatment, better regulatory treatment, ways to make sure that in changing times economies that need help are able to get the help. No, I know there's people still hurting in this State, and that's why it's important to continue to promote pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer economic policies.

It's one thing to say we've overcome the obstacles. The real question is how do we make sure that this prosperity lasts. So I'll give you some ideas. First, America must be the best place in the world to do business. If you want jobs to stay right here in America, we better make sure this is the best place to create jobs. That means less regulations on our businessowners and employers. It

means we've got to do something about frivolous lawsuits that make it hard for people to expand their job base.

If you want to make sure jobs stay here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. Listen, if you don't have energy, you're not going to have jobs. We need to make sure the electricity system is reliable. You in Ohio know what I'm talking about. We've got to make sure that we use alternative sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. We've got to make sure that we continue to enhance conservation. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can burn coal. We've got to make sure we use our technology so we can continue to explore for natural gas. What I'm telling you is if we want jobs to be here in America, this country must become less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

A couple other points I want to talk about. One, in order to make sure jobs are here, we need to open up markets for U.S. products. It would be a mistake to adopt the policies of economic isolationism. Do you realize, one in five manufacturing jobs in America depend upon exports? If you're good at something, we ought to promote it. If you're good at growing crops, we ought to be selling crops all around the world. If you're good at manufacturing things, we ought to make sure you have a chance to do so. We've opened up our markets for foreign goods. This is not just the policy of this administration, it's the policy of both Republican and Democrat Presidents. And I'll tell you why. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get the product you want at a better price or higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. It makes sense to—to give you more choices as a consumer. It makes economic sense.

And so what I say to places like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." And I say that—and not only that, we've used the tools at my disposal to make it clear to China and other countries we expect to be treated fairly. And the reason I say that with certainty—that it's good for America—is I know we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere so long as the rules are fair.

Finally, to make sure you've got jobs here in Ohio and all across America, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low. Running up the taxes—running up taxes on the American people would hurt economic growth. So the—so taxes are an issue.

The fellow I'm running against has proposed $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending so far. [*Laughter*] We still got October to go—[*laughter*]—three debates in October. So they said, "How are you going to pay for all that money?" And by the way, 2.2 trillion is a lot, particularly for—or even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" It's a legitimate question, isn't it? "In the course of a campaign, you made all these promises, you're going to do all this stuff on health care, and all this stuff on here, and all that stuff on there, how are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Oh, that's easy. We'll just tax the rich."

Now, we've heard that before. I know you've heard that before. By the way, most small businesses in America are—pay tax at the individual income-tax rate. Ninety percent of the small businesses are sole proprietorships or limited partnerships. Therefore, they pay income tax at the individual rate. And so you hear him say, "Well, we're going to tax the rich. We're just going to run up the top two brackets." The first thing wrong with that proposal is you're starting to tax the job creators of America. Seventy percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses. It makes no sense to tax the job creators in this country just as this economy is being to recover.

Secondly, you can't tax the rich enough to pay for $2.2 trillion of new spending. So there's a tax gap. Guess who usually fills the tax gap when there is one? You do. Yes, I know. Thirdly, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason. That's to stick you with the bill. The good news is you're not going to get stuck with the bill, because we're going to carry Ohio again and win in November. [*Applause*]

Okay. Let me talk about—thank you for coming. Thank you. We got work to do. Save your energy. Save your energy. [*Laughter*]

I want to talk about education. A hopeful America is one in which not one child is left behind. I went to Washington, as I told you,

to solve problems, not to pass them on to future generations. We saw a problem. Congressman Boehner saw a problem too in public schools, and the problem was this, that people were just being shuffled through school grade after grade, year after year without learning the basics. That's a problem.

If you want a hopeful America, you better make sure every child learns and they learn early, before it's too late. So I worked with the Congressman. I said, "I tell you what we'll do. We'll increase spending at the Federal level, but we're going to start asking some important questions, starting with, can the children read?" Seems like to make sense, doesn't it? If you're going to increase spending, you ought to at least know whether or not the system is working.

