

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricane Jeanne

October 5, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On September 8th, I signed into law Public Law 108-303, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2004, which provided \$2 billion in supplemental funds for hurricane-related disaster relief. On September 14th and 27th, I submitted additional supplemental requests totaling \$10.2 billion to continue immediate assistance to address the impact of Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.

Due to the availability of better estimates regarding the damage resulting from Hurricane Jeanne, I am requesting additional emergency funds from the Congress to address this natural disaster. I now ask the Congress to consider the enclosed requests, totaling \$691.2 million, for additional emergency resources for the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, the Interior, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; as well as the Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and International Assistance Programs.

I hereby designate these specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. These additional requests will support response and recovery efforts to address the critical needs associated with the effects of Hurricane Jeanne. In addition to this enacted and requested emergency funding, Federal agencies will continue to use existing resources and programs for response and recovery efforts from all recent hurricanes and storms.

I urge the Congress to limit this emergency funding to those items directly related to the recovery efforts from the impact of these recent major disasters and to act expeditiously on this and my pending emergency supplemental requests.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

October 6, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Thank you all. Thank you. Please be seated. Gosh, thanks for such a great welcome. I appreciate it. It's great to be in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. It's such an honor to be back here. I'm glad to be in a part of the world where people work hard, they love their families. Good to be in a part of the world where people like to hunt and fish.

My regret is that Laura is not with me. She is—

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. I know it. [Laughter] That's generally the reaction. [Laughter] Kind of like, "Why didn't you stay home and send Laura." [Laughter] You're not going to believe this; it's a true story—or kind of true. [Laughter] I said, "Will you marry me?" She said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." [Laughter] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. Laura—when Laura speaks, people see a compassionate, decent, strong First Lady.

I had my morning briefing today with someone you're familiar with. That would be your former Governor Tom Ridge. So Laura sends her best, as does Tom Ridge.

Today I traveled with Don Sherwood. As we say in Crawford, he's a good one. He's a great Member of the United States House of Representatives. I'm proud to work with him. He cares deeply about the people of this important part of the State of Pennsylvania. He is a fine Representative who brings integrity to the office. I appreciate your service.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank the candidates who are here. I want to thank the

grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is to put up the signs, make the phone calls, turn out the vote. With your help, there's no doubt in my mind we'll carry Pennsylvania.

I am sure many of you stayed up to watch the Vice Presidential debate last night. America saw two very different visions of our country and two different hairdos. [*Laughter*] I didn't pick my Vice President for his hairdo. I picked him for his judgment, his experience—a great Vice President. I'm proud to be running with him.

In less than a month, you'll have a chance to vote for Dick Cheney and me. Think about that—less than a month. I'm looking forward to coming down the stretch with a positive, strong message. As your President, I've worked to make America a more hopeful and more secure place. I've led our country with principle and resolve. And that's how I'll lead our Nation for 4 more years.

When I took office in 2001, the bubble of the nineties had burst. Our economy was headed into a recession. And because of the attacks of September the 11th, nearly a million jobs were lost in 3 months. It was a dangerous time for our economy. People were warning of potential deflation and depression. But I acted.

To stimulate the economy, I called on Congress to pass historic tax relief, which it did, without my opponent's "yes" vote. The tax relief was the fuel that got our economy growing again. Thanks to the efforts of our citizens and the right policies in the right place at the right time, we put the recession behind us and America is creating jobs once again.

We have built a broad and solid record of accomplishment. In the past year, the United States of America has added about 1.7 million new jobs, more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. Real tax—real after-tax income—that's the money in your pocket to spend on groceries or house payments and rent—is up more than 10 percent since I took office. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America. Farm income is up. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial

spirit is strong in the United States of America.

Ours is a record of accomplishment. Thanks to reforms in education, math and reading scores are increasing in our public schools. Ten million students will get record levels of grants and loans to help with college. Low-income seniors are getting \$600 extra to help pay for medicine this year, in their drug discount cards. And soon Medicare will offer prescription drug coverage to every senior in America. We have made America a stronger, more hopeful country, and we're just getting started.

