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intend to do so in a—you know, in a period of time that will give me time to fully analyze the different candidates and speak to them. I'm not exactly sure when that process will begin, in terms of the interviews. And probably if I knew, I wouldn't tell you. [*Laughter*] And—but the American people can rest assured that I understand the seriousness of this responsibility and that I will name somebody who will bring dignity to the Court, someone who will be able to do the job, and someone who will sit on that bench and interpret the Constitution and not use the bench from which to legislate.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Indiana Black Expo Corporate Luncheon in Indianapolis, Indiana

July 14, 2005

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Be seated. It is an honor to be here. Thanks for having me. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here with the men and women of the Indiana Black Expo as you celebrate your 35th anniversary.

You know, I was reading about this organization—it is a—it shows the entrepreneurial spirit deep within the hearts of the founders of this organization and the people who are carrying on the proud tradition. I appreciate the fact that you provide scholarships, support programs that are transforming local communities, and as a result, you're lifting up thousands of citizens. I appreciate the example of leadership you set, and it's my honor to join you. Thanks for having me.

I was proud to be introduced by Governor Mitch Daniels. I knew he'd amount to something one of these days. [*Laughter*] And I'm particularly thrilled to be with his wife, Cheri, the fine first lady of the State of Indiana. Laura sends her love to both you and Mitch. She is, by the way, still on the continent of Africa. She'll be coming home tomorrow. She's probably expecting me to fix the dinner. [*Laughter*] I hope she's not hungry. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman for being here. I want to thank Congresswoman Julia Carson for being here today. [*Applause*] It looks like they still remember you here, Julia. She was on Air Force One, and I went back to have a visit with her. Now, if you've never had a visit with Julia—[*laughter*]—she's got a lot of wisdom. [*Laughter*] And she's not afraid to speak her mind. She kind of reminds me of my mother. Thanks for being here. Thanks for coming down.

I want to thank the mayor, Bart Peterson, of the city of Indianapolis for joining us today. Mayor Peterson, appreciate, you. Thanks for coming.

I thank Arvis Dawson and Joyce Rogers and Jim Cummings for this fantastic invitation to come. And I want to thank you for your leadership. Appreciate you all being here.

They tell me Quinn Buckner is here—somewhere out there. There he is. I appreciate you coming. I'm old enough to remember—[*laughter*]—the good old days in Indiana. [*Laughter*] Thanks for being here, Quinn. I'm honored you're here.

I appreciate the fact that Vernice Williams came out to the airport today. I don't know if you know Vernice or not, but I find it very interesting—her story interesting, and it's a good example for all of us to listen to. Vernice has been a volunteer with Black Expo for 35 years. In other words, once this association got started, she said, "I want to volunteer to help." She's involved with the IBE Youth Corps program, all aimed at helping at-risk youth to achieve academic achievement, to instill in them the desire to excel. In other words, she's a soldier in the army of compassion. And I appreciate the example that Vernice has set. And if you want to serve your State and serve our Nation, help somebody in need.

It's an honor to be here with so many charitable and civic leaders. You see, we share a belief in the founding promises of this Nation, a sense of optimism about our future, the future for all citizens, including African Americans. We believe in the power of the

human spirit to lift communities and to change lives. Together, we're working to achieve a great national goal, making our country a place where opportunity and prosperity are within reach for all Americans.

I see an America where all our children are taught the basic skills they need to live up to their God-given potential. I see an America where every citizen owns a stake in the future of our country and where a growing economy creates jobs and opportunity for everyone. I see an America where most troubled neighborhoods become safe places of kinship and community. I see an America where every person of every race has the opportunity to strive for a better future and to take part of the promise of America. That's what I see. And I believe the Government has a role to play in helping people gain the tools they need to build lives of dignity and purpose. That's at the heart of what I call compassionate conservatism.

To ensure that the promise of America reaches all our citizens, we must begin with education. I don't believe you can succeed in America unless you get a good education. Our Nation took an historic step toward that goal of making sure every child is educated—3 years ago when Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind Act is based on this straightforward principle: We'll spend money, but we want to make sure we get results.

See, if you believe certain children can't read and write and can't possibly learn, then you don't care about results. But if you believe every child can read and every child can learn to write and add and subtract, then you want to know, don't you? How can you solve a problem unless you measure? And so as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act, we raised the bar. We raised the standards, and we said to local school districts, "Show us. That's all we want to know. We want to know whether or not a child can read."