So John and I and others drafted some legislation called the No Child Left Behind Act, the heart of which says the following things. One, we trust local people to make the right decisions for the schools. We're going to talk about some school decisionmakers—with some school decisionmakers here.

Secondly, it says we need to measure, not the Federal Government doesn't need to measure, the people outside of Washington need to measure so we can determine whether or not we're meeting goals. And the first goal is every child reading by third grade—at grade level by the third grade. It seems to make sense, doesn't it? That's a legitimate request to ask of the school systems, in return for 49-percent increase in K-through-12 funding since I've been in Washington, DC, that people learn how to read, write, add, and subtract.

Thirdly, we're raising the standards. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. What that means is, when you lower the standards, you get lousy results. We can't have a hopeful America unless every child has a chance to succeed because every child has been taught how to read and write and add and subtract. As a result of the legislation we passed, an achievement gap is beginning to close in this country. It's happening.

I'll tell you what else we did, which is an important part of the accountability system. We—I'm going to use a fancy word—disaggregated results. That means we measured by race, for example. See, we want to know if every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract. We don't want any doubt in our mind that the system is making sure it's hopeful for everybody. You don't know whether every child is learning to read and write and add and subtract unless you measure, unless you show the results, unless you say to parents, "This school is great. This school needs help."

Some people say, "You shouldn't test. You're just punishing the schools." I disagree. By not testing, you're punishing children. By testing, you can determine what needs to be cured. You can't solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem. And we're using the accountability system as a diagnostic tool to lift the sights and the spirits of every child in this country.

So that's what we're here to talk about, the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a vital piece of legislation. Someone said, "Well, you know, when you look back, what's going to be important?" Well, I'll tell you, the peace is going to be important when I look back on my time as your President, but also making sure that this education system fulfilled its promise, that our teachers had the tools necessary to teach.

One of the things we've got in the program we're going to talk about is teacher training, that the local folks were able to make the right decisions, that moms and dads were happy with what they were receiving, that the community was involved. No, I'm proud of this piece of legislation. We're not going to turn back. We're not going to allow my opponent to weaken it. We're going to continue moving forward to make sure every child has a chance to realize his or her dreams.

A couple of other things I want to talk about. We're going to make sure that in high school, there's at-risk—programs for at-risk kids. Listen, if you're going to start a job in a changing world, you need a college degree. Yet, one in four of our students doesn't get there. And since they don't get there, it means we better do something better. So we're going to make sure we intervene in high schools on reading and math and sciences. We'll continue to expand reading

and sciences. We're going to continue to expand Pell grants. We want to make sure that everybody has a chance to start their career with at least 2 years of college, in order to make sure there's a hopeful tomorrow. In other words, we got to plan not only to build on No Child Left Behind but to take the progress of No Child Left Behind, the success of No Child Left Behind to our high schools.

In a changing world, a lot of times people need a new set of skills. You know what I'm talking about. When you've seen jobs leave, new jobs come in, and oftentimes, somebody needs a little help in making sure they got the skills necessary to fill the jobs. That's why I'm such a strong believer in the community college system in America. I want to make sure workers have a lifetime of learning opportunity in this country.

These are all plans to make sure education works from K all the way through lifetime.

Now, let me talk to some people who know what I'm talking about. We got George Tombaugh with us. He is the superintendent of——

George Tombaugh. Westerville School District.

The President. Good. Where is that?

Mr. Tombaugh. Northeast side of Columbus, Ohio.

The President. There you go. How are things in Westerville?

Mr. Tombaugh. Very good, sir. We have a great school system and a great staff.

The President. Good. So tell me what life is like under No Child Left Behind.

[*Mr. Tombaugh made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, one thing that's important about accountability is it lets you determine whether the curriculum you're using is working. If you're using a lousy curriculum, you're going to get lousy results. And it helps schools adjust. It helps teachers understand whether or not the systems they use work. This is a tool. This is a helpful tool. Measurement is good. I've heard all the excuses. Listen, I was a Governor at one time, and you heard them all, "Oh, all they're doing is teaching the test"—I'm sure you've heard that—or "They're testing too much."