Listen, I like to travel our country because I have a chance to talk to our fellow citizens. I understand the challenges facing our Nation. People are living and working in a time of change. Workers switch jobs more than they used to, which means they often need new skills and benefits they can take with them from job to job. We're in a changing world, yet the systems of Government haven't changed. I'm running for 4 more years to change the systems of Government so people can better realize the great dreams of America.

Making sure people realize those dreams, it's essential that our education systems work. We're going to raise the standards and expectations in every high school. We'll invest in our Nation's fine community colleges so workers can be prepared to fill the jobs of the 21st century. We're going to expand health savings accounts so people can pay health expenses with tax-free money and keep the savings if they change jobs. We're going to improve Social Security to allow younger workers to own a piece of their own retirement, a nest egg that the Washington politicians can never take away.

To keep this economy strong and competitive, we must make sure America is the best place in the world to start a business and to do business. To make sure America is the best place in the world to start a business, our taxes must be low. Congress must make the tax relief we passed permanent. To keep jobs here, there need to be less regulations on our small businesses. To keep jobs here, we must pass an energy plan that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To make sure jobs exist here in America, we

got to do something about these junk and frivolous lawsuits. Trial lawyers shouldn't be getting rich at the expense of our entrepreneurs and our doctors.

My opponent and I have a very different view on how to grow our economy. Let me start with taxes. I have a record of reducing them. He has a record of raising them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted in the United States Senate to increase taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot. [Laughter] He voted for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In 1997, he voted for the formula that helped cause the increase in Medicare premiums.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. My opponent was against all of our middle class tax relief. He voted instead to squeeze another \$2,000 per year from the average middle class family.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now the Senator is proposing higher taxes on more than 900,000 small-business owners. My opponent is one of the few candidates in history to campaign on a pledge to raise taxes. [Laughter] And that's the kind of promise a politician from Massachusetts usually keeps. [Laughter]

He says the tax increase is only for the rich. You've heard that kind of rhetoric before. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason—to stick you with the tab. The Senator is not going to tax you because we're going to win in November.

The Senator and I have different views on another threat to our economy, frivolous lawsuits. He's been a part of the Washington crowd that has obstructed legal reform again and again. Meanwhile, all across America, unfair lawsuits are hurting small businesses. Lawsuits are driving up health care costs. Lawsuits are threatening ob-gyns all across our country. Lawsuits are driving good doctors out of practice. We need a President who will stand up to the trial lawyers in Washington, not put one on the ticket.

The Senator and I have very different views on health care. I've got a specific plan to help Americans find health care that's

available and affordable, lawsuit reform, association health care plans to help our small businesses, health savings accounts, community health centers to help the poor, expanding health care for low-income children, using technology to drive down the cost of health care.

He has a different vision. Under his health plan, 8 million Americans would lose the private insurance they get at work, and most would end up on a Government program. Under his plan, 8 out of 10 people who get new insurance will get it from the Federal Government. My opponent's proposal would be the largest expansion of Government-run health care ever. And when Government pays the bills, Government makes the rules. His plan would put bureaucrats in charge of dictating coverage, which could ration care and limit your choice of doctor. Senator Kerry's proposal would put us on the path to "Clinton-care."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'll make sure doctors and patients are in charge of the decisions in America's health care.

The Senator and I have different views on Government spending. Over the years, he's voted 274 times to break the Federal budget limits. And in this campaign, Senator Kerry has announced more than \$2 trillion of new spending. And that's a lot of money, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter]

During his 20 years as a Senator, my opponent hasn't had many accomplishments. Of the hundreds of bills he submitted, only five became law. One of them was ceremonial. But to be fair, he's earned a special distinction in Congress. The nonpartisan National Journal analyzed his record and named John Kerry the most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And when the competition includes Ted Kennedy—[laughter]—that's really saying something. [Laughter] I'm telling you, I know that bunch. [Laughter] It wasn't easy for my opponent to become the single most liberal Member of the Senate. You might even say, it was hard work. [Laughter] But he earned that title by voting for higher taxes, more regulation, more junk

lawsuits, and more Government control over your life.