And we're making good progress as result of this new way of thinking. This morning the latest scores for the long-term National Assessment of Educational Progress were announced. See, this test is called the Nation's Report Card. It measures student achievement at age 9, 13, and 17, across the country with the same set of standards. In other words, we want to know how students are doing in California, Texas, and Indiana. So we measure on the same set of standards. You see, measurement helps us understand how we're doing. You can't guess when it comes to a child's life. You got to measure.

And the test results were released today. I'm proud to come here to talk about the new results. They're from the first long-term test, by the way, since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Over the last 5 years, American children have made significant gains. Math scores for 13-year-olds have increased by 5 points. Math scores for 9-year-olds have increased by 9 points. And reading scores for 9-year-olds jumped 7 points. America's 13-year-olds have earned the highest math scores ever recorded. Nine-year-olds posted the best scores ever in reading and math.

What I'm telling you is, across America, more children are learning. And the success of young students is setting them on the path to a lifetime of achievement, and we're making big differences in the lives of African Americans. I say, "we"—let me get this straight—I'm talking about good teachers and good principals and engaged parents. This is not the Federal Government. It is the people at the local level who are making a huge difference in the lives of their students.

We've had an achievement gap in America, and we need to do something about it. The No Child Left Behind Act is helping to do something about it. See, I refuse to accept this belief that certain people can't learn. I called it the soft bigotry of low expectations. Think about that phrase. It says if you lower the standards, you get lousy results. I believe you need to challenge that soft bigotry of low expectation, and we are. The Nation's Report Card shows that reading scores for African American 9-year-olds have jumped 14 points over the past 5 years. Math scores have jumped 13 points in the same period of time. These are the highest scores ever in the history of the test. The achievement gap is starting to close, and that's good for the future of America.

The gap between white and African American 9-year-olds in reading is the narrowest it's ever been in the history of the 30-year test. These results show that when performance is measured and schools are held accountable, every child can succeed. That's what it shows. And we're making progress toward achieving a dream where every single child in America gets a good education and not one child is left behind.

No Child Left Behind is making a difference in the elementary and middle schools, and I believe we need to expand this process to our high schools. Do you realize that according to the most recent data, only 68 out of every 100 students entering our public high schools make it to graduation 4 years later? That is an unacceptable statistic for America.

See, here's what I think we need to do: I think we need to measure and determine why. You can't solve a problem unless you diagnose the problem. I think we need to measure to make sure we understand what is going wrong and correct the problems early, before it's too late. And I believe the Federal Government has a role in providing money for early intervention for students falling behind. I know we need to do this. We need to make sure a high school diploma is the ticket to success.

Most new jobs in the 21st century are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. Think about that. Most new jobs in America today are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. And so we need to make higher education more affordable. And I proposed to the United States Congress that we reform the student aid system and increase college assistance for low-income students through the Pell grant program. I think we need to increase the maximum award for Pell grants and make them available to students year-round so they can be used for summer school as well.

We'll expand access to community colleges so more Americans can develop the skills and knowledge they need. And to help African American students get a higher education, we have continued to fund historically black colleges and historically black graduate institutions at record levels.

My point to you is that if you're willing to work hard and stay in school, the Federal Government will take your side and help you. To ensure that the promise of America reaches all our citizens, we're working to build an ownership society in which more of our citizens have a personal stake in the future of our country. When you own something, your life is more secure. When you own something, you have more dignity. When you own something, you have greater independence. The more people who own something in America means this country is better off. So we've been working to promote an ownership society. I want more people from all walks of life, including African Americans, to have a chance to own their own business.

You can't expand business ownership unless you have a growing economy, and our economy is growing. It is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world. Our unemployment rate is down to 5 percent. In the last 12 months, we've created more than 2 million jobs. More Americans are working today than ever before in our Nation's history.

I believe the Federal Government can play a positive role in helping African Americans achieve the goal of owning their own business. Last year, the Small Business Administration increased the number of loans to African American businesses by 28 percent, and we're on track to beat that number this year. We're also working to ensure minority businesses are getting a better chance to compete for Federal contracts. We've provided $8 billion in new market tax credits to boost investment and community development in low-income areas. Because of sound policy and low taxes, by the way, and the hard work of our citizens, we're getting results. African American business ownership is at an alltime high in America today.