If you use the accountability system properly, it is a great diagnostic tool to make sure children have a chance. You know what I'm talking about when I tell you sometimes we walk into a classroom and see a classroom full of child that are—these so-called "hard to teach." You know what happened with the so-called "hard to teach," don't you? They just moved them through. That's how you handled the so-called "hard to teach" when you didn't have an accountability system—or a classroom full of children whose moms or dads might not speak English as a first language. "Let's just move them through. No one is going catch us." I'm not saying it was that conscious, but it happened. It was practiced. And it wasn't right, and it wasn't fair, and it wasn't what America stands for. Every child should have a chance.

You ready to go? Good job. Kathy Rank, sitting right here next to—I'm sitting right here next to the Ohio Teacher of the Year. Thank you.

First of all, all the teachers out there need to know how much I appreciate you being a teacher. It is a noble and important profession. And if youngsters are looking for a great way to serve our country, teach. Teach a child. Impart knowledge. What a fantastic way to make a living. Thanks for coming. Where do you teach?

Kathy Rank. I teach at Bennett Intermediate, which is part of Piqua City School System.

The President. Great, and what grades?

Mrs. Rank. Fourth grade.

The President. Fourth grade. That's good. I remember my fourth grade teacher, Augustine B. Crosby. [*Laughter*] Somebody someday is going to sit back and say, "Gosh, I remember my teacher, Kathy Rank." What's the nature of the school, kind of school?

[*Mrs. Rank made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, good job. That's great. You can see why she's teacher of the year. One of the things I think we need to do—and I talked to John about this on the bus, although I think people in the White House have already talked to him about it—is to set up about a half-a-billion-dollar fund to reward teachers who are helping students meet the standards and goals, as an incentive

program. I know we need to have loan forgiveness—student loan forgiveness for teachers who teach in special ed or math or science in schools that need special ed, math, or science teachers. Matter of fact, the loan forgiveness ought to go from 5,000 to $17,500 to provide incentives for teachers to fill the needs where they're needed most. I still believe we ought to continue to increase teacher training funds. These teachers have got great hearts, and sometimes they need the tools necessary to be able to teach the curriculum that works.

So, thanks for coming. Congratulations. See you in Washington——

Mrs. Rank. All right. I'm looking forward to it.

The President. ——Teacher of the Year award.

Tracy Reiner is with us, a mom. Tell us about your little guy, Tracy.

Tracy Reiner. Well, I have three great kids. They're here with me today. I have Zach, who's in sixth grade; Joshua, who's in fourth grade; and Abby, who's in third grade. They attend Hopewell Elementary in the Lakota School System in West Chester——

The President. Good.

Mrs. Reiner. ——where you'll be speaking later today, I understand.

The President. Yes, we're ready to crank it up, yes. [*Laughter*] I'm just warming up here. [*Laughter*]

Mrs. Reiner. And if I could just add real quick, the principal sends his greetings, and he wants you to know there is very much support in the Lakota School System for you.

The President. Oh, thank you. I appreciate you saying that. Tell me about Josh, and the No Child Left Behind Act.

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Mrs. Reiner. And I need to add this, that my children know discipline. In fact, they were just reminded last night about discipline. But this is not—[*laughter*].

The President. You probably want to keep that one to yourself, Mom, you know. [*Laughter*] She's turning this into Dr. Phil, you know. [*Laughter*] Don't worry about it. The same thing happened to me a couple of times. [*Laughter*] Listen to your mother, though. Still listening to mine. [*Laughter*]

[*Mrs. Reiner made further remarks.*]

The President. It's working. Good job. Congratulations, Josh. Ninety-nine, brother. Let me—Tracy talked about parental involvement; I think there needs to be community involvement as well. See, I think we need to support our teachers and principals and superintendents. You know, a lot of people look to Washington. You're not going to find support out of Washington. You'll find money. You'll find good law, but the truth of the matter is, a responsible society is one in which people who live close to the school systems support the school systems and support the teachers.

Nick is with us today, Nick Lashutka. He is the—what do you do, Nick?

Nick Lashutka. I'm the director of government relations at the Ohio Business Roundtable.