And that sets up a real difference in this campaign. My opponent is a tax-and-spend liberal. I'm a compassionate conservative. My opponent wants to empower Government. I want to use Government to empower people. My opponent seems to think all the wisdom is found in Washington, DC. I trust the wisdom of the American people.

Our differences are also clear on issues of national security. When I took office in 2001, threats to America had been gathering for years. Then on one terrible morning, the terrorists took more lives than America lost at Pearl Harbor. Since that day, we have waged a global campaign to protect the American people and bring our enemies to account. Our Government has trained over a half a million first-responders. We tripled spending on homeland security. Law enforcement and intelligence have better tools to stop terrorists, thanks to the PATRIOT Act, which Senator Kerry voted for but now wants to weaken.

The Taliban regime that sheltered Al Qaida is gone from power, and the people of Afghanistan will vote in free elections this very week. A black market network that provided weapons materials to North Korea and Libya and Iran is now out of business. Libya, itself, has given up its weapons of mass destruction programs. We convinced Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to join the fight against the terrorists. And more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice.

After September the 11th, America had to assess every potential threat in a new light. Our Nation awakened to an even greater danger, the prospect that terrorists who killed thousands with hijacked airplanes would kill many more with weapons of mass murder. We had to take a hard look at every place where terrorists might get those weapons, and one regime stood out, the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein.

We knew the dictator had a history of using weapons of mass destruction, a long record of aggression, and hatred for America. He was listed by Republican and Democrat administrations as a state sponsor of terrorists. There was a risk, a real risk, that Saddam

Hussein would pass weapons or materials or information to terrorist networks. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

After 12 years of United Nations Security Council resolutions, we gave him a final chance to come clean and listen to the demands of the free world. When he chose defiance and war, our coalition enforced the just demands of the world. And the world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell.

We've had many victories in the war on terror, and that war goes on. Our Nation is safer but not yet safe. To win this war, we must fight on every front. We'll stay on the offensive against terrorist networks, striking them before they come to America to hurt us. We'll confront governments that support terrorists and could arm them, because they're equally guilty of terrorist murder.

And our long-term victory requires confronting the ideology of hate with freedom and hope. Our victory requires changing the conditions that produce radicalism and suicide bombers and finding new democratic allies in a troubled part of the region. America is always more secure when freedom is on the march. And freedom is on the march in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere. There will be good days, and there will be bad days in the war on terror. But every day we will show our resolve, and we will do our duty. This Nation is determined. We will stay in the fight until the fight is won.

My opponent agrees with all this, except when he doesn't. [Laughter] Last week in our debate, he once again came down firmly on every side of the Iraq war. [Laughter] He stated that Saddam Hussein was a threat and that America had no business removing that threat. Senator Kerry said our soldiers and marines are not fighting for a mistake but also called the liberation of Iraq a "colossal error." He said we need to do more to train Iraqis, but he also said we shouldn't be spending so much money over there. He said he wants to hold a summit meeting so he can invite other countries to join what he calls "the wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time." [Laughter] He said terrorists are pouring across the Iraqi border but

also said that fighting those terrorists is a “diversion” from the war on terror. [Laughter] You hear all that, and you can understand why somebody would make a face. [Laughter]

My opponent’s endless back-and-forth on Iraq is part of a larger misunderstanding. In the war on terror, Senator Kerry is proposing policies and doctrines that would weaken America and make the world more dangerous. Senator Kerry approaches the world with a September the 10th mindset. He declared in his convention speech that any attack will be met with a swift and certain response. That was the mindset of the 1990s, while Al Qaida was planning the attacks on America. After September the 11th, our object in the war on terror is not to wait for the next attack and respond but to prevent attacks by taking the fight to the enemy.

In our debate, Senator Kerry said that removing Saddam Hussein was a mistake because the threat was not imminent. The problem with this approach is obvious. If America waits until a threat is at our doorstep, it might be too late to save lives. Tyrants and terrorists will not give us polite notice before they launch an attack on our country. I refuse to stand by while dangers gather. In the world after September the 11th, the path to safety is the path of action. And I will continue to defend the people of the United States of America. [Applause] Thank you all. Thank you all.