We got some interesting ideas on how to build on this progress. We're working on a new initiative to help more African Americans and other minorities become businessowners. My administration is joined with the Urban League, the Business Roundtable, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and others to create what we call the Urban Entrepreneur Partnership. I think it's

a smart idea. This partnership will develop one-stop economic empowerment centers in many of our Nation's poorest communities. In other words, we're trying to reach out and help people understand what it means to become a small-business owner, through training and access to financing contracts for minority entrepreneurs. And the first pilot center will open next Monday in Kansas City and will serve as a model for the rest of the Nation. I hope Black Expo, in its leadership position, will take a look at these kind of programs. I think you're going to find it really interesting.

Listen, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in the African American community. It's strong. There's a lot of great business leaders today, and there's a lot of would-be great business leaders tomorrow, just with some help. And what I'm telling you is, through good economic policy and through good social policy, this administration, in working with others, is willing to help. We want more people owning their own business.

And we want more people owning their own homes. I like the idea of homeownership, and I hope you do as well. Three years ago, I set a goal of creating 5.5 million new minority homeowners by the end of this decade. And we're getting results. We've already added 2.3 million new homeowners, minority homeowners, putting us ahead of schedule. Today, nearly half of all African Americans own their own homes, and that's good for our country.

And there's more we can do. We're going to provide downpayment assistance for families, counseling for new homebuyers. I don't know if you've ever seen one of those contracts, but the print's really small. We need to help people. Perhaps a good project for Black Expo is to join with Alphonso Jackson and the Housing of Urban Development to help people understand what's in the print so it doesn't—that small print doesn't frighten them off from becoming a first-time homebuyer.

I believe we ought to have tax credits to encourage construction of more affordable housing in low-income areas. See, what I want is more and more people from all walks of life, including our African Americans, opening up the door where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece property."

And I believe that we also got to expand ownership through our retirement system. We got a problem in Social Security. If you've retired, you have nothing to worry about. You're going to get your check. Believe me, there's enough money there for you. It's just for the younger folks coming up, you're going to be paying—you're going to be paying payroll taxes into a system that simply cannot sustain itself. It's going broke. I know some in Washington don't like to hear that. They kind of wish the issue would go away. It's not going away. In my judgment, now is the time to address it. The job of the President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents or future generations. And we got a problem.

I put some ideas out there. I hope both Republicans and Democrats forget politics for once in Washington, DC, and focus on what's good for the younger folks in America. But I got another idea to make the system work better. I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own money and set it aside in a personal savings account that they can call their own.

Now, this isn't a new idea. See, this isn't a new idea. I wasn't the one who thought about it. Guess who thought about it first? Members of the United States Congress. See, they get to have their own retirement system, and so do Federal employees. And you can invest some of your own money, if you so choose, in a conservative mix of bonds and stocks, so you get a good rate of return on your money over time. See, it's your money. You get to watch it grow. My idea is this: If this idea is good enough for Members of the United States Congress, it's good enough for working people all across the United States of America.

To ensure that the promise of America reaches all of our citizens, we must do more to improve the safety of our most troubled neighborhoods. It is difficult for a young person to study and to learn and grow in the midst of violence, addiction, and despair. So we're fighting the scourge of drugs that destroys lives and wounds families and tears our community apart. We're aggressively prosecuting drug dealers and gun criminals.

We're after them. You expect us to enforce the law. We're enforcing the law, because we don't believe people should be allowed to commit crimes with guns. And people ought not to be allowed to sell drugs on the streets. And as a result, violent crime is at its lowest point in 30 years.

As we work to combat crime and keep our streets safe, we must ensure our criminal justice system is fair and effective. Americans of all races and backgrounds must be able to trust the legal system. They must be able to trust it so that no person is held to account for a crime he or she did not commit. We're dramatically expanding the use of DNA evidence to prevent wrongful conviction. See, progress for African Americans and, for that matter, all Americans depends on the full protection of civil rights and equality under the law.

To ensure that the promise of America reaches all our citizens, we must encourage those who are healing our neighborhoods with good works. We must stand with people of faith, not stand against them at the Government level. See, Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when somebody puts an arm around somebody and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you? How can I be a part of making your life a better way?"

See, the Nation's faith-based and community groups bring kindness and acts of charity to harsh places across America. I call these folks the social entrepreneurs of America. They're trying to figure out ways to listen to that universal call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself and help heal the broken heart. And oftentimes, those programs are a heck of a lot more effective than Government programs. And therefore, it seems like to me that instead of just applauding the leaders, we got to support the leaders. And one of the most important initiatives that I put out is to say to faith-based programs, "You can access Federal money. You have the right to be able to apply for grants without having to take the cross off the wall or the Star of David off your wall. You can interface with Government without losing your mission."