The President. Good. And so, therefore, why are you sitting here? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lashutka. Because improving Ohio's public schools is the single most important priority for our organization.

The President. There you go. And your organization is called the Roundtable. I guess you meet at a round table, but why would you call it the—what's it—who sits at the table?

Mr. Lashutka. Our organization consists of the CEOs of the State's largest business enterprises, and we focus on issues of competitiveness. And for us, a growing economy and the elements of that are primary for our mission. And at the center of that, what really drives that is talent, and that's having an educated citizenry. It's having a qualified workforce, and it's having the kind of individuals in our public schools that are capable of going on, earning higher degrees and being able to be really——

The President. So what are you doing? How are you helping?

[*Mr. Lashutka made further remarks.*]

The President. Great. Good job. Thanks for coming. Listen, thank you all for being here. We're making progress. We're achieving what every American wants, every child

receive—being able to realize their dreams through a good education.

I want to talk about keeping the peace. I want to talk about the challenges we face to secure this country, make the world and America a safer place. You know, later on this week, I'm going to have a chance to debate my opponent. It's been a little tough to prepare, because he keeps changing positions on the war on terror. He voted for the use of force in Iraq and then didn't vote to fund the troops. He complained that we're not spending enough money to help in the reconstruction of Iraq, and now he's saying we're spending too much. He said it was the right decision to go into Iraq; now he calls it the wrong war. Probably could spend 90 minutes debating himself. [*Laughter*]

You cannot lead when people don't know where you stand. In order to make sure America is a safer place——

Audience member. We need you as a leader! [*Laughter*]

The President. In order to make sure America is safer, the President must speak clearly and mean what he says. I'll share some lessons with you about September the 11th. We face a brutal enemy that has no conscience. They are the kind of people that you just can't reason with. It makes no sense for anybody to say, "Oh, all we've got to do is change our ways because they'll change their visions." It's just not true. You can't negotiate with these people. You cannot rationalize with these people. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offense against them around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're making progress. We're working with our friends and allies to bring Al Qaida to justice. Seventy-five percent of their leadership has been brought to justice. Just yesterday, if you noticed, that in Pakistan, one of the killers of Danny Pearl had been arrested. One by one, we're finding these people.

It's a different kind of war. And first of all, I wish I wasn't talking about war. We didn't ask for this war. This war came to our shores. And there's only one way to deal with it, and that is to do everything we possibly can to protect the American people using all our assets, using everything at our disposal. And anything short of that will mean this Government has not done its duty to the American people. Our most solemn duty is to protect you.

Now, we can make sure the Homeland Security Department works well and do a better job on our borders and ports, which we're doing. But the only way to protect America in the long term is to—to protect America at all is to stay on the offense against these killers and to spread liberty and freedom. That's the only way we can protect this country.

In a different kind of war, we had to recognize that we're not facing a nation; we're facing a group of people who have adopted an ideology of hatred and love to find places where they can hide. They're like parasites. They kind of leech on to a host and hope the host weakens over time so they can eventually become the host. That's why I said to the Taliban in Afghanistan, "Get rid of Al Qaida. See, you're harboring Al Qaida." Remember, this is a place where they trained—Al Qaida trained thousands of people in Afghanistan. And the Taliban, I guess, just didn't believe me. And as a result of the United States military, Taliban no longer is in existence and the people of Afghanistan are now free. In other words, when you say something as President, you better make it clear so everybody understands what you're saying and you better mean what you say. And I meant what I said. [*Applause*] Okay, hold on for a minute. Thank you all. I meant what I said for the sake of peace, because I understood that America would become more secure by denying Al Qaida safe haven and training bases in Afghanistan.

But I want to tell you something else that's on my mind during the course of my decisionmaking. I understand how powerful freedom can be. And I want you to think about Afghanistan. It wasn't all that long ago that the Taliban were running that country. People say, "What were they like?" They're the opposite of America. If you had a point of view that didn't coincide with what they thought, you were in trouble. They didn't believe in the freedom of anything. They have a dark vision about the world. We have a vision based upon light. We believe in freedom. We believe you can worship freely

any—in this country, any way you want—any way you want. It's your right. You can speak your mind. You can participate in the political process. You can write any editorial you want in this country. That's freedom. That's not what the Taliban thought. You know that young girls weren't allowed to go to school, or many—most young girls weren't allowed to go to school under the Taliban. Imagine a society like that. It's hard for Americans to visualize that.

