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Mr. Ward. It's a wonderful thing. [*Laughter*]

The President. It sure is. What's even more wonderful is both of your desires to use what's available to improve your skill set so you can realize dreams—in your case, be as good a dad as you can be. That's wonderful. That is what is possible and is happening all across the country.

So the reason we have people come and talk, other than me, is so, one, you'll listen—[*laughter*]—and two, so the stories make sense. These stories make sense to me. It makes sense to support the community college system, a system that is able to adjust to meet the needs of the people that we taxpayers expect the community college to serve, people wanting to work, employers trying to find a skill set so the communities can stay vibrant and whole and jobs are available.

I told you, one of the objectives of Government is to set the conditions right for job growth. And a lot of that always times—a lot of times focuses on tax policy. And obviously, good tax policy matters, and—but also what matters is to make sure that people understand the relevance and importance of education. We must never lose sight of the need to have an education system which not only provides—gives people the basic skills working their way through elementary and secondary and high school but, equally importantly, an education system that's capable of keeping this country competitive by adjusting to the workplace as it really is.

I've come to herald success and a Governor who's successful in implementing a vision because he's got community colleges and community college presidents who are responsive to the needs of people. Again, I want to thank you all for letting me come. I hope you have found this as interesting as I have.

May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at Anne Arundel Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Kendel S. Ehrlich, wife of Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., of Maryland, and their son Drew; Nancy and Robert Ehrlich, Sr., the Governor's parents; and Foreign Minister Michel Barnier of France. Governor Ehrlich referred to Secretary Aris Melissaratos of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal Posthumously to Jackie Robinson

March 2, 2005

Members of Congress, Mrs. Robinson, and Sharon and Dave, Laura and I are honored to be with you all as we honor your husband and your dad. Reverend Jackson. You know, I figure I'm the ninth speaker. [*Laughter*] I spent a little time in baseball. Commissioner, it's good to see you, and appreciate the McCourts being here, of the great Los Angeles Dodgers family. But a lot of times, the ninth hitter was told by the manager, "Keep your swing short." [*Laughter*] I kind of guess that's what Nancy Pelosi meant when I got up here. She said, "You are the ninth speaker." [*Laughter*] "How about keeping it short?"

I'm honored to be here for the—to present the Congressional Gold Medal to Mrs. Robinson. It's a great tradition of our Congress to honor fantastic and noble Americans, and we're doing just the thing today with Jack Roosevelt Robinson.

You know, he was a great ballplayer. Anybody who follows baseball knows how great he was—fantastic statistics, MVP, all the big honors you could get. But his electricity was unbelievable. Think about this. This is a guy who inspired little 7-year-olds to dream of wearing "42" and dashing for home in Brooklyn, and a 7-year-old like me hoping to get his Topps baseball card, even though I was an avid Giants fan. He was an amazing guy. And his story was powerful then, and it is powerful today.

His story is one that shows what one person can do to hold America account—to account to its founding promise of freedom and equality. It's a lesson for people coming up to see. One person can make a big difference in setting the tone of this country.

He always fought for what he called "first-class citizenship." That's an interesting phrase, isn't it, "first-class citizenship," not

second-class, not third-class—first-class citizenship for all. As John Kerry mentioned, it started in the Army. Obviously, it really manifested itself on the baseball field. After all, it was Branch Rickey who said he was looking for a man to cross the color line who could play baseball and had the character necessary to do so. Jackie Robinson had both. And that's why we're honoring him today.

I found Martin Luther King's quote about him interesting. I'm sure you will too. He said, "He was a freedom rider before freedom rides." That's a pretty high compliment, when you think about it. He was—to me, it just says courage and decency and honor.

This son of Georgia sharecroppers was taught by his mother that the best weapon against racism was the use of his talent, his God-given talent, not to waste a minute, and he didn't. And that spirit, passed on from mother to son and now son to family, still lives through the Jackie Robinson Foundation. The Jackie Robinson Foundation is a noble cause to help academically gifted students of color go to college. I know the Dodgers will continue to support that foundation. I hope baseball continues to do so as well.

It is my honor now to join Speaker Hastert and Senator Stevens in presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Rachel Robinson, in the name of her husband, the great baseball star and great American, Jackie Robinson.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Rachel Robinson, widow of Jackie Robinson, and their daughter, Sharon Robinson, and son David Robinson; Allan H. "Bud" Selig, commissioner, Major League Baseball; Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, Inc.; and Frank McCourt, chairman, and Jamie McCourt, vice chairman, Los Angeles Dodgers.

Remarks Honoring the 2004 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox

March 2, 2005

Please be seated, unless you don't have a chair. [*Laughter*] So, like, what took you so long? [*Laughter*] Welcome. And welcome to the citizens of the Red Sox Nation. I'm proud to be joined by the Vice President. He's a Chicago Cubs fan. So, like, he knows what you've been through. [*Laughter*] We're really glad you're here.

There's been a lot of people in this town waiting for this day to come. Some have said it would be a cold day when the Red Sox made it here. [*Laughter*] I am honored to welcome the world champs, the mighty Boston Red Sox, to the White House.

I want to welcome the members of the Massachusetts delegation who are here. I know that Senator Kennedy is here. Senator Kerry is on his way. We have just finished a ceremony honoring Jackie Robinson. I know members of the congressional delegation are here from like Massachusetts, and everybody else that claims to be a Red Sox State. [*Laughter*] You all are welcome here.

I appreciate the commissioner coming. And Bob, it's good to see you. I thank the members of my Cabinet who are here. I appreciate the mayor being here, the mayor of Boston. You've had a heck of a year, Mayor. [*Laughter*] I want to thank and welcome my friend Tom Werner and Larry Lucchino. I'm sorry John Henry is sick. You know, Lucchino, I knew you'd amount to something eventually. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the way this team played baseball. You know, it took a lot of guts, and it took a lot of hair. [*Laughter*] It took a great manager and coaching staff, and I'll never forget calling Terry Francona after the team won the championship, and he—the only thing I remember him saying was, "It's all—it all depended upon the players," which is why he's a good manager, isn't it?

I appreciate the fact that Dom DiMaggio and Jimmy Piersall are with us. You guys represent a lot of great Boston Red Sox players that a lot of us grew up watching play, and you're welcome here in the White House, and you're representing a great tradition of wonderful folks.

You know, the last time the Red Sox were here, Woodrow Wilson lived here. [*Laughter*] There were only 16 teams in baseball then. After the World Series victory in 1918, a reporter from Boston said, "The luckiest baseball spot on Earth is Boston, for it has never lost a World Series." [*Laughter*] That's one optimistic writer. [*Laughter*]