My opponent has also announced the Kerry doctrine, declaring that American actions in the war on terror must pass a “global test.”

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Under this test, America would not be able to act quickly against threats, because we’d be sitting around waiting for our grade from other nations and other leaders. [Laughter]

I have a different view. America will always work with allies for security and peace. But the President’s job is not to pass a “global test.” The President’s job is to protect the American people. [Applause] Thank you all.

When my opponent first ran for Congress, he argued that American troops should be deployed only at the directive of the United Nations.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Now, he’s changed his mind. [Laughter] No, he has, in all fairness. But it is a window into his thinking. Over the years, Senator Kerry has looked for every excuse to constrain America’s action in the world. These days he praises America’s broad coalition in the Persian Gulf war. But in 1991, he criticized those coalition members as, quote, “shadow battlefield allies who barely carry a burden.” Sounds familiar. At that time, he voted against the war. If that coalition didn’t pass his “global test,” clearly, nothing will. [Laughter] This mindset would paralyze America in a dangerous world. I’ll never hand over America’s security decisions to foreign leaders and international bodies that do not have America’s interests at heart.

My opponent’s doctrine has other consequences, especially for our men and women in uniform. My opponent supports the International Criminal Court, which would allow unaccountable foreign prosecutors and judges to put American soldiers on trial.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That would be a legal nightmare for our troops. My fellow citizens, as long as I’m your President, Americans in uniform will answer to the officers and laws of the United States, not to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

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

The President. The Senator speaks often about his plan to strengthen America’s alliances, but he’s got an odd way of doing it. In the middle of the war, he’s chosen to insult America’s fighting allies by calling them “window dressing” and the “coalition of the coerced and the bribed.” The Italians who died in Nasiriyah were not window dressing. They were heroes in the war on terror. The British and the Poles at the head of the multinational divisions in Iraq were not coerced or bribed. They have fought and some have died in the cause of freedom. These good allies and dozens of others deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician.

Instead, the Senator would have America bend over backwards to satisfy a handful of governments with agendas different from our

own. This is my opponent's alliance-building strategy: Brush off your best friends; fawn over your critics. And that is no way to gain the respect of the world.

My opponent says he has a plan for Iraq. Parts of it should sound pretty familiar. It's already known as the Bush plan. [Laughter] Senator Kerry suggests we train Iraqi troops, which we've been doing for months. Just this week, Iraqi forces backed by coalition troops fought bravely to take the city of Samarra from the terrorists and Ba'athists and insurgents. Senator Kerry is proposing that we have—that Iraq have elections. [Laughter] Those elections are already scheduled for January. [Laughter] He wants the U.N. to be involved in those elections. Well, the U.N. is already there.

There was one element of the Senator Kerry's plan—it's a new element. He's talked about artificial timetables to pull our troops out of Iraq. He sent the signal that America's overriding goal in Iraq would be to leave, even if the job isn't done. That may satisfy his political needs, but it complicates the essential work we're doing in Iraq. The Iraqi people need to know that America will not cut and run when their freedom is at stake. Our soldiers and marines need to know that America will honor their service and sacrifice by completing the mission. And our enemies in Iraq need to know that they can never outlast the will of America.

Senator Kerry assures us that he's the one to win a war he calls a "mistake," an "error," and a "diversion." But you can't win a war you don't believe in fighting. On Iraq, Senator Kerry has a strategy of retreat; I have a strategy of victory. We've returned sovereignty to the Iraqi people ahead of schedule. We've trained about 100,000 Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel, and that total will rise to 125,000 by year-end. We've already allocated more than \$7 billion for reconstruction efforts, so more Iraqis can see the benefits of freedom. We're working with a coalition of some 30 nations to provide security. Other nations are helping with debt relief and reconstruction aid for Iraqis. And although the terrorists will try to stop them, Iraq will hold free elections in January because the Iraqi people want and deserve to govern themselves.