So not only was Al Qaida being able to train there in Afghanistan, but it was a repressive society. Repressive societies breed violent people. Repressive societies breed those who are willing to strike at those of us who love freedom as well.

Today, in Afghanistan—I want you to hear this fact—today, in Afghanistan some—a little more than 3 years since we liberated them, 10 million people have registered to vote, 41 percent of whom are women, in the elections that will be held in about the first—let's see, I think the 9th of October. Think about that, a country that has gone from darkness to light because of freedom. Freedom is powerful. It's powerful. Unbelievable statistic, I think. And I tell you why it's important. One way to defeat the ideologs of hate is to spread freedom. Free societies answer to the hopes and needs of the average citizens. Free societies do not export terror. Afghanistan is an ally now in the war on terror. In order to make sure America is secure in the long run, we must have allies standing with us in the broader Middle East.

Another lesson I learned is that we've got to deal with threats when we see them. We've got to take a threat seriously before it fully materializes. Prior to September the 11th, the American President and policymakers could say, "Well, we see a threat, but it's probably not going to come and hurt us." That all changed on September the 11th. Every time we see a threat now, we must take it seriously before it comes to hurt us again.

And so I looked around the world and saw a significant threat in Saddam Hussein. I'll tell you why I saw a threat. One, he a was a sworn enemy of the United States of America. Secondly, he was firing missiles at U.S. pilots who were enforcing the sanctions placed upon him by the world. Thirdly, I knew exactly how he felt about the demands of the free world. As they say down in Texas, he could care less. After all, they'd passed 16 different resolutions, and he ignored them all. Fourthly, there was terrorists like Abu Abbas, Abu Nidal—Abu Abbas is the guy who killed Leon Klinghoffer; Abu Nidal, famous terrorists. We knew Zarqawi was in and out of Baghdad. He had terrorist connections. He also used weapons of mass destruction. The lessons of September the 11th were we must take these threats seriously.

I went to the Congress and said, "We see a threat." Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at, remembered the same history I had just recited to you, and concluded that, yes, Saddam Hussein was a threat, and not only that, concluded that they—that force might be necessary, and they authorized the use of force for the President, if necessary, to use force to deal with the threat.

My opponent, he looked at the same intelligence I looked at. He remembered the same history I remembered. And when it came time to vote for the authorization of force, he voted "yes."

So I went to the United Nations. Let me tell you why I did: Because the President must try all means to prevent war. I understand the consequences of putting our troops in harm's way, and before any President puts one troop in harm's way, they best try all different means the solve the problem. And I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I was hoping that finally Saddam Hussein would listen to the demands of the free world. At the United Nations, I laid out our case. They looked at the intelligence. They concluded with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council that Saddam Hussein should disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences. Fifteen to nothing was the vote. As a matter of fact, they also sent in inspectors into Iraq. The problem was Saddam Hussein systematically deceived the inspectors. You can't inspect unless you get cooperation. They got no cooperation.

It was clear that he wasn't about to cooperate with the United Nations. It was clear that,

once again, he was going to ignore the demands of the free world. Diplomacy wasn't working. So I have a choice to make at this point in time: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and just hope for the best when it came to a madman who brutalized his own people, or do I take action necessary to defend this country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

A couple of other things. I know what you know. We've got a great military. I want to thank those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the loved ones of those who wear the uniform. And when we put our troops in harm's way, they need to have the full support of the Federal Government—the full support. That's why I went and asked for $87 billion of additional spending for important—this is an important piece of legislation. After all, it's for ammunition, fuel, spare parts, body armor, hazard pay, health benefits, things necessary when you've got your troops in combat. This money was going to go to not only those in Afghanistan but Iraq. It was vital.