And we're making a difference. We're getting results. Last year, we awarded $2 billion in competitive grants to faith-based institutions that are transforming our Nation and our neighborhoods one heart and one soul at a time.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. Here in Indianapolis, the Zion Tabernacle Apostolic Church is reaching out to neighbors and helping lift up their communities. A social entrepreneur, a leader of the effort is Bishop Farris, who is with us today. Let me tell you what the Bishop has in mind and how he's going to be helped by the Federal Government. Secretary Alphonso Jackson, by the way, is a believer when it comes to the faith-based and community-based initiative. And so the Department of Housing and Urban Development has entered into a collaborative effort with his church, and they plan to break ground in October on 49 housing units for low-income elderly. And their new development will provide residents with shuttle services to stores and counseling and doctor appointments.

I think this is a good use of taxpayers' money. I think it's a good way to say, we're going to try to help improve people's lives. [*Laughter*] And the delivery systems don't have to be Government. They can be people of compassion, people who have heard the call, people who want to make somebody's life better. So I want to thank you, Bishop, for doing what you're doing. And by the way, there's thousands of examples just like the Bishop's all across the country.

As we ensure that America's promise reaches all our citizens, we're defending the freedom that makes this progress possible. Our foreign policy is tough, and it is compassionate. The bombings in London last week are a grim reminder that free nations face dangerous enemies who hate our freedom and who'll kill in cold blood. We're on the offense against these terrorists overseas. We will bring them to justice so they don't murder more of our citizens and other citizens around the world.

And as we hunt down the terrorists, we're offering an alternative to their hateful ideology. You see, we're spreading freedom and hope to millions. Because we acted, more

than 50 million people—50 million—in Iraq and Afghanistan now live in freedom. And across the broader Middle East, many are claiming their liberty as well. By spreading freedom in a troubled region, we're making this country more secure. We're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come. I believe that freedom is not America's gift to the world; it is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

I believe that human rights are not determined by race or nationality or diminished by distance. As Americans are moved to action—we are moved to action when we see millions in Africa who are facing famine or dying of malaria or the AIDS pandemic. Last year, the United States of America provided nearly 60 percent of the global food aid to the continent of Africa. We're supporting an aggressive campaign to cut the mortality rate of malaria in half.

We're taking the lead when it comes to compassion around the world. And since 2003, the United States of America has led the world. We've undertaken an historic initiative to help the nations of Africa combat HIV/AIDS. So far, thanks to the leadership of a former Hoosier, Randy Tobias, we have delivered lifesaving treatment to more than 230,000 people on the continent of Africa, and there's more work to be done.

We seek progress in Africa because our conscience demands it and because we have an interest in the long-term stability of the continent. Instability and lawlessness in any distant country can bring danger to our own shores. That's the lesson that we're learning in the 21st century. The United States of America will help Africa's leaders bring democracy and prosperity and hope, and this will bring security to our country and peace to the world.

Today, we live in the most hopeful time in human history. These are exciting times. The hope of liberty is spreading across the world. Just watch what's happening. And the hope and opportunity is spreading across our country as well. We will continue to work for the day when the blessings of freedom reach everybody who lives in this country.

The reason I've come today is because your work shows the dignity and equality and potential of every person. I'm here to herald the good works of good people of good heart. You've inspired Americans with your commitment to serve us in education and opportunity. You're helping to unite people of all races. I'm proud of your work. May God continue to bless your families, and may God continue to bless our great Nation.

Thanks for letting me come.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. at the RCA Dome. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mitch Daniels of Indiana and his wife, Cheri; Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman of Indiana; Arvis Dawson, chairman of the board of directors, Joyce Rogers, chief executive officer and president, and James C. Cummings, co-founder and former president, Indiana Black Expo, Inc.; Quinn Buckner, vice president of communications, National Basketball Association's Indiana Pacers; and Joseph D. Farris, pastor, Zion Tabernacle Apostolic Faith Church.

Memorandum on Waiver of Restrictions on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

July 14, 2005

Presidential Determination No. 2005–29

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Restrictions on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 550(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2005 (Div. D, Public Law 108–447) (the "Act"), I hereby certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 550(a) of the Act, in order to provide funds appropriated to carry out chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to the Ministry of Finance of the Palestinian Authority in direct assistance for use on new projects in Gaza.

You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with