I understand some Americans have strong concerns about our role in Iraq. I respect the fact that they take this issue seriously, because it is a serious matter. I assure them we're in Iraq because I deeply believe it is necessary and right and critical to the outcome of the war on terror. If another terror regime were allowed to emerge in Iraq, the terrorists would find a home, a source of funding, vital support. They would correctly conclude that free nations do not have the will to defend themselves. If Iraq becomes a free society at the heart of the Middle East, an ally in the war on terror, a model of hopeful reform in a region that needs hopeful reform, the terrorists will suffer a crushing defeat, and every free nation will be more secure.

This is why Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman calls Iraq a "crucial battle in the global war on terrorism." This is why Prime Minister Tony Blair has called the struggle in Iraq "the crucible in which the future of global terrorism will be determined." This is why the terrorists are fighting with desperate cruelty. They know their own future is at stake. Iraq is no diversion. It is the place where civilization is taking a decisive stand against chaos and terror, and we must not waver.

Unfortunately, my opponent has been known to waver. [Laughter] His well-chosen words and rationalizations cannot explain why he voted to authorize force against Saddam Hussein and then voted against money for bullets and vehicles and body armor for the troops on the ground. He tried to clear it all up by saying, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." Now he says he made a mistake in how he talked about the war. The mistake here is not what Senator Kerry said. The mistake is what he did in voting against funding for Americans in combat. That is the kind of wavering a nation at war can never afford.

As a candidate, my opponent promises to defend America. The problem is as a Senator for two decades, he has built a record of weakness. The record shows he twice led efforts to gut our intelligence service budgets. The record shows he voted against many of the weapons that won the cold war and are vital to current military operations. And the

record shows he has voted more than 50 times against missile defense systems that would help protect us from the threats of a dangerous world.

I have a record in office as well, and all Americans have seen that record. 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." I remember trying to console people coming out of that rubble, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye and said, "Do not let me down." These men and women—the men and women there took it personally. You took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I wake up every morning thinking about how to make our country more secure. I have acted again and again to 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. Twenty-seven days from today, Americans will make a critical choice. My opponent offers an agenda that is stuck in the thinking and the policies of the past. On national security, he offers the defensive mindset of September the 10th, a "global test" to replace American leadership, a strategy of retreat in Iraq, and a 20-year history of weakness in the United States Senate. Here at home, he offers a record and an agenda of more taxes and more spending and more litigation and more Government control over your life.

The race for President is a contest for the future, and you know where I stand. I'm running for President to keep this Nation on the offensive against terrorists, with the goal of total victory. I'm running for President to keep this economy moving so every worker has a good job and quality health care and a secure retirement. I'm running for President to make our Nation a more compassionate society, where no one is left out, where every life matters.

I have a hopeful vision. I believe this young century will be liberty's century. We'll promote liberty abroad, protect our country, and build a better world beyond the war on terror. We'll encourage liberty at home to

spread the prosperity and opportunity of America to every corner of our country. I will carry this message to my fellow citizens in the closing days of this campaign, and with your help, we will win a great victory on November the 2d.

God bless. God bless our great country. Thank you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. at the Kirby Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Remarks in Farmington Hills, Michigan

October 6, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. You know what I think, Bill? I think that with the help of these good folks here, we'll carry Michigan. We'll win a great victory in November, and I'll be there in the White House when you come back.

Listen, I appreciate you coming. Thanks for coming today. We're coming down the stretch. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. Register your friends and neighbors. Make sure you don't overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller. Get people headed to the polls, and remind them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Speaking about the Vice President, I'm sure some of you stayed up to watch the debate last night. America saw two different visions of our country and two different hair styles. [Laughter] America saw why I picked Dick Cheney to be the Vice President. He's strong. He's steady. He knows what he's talking about.

Laura sends her best. She's warming up for the Jay Leno show. He's lucky to have her as a guest, and I'm lucky to have her as a wife. She is a great First Lady. Perhaps the most important reason to put me back into office, is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I appreciate Bill Laimbeer for being here. I also want to thank another great leader and sports figure of your great State, Bo