Fortunately, Members of Congress here knew how vital it was, and they stood up like most of the Members of Congress and voted, "Yes. We'll fund the troops." As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against funding our troops, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. Now, when you're out there campaigning, I want you to remind the good folks of this statistic. There were only four Members of the United States Senate who said, "Yes, we're going to send troops," but, "No, we're not going to pay for them." In other words, "Yes, we're going to send troops by authorizing force"—they voted to authorize force—but then when the troops were in harm's way, did not vote the money to support the troops. Only 4—there's 100 Members of the Senate; 4 voted that way, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

So they asked him, they said, "How could you possibly have made that vote?" He said, "I actually did vote for the $87 billion, before I voted against it." You've got to be able to speak clearly in order to make this world a more peaceful place. You cannot expect to lead this world if you try to take both sides of every position. Finally, they kept pressing him. He said, "The whole thing's a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We'll prevail. We will prevail if we're resolute and determined. We'll prevail because we'll stay on the hunt, and we've got a great coalition of nations. There are 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. People are doing hard work, and I appreciate the sacrifice the people of those countries are making right alongside our troops. I'll continue to build these coalitions. I'll continue to praise the people and not denigrate the contributions. But one thing I'll never do is I'll never turn over national—our country's national security decisions to leaders of other countries. [*Applause*]

Finally, a couple of other things. Thank you all very much. I appreciate that. A couple of other points I do want to make. They'll be short, you'll be happy to hear. [*Laughter*]

We've got hard work in Iraq, no question about it. And the reason why is because people are trying to stop the march of freedom. These terrorists cannot beat our military. They cannot beat our military. The only thing, the only weapon they have is their willingness to behead a citizen and put it on TV. The only weapon they have is the capacity to shake our conscience. They understand people in America. See, we value human rights and human dignity. Our heart breaks when a—for the family of those two fellows who were beheaded, just as Prime Minister Allawi was here.

This guy, Zarqawi and his crowd, they are so coldblooded that they have no conscience. Yet, they know we do. And their main tool is their capacity to get on our TV screens, with horror that the American people just cannot stomach it, because we're civilized and we love and we're compassionate. It's really important for them not to be able to shake our will. I'll tell you why. A free Iraq is in our interests. A free Iraq will become an ally in the war on terror. A free Iraq will be such a hopeful example for other nations. A free Iraq will serve as stark contrast to the hateful ideology of these people.

We'll stay with the Iraqi people because when America gives its word, it must keep its word in order to make the world a more peaceful place. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because it's in our interests. We'll stay with the Iraqi people because they long for freedom; they desire to be free.

People say to me, "Well, maybe certain parts of the world don't want to be free." I strongly disagree. I believe people want to be free because I believe freedom is the gift from the Almighty God to each man and woman in this world.

Schools are being rebuilt. The electricity is up to pre-war levels. Hospitals are functioning. Children are being immunized. But it's hard work. It's hard work. And—but amidst this hard work, remember this: Elections are going to be held in January. This country is headed to democracy. I appreciate visiting with Prime Minister Allawi. He's a guy who woke up one day in a London flat to see two men standing beside his bed with axes, sent by Saddam Hussein to kill him. He, fortunately, got out of that, got wounded severely. He knows firsthand what it means to be dealing with a tyrant. He is determined. He is strong. He tells me right to my face, "Mr. President, we will succeed." And I believe him. We'll succeed so long as the United States does not grow weary or tired and allow these thugs to shake our will. And it's in our interests.

I want to tell you a story, and then I'll—let me tell you a story I like to tell people. It's my—with my dealings—the story is about my dealings with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I saw him in New York recently. I said, "Do you mind if I tell people about you?" And he should have said, "You already started." But anyway—[*laughter*]—he said, "Not at all." So I'm going to tell you about him.

First, he likes Elvis—[*laughter*]—favorite movie is "High Noon." Anyway, I like to tell the story about talking to Prime Minister Koizumi, because I'm talking to the leader of a former enemy. It was 60 years ago or so we were fighting the Japanese. My dad was there. I'm sure your relatives were there, a bloody war.

