AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO



personnel are treating the sick and the injured. Earlier today I visited a FEMA disaster recovery center where hurricane victims can go to register for disaster assistance.

I've asked Congress to provide $12.2 billion in Federal funds to respond to these storms. I urge the Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so the people of Florida can get the help they need.

People in Florida and many other States are coming through a trying time. I thank all those who've reached out to help the neighbors in need. I thank the leaders who have shown strength and composure during difficult times. And to our fellow citizens facing hardship, the prayers of our Nation are with you, and America stands with you.

Thank you all for coming. God bless your compassion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. at the American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on House of Representatives Action on a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

*September 30, 2004*

Today a bipartisan majority of U.S. Representatives voted in favor of a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. I am disappointed that the House failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote. Because activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are seeking to redefine marriage for the rest of the country, we must remain vigilant in defending traditional marriage. I welcome the important debate underway across America on this issue.

## Presidential Debate in Coral Gables, Florida

*September 30, 2004*

***Jim Lehrer.*** Good evening from the University of Miami Convocation Center in Coral Gables, Florida. I'm Jim Lehrer of the News Hour on PBS. And I welcome you to the first of the 2004 Presidential debates between President George W. Bush, the Republican nominee, and Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee.

These debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight's will last 90 minutes, following detailed rules of engagement worked out by representatives of the candidates. I have agreed to enforce their rules on them. The umbrella topic is foreign policy and homeland security. But the specific subjects were chosen by me. The questions were composed by me. The candidates have not been told what they are, nor has anyone else.

For each question, there can only be a 2-minute response, a 90-second rebuttal, and at my discretion, a discussion extension of 1 minute. A green light will come on when 30 seconds remain in any given answer, yellow at 15, red at 5 seconds, and then flashing red means time's up. There is also a backup buzzer system if needed. Candidates may not direct a question to each other. There will be 2-minute closing statements but no opening statements.

There is an audience here in the hall, but they will remain absolutely silent for the next 90 minutes, except for now, when they join me in welcoming President Bush and Senator Kerry. [*Applause*]

Good evening, Mr. President, Senator Kerry.

As determined by a coin toss, the first question goes to you, Senator Kerry. You have 2 minutes.

### *Preventing Future Terrorist Attacks*

Do you believe you could do a better job than President Bush in preventing another