And after World War II was over with, Harry S. Truman, one of my predecessors, said, "We'll help Japan become a self-governing democracy." A lot of people in the United States didn't believe that was capable of happening. Some people said, "Why even bother. They're the enemy." But Harry Truman and others in this country believed that liberty has got the capacity to transform enemies to allies. That's what he believed.

And that's what I believe. So I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, and we're talking about the peace we all want. We're talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place. Think about that for a minute. There we were at war with an enemy, and today, the leader of Japan and the United States are working together in concert for peace. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, talking about how to make sure peace comes in a troubled part of the world so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a more peaceful, peaceful world.

We have an obligation, I think—this generation has an obligation to do the hard work, the hard work to defend ourselves from these brutal killers, the hard work to spread freedom and liberty, the work necessary so that someday, people will look back at us and say, "Thank goodness they didn't lose faith. Thank goodness they were strong in their beliefs that we can overcome this evil and that liberty will help change the world for the better."

I want to thank you all for coming. I'm ready to go. God bless you all, and God bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Midwest Livestock and Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; television host Phillip "Dr. Phil" McGraw; Amjad Hussain Farooqi, Pakistani terrorist killed by Pakistani military forces in Nawabshah, Pakistan, on September 26, who participated in the 2002 kidnaping and later killing of Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl; Eugene Armstrong and Jack Hensley, American citizens who were killed in Iraq on September 20 and 21, respectively, by militants led by senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi

of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Xenia, Ohio

September 27, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. There you go. Thanks, Mr. Mayor. Listen, thank you all for coming out to say hello. As you can see, I'm taking a bus trip. [*Laughter*] It's a fantastic way to see your beautiful State. I get to wave to people, shake some hands, and tell people that I'm running for a reason. I want this country to be a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country.

I'm proud to be with Mike and Fran DeWine and Congressman Dave Hobson. I want to thank you for coming out to say hello. I'm asking for your help. I'm asking for your vote. We've going to win Ohio again. We're going to win in November.

God bless you all. Thanks for coming. Great to see you all. Thanks for being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. at the Greene County Courthouse. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor John Saraga of Xenia, OH; and Senator Mike DeWine of Ohio and his wife, Fran. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in West Chester, Ohio

September 27, 2004

The President. Thanks for coming. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

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

The President. Thank you all for coming. That's what I'm here to tell you: I'm ready to lead this Nation for 4 more years. And I'm here to ask for your vote.

I think you've got to get out among the people and give them a reason. That's what I'm here to do today. I'm here to give you a reason why you ought to put me back in office for 4 more years. I not only want your vote; I want your help. I'd like for you to register your friends and neighbors, tell them we have a duty in this country to participate in democracy. Register your Republican friends; register your independent friends; register your discerning Democrat friends, people like Zell Miller. And then when it's voting time, head them to the polls and tell them if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Thanks for coming. It's a good sign when this many people come here for a rally. Let me tell you what I think. I think we're going to carry Ohio again, and I think we're going to win a great victory in November.

I wish Laura were here today to see this crowd. I'm going to have dinner with her tonight, and I cannot wait to tell her what I saw. As you might remember, she was a public school librarian. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, just so long as I don't ever have to give a speech." [*Laughter*] I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. The American people got to see her in New York City a while ago, saw what a strong, compassionate, great lady she is. I love her dearly. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back into office is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate. Dick Cheney is a fine man. Listen, I admit it, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because of his experience, his sound judgment. I picked him because he can get the job done for the American people.

I'm proud to be on this stage with John Boehner. What a fine man he is and a great United States Congressman. I'm proud to have worked with him on important legislation, and I'm proud to call him friend. I'm honored that Mike DeWine is with me today, the fine United States Senator from the State of Ohio. I appreciate you coming, Mike. Speaking about Senators, I hope you put George Voinovich back in office. He's a fine leader, good man.

I appreciate Congressman Rob Portman, Dave Hobson, who is with us, Mike Turner, Steve Chabot. I want to thank you all for coming. I'm proud you're serving the people of the great State of Ohio so well.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I know the Lieutenant Governor and the State auditor. My friend