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Remarks at a Lunch for Gubernatorial Candidate Judy Baar Topinka in Chicago

July 7, 2006

Thank you all. Go ahead; please be seated. Thanks for coming. I am honored to be here. I proudly stand with Judy Baar Topinka as the next Governor of the State of Illinois.

Laura sends her best. Like Judy says, "Sorry Laura didn't come." I say, "Yes, most candidates say that." [*Laughter*] I'm really lucky that Laura said yes when I asked her to marry me. And I think the country is lucky to have her as the First Lady. And she sends her very best to Judy. She, like me, hopes that Judy will win. And she, like me, knows that when Judy does win, she's going to be a fabulous Governor for the people of Illinois.

I'm glad to be here with the Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud you're here. Thanks for coming. Somebody said, "What is it like dealing with Hastert?" I said, "Solid as a rock." [*Laughter*] He's predictable. You can count on him. He's doing a fine job as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. I love working with you. We're getting a lot done. And I want to thank you for being here.

Jim Edgar, what a good man. Thanks for coming, Governor. I appreciate you being here. We're members of the ex-Governors club. [*Laughter*] And we got to know Jim and Brenda well during his time as Governor of Illinois, and he was a dandy. All you got to do is aspire to be as good as Jim Edgar, and you'll do a great job, Governor Topinka. He is—he set the standard, didn't he, for Governors here in Illinois. And I'm proud you're here, and thanks for helping Judy Baar.

I want to thank all the candidates who are here. There's a lot here, so I'm not going to try to rip them all off, but I do want to thank you for running statewide—Lieutenant Governor candidate, attorney general candidate, treasurer candidate, comptroller candidate. Maybe I ought to say it just to see if I can get some ink for you: Joe Birkett, running for Lieutenant Governor. [*Applause*] Yes, let's do it that way—Christine Radogno running for State treasurer. Senator, thanks for coming. Senator Dan Rutherford running for secretary of state—there he is. Senator Bill Brady, he's not running for anything statewide, but he's here. Senator, thank you.

It's a good sign to see all the senators. When senators and members start to swarm around, it means they're smelling victory. [*Laughter*] They want to be close to the next Governor. Judy Baar, it's a good sign when you've got people like Tom Cross, the Illinois house minority leader. He's from your district, right, Speaker? Yes. Stu Umholtz is running for attorney general. Thanks for coming, Stu. Yes.

I want to thank Andy McKenna and all the grassroots activists who are here. This has been an incredibly successful fundraiser. And I thank you for your hard work in supporting Judy Baar. It's hard to do a big fundraiser like this, and it takes a lot of good organizers and people willing to go out and pick up the phone and call and ask. And you've done a fantastic job. It's a good sign. People don't want to back somebody who can't win. And you're here to back Judy Baar because, one, you like her; two, you trust her; and, three, you know she can win and become the Governor of the State.

So I thank you all for contributing mightily to her campaign, and I urge those of you who are involved in grassroots politics to kind of warm up and get ready to turn out the vote come November. She's going to need people putting up the signs and stuffing the letters and making the phone calls and urging the good people of this State—Republican, Democrat, and independent—to show up to the polls and do their duty and to vote for Judy Baar. She's going to do a fine job as you're Governor. She's a good, fine, honest person who knows what she's doing. She's got a track record. She can get the job done.

Having been a Governor, I know what it means to be a Governor. You got to have somebody who can set an agenda; somebody that doesn't try to be all things to all people; somebody that says, "Here's what I'm running for, and here is what I intend to do," and then is going to do it. That's what the people of Illinois want. They don't want a bunch of fancy footwork and empty slogans. They want a practical person to say, let's make this State, for example, the best State in the country to be an entrepreneur. Let's

make sure this is a progrowth economic policy in the State of Illinois.

We share a philosophy: The role of government is not to create wealth; the role of government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes. And Judy Baar wants to make sure Illinois is entrepreneurial heaven for people here.

And so, how do you do that? How do you do it? Well, the first thing you do is make sure you keep the people's taxes low. And it works. It works. We have been—in Washington, the Speaker and I and others, working together, have proven that low taxes can increase economic vitality. We believe that when a person has more money in his or her own pocket to save, spend, and invest the way she or he feels fit, the economy grows.

Remember what's happened in the last 5 years. We have faced a recession, a stock market correction, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America, two major military operations to defend ourselves, national disasters, high energy prices. And yet this economy—first quarter of 2006, grew at 5.6 percent. Today we found out we added another 121,000 new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 4.6 percent. The unemployment rate in Chicago is 4.3 percent. Productivity is high. More people own a home than ever before. Small businesses are being created. This economy is strong, and the reason it's strong is because we cut the taxes on the American people.

And the fundamental question is, can we keep them low to make sure the economy grows? Here's the interesting debate in Washington—and I'm proud that Dave McSweeney is here, because he gets it. He's running for the United States Congress. He understands what I'm about to say. Here's the trap: In Washington they say, "Oh, all we got to do is raise taxes to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington, DC, works. Yes, they'll raise your taxes, but they will figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance the budget—and Judy Baar understands this—is to keep progrowth economic policies in place through low taxes and be wise about how we spend the people's money.

Our progrowth policies are working. Pretty soon we're going to announce the new deficit projections. I told the people that if we're wise about spending the money and keep progrowth policies in place, we'll be able to cut the deficit in half by 2009. What's really interesting is that when you cut the taxes and your economy grows, guess what happens. You yield more tax revenues. It's working. And, Speaker, I think we're going to have a pretty good projection here in a couple of weeks that will remind the American people that it's good policy to let you keep more of your own money, that we got to set priorities with your money in Washington, DC, and we can grow our way out of our deficits.

You know, the country has got some tough decisions to make. And that is, do we fear the future and try to wall ourselves off from the world, or do we welcome the competition the world provides and shape the future? And Judy Baar Topinka understands that we shouldn't fear the future. We ought to put good policies in place to keep us the most innovative, technologically advanced country in the world.

And you start with making sure you've got a good education system. When I was Governor of Texas, I used to say, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. In other words, it's got to be the number-one priority of your Governor. And you got to have a Governor that's willing to set high standards and willing to challenge the status quo if you find mediocrity and failure.

We've got too much stateism in public education, too much excuse-making, too much process. See, it's so simple to give up on an inner-city kid and say, "Well, you're this age; you're supposed to be here," or just kind of shuffling children through. It is inexcusable behavior. And therefore, we passed the No Child Left Behind Act, which says, we'll have high standards. And we expect people, in return for Federal money, to measure.

And the reason we want people to measure is because we want to know. We want to know if the curriculum may need to be corrected; we want to know if a school is failing to meet standards; we want to know if children are simply being shuffled through the school system without regard to their capacity to read and write and add and subtract.

And, Judy Baar, you're going to hear all the excuses for no measuring. You know, it's too much State interference, this; you're teaching to test. If we hold people to account, we will make sure children are not left behind.

You know what's happening here in the city of Chicago? You're reading scores are up. And the reason why is because you measure and you correct problems early, before it's too late. I look forward to working with Governor Judy Baar Topinka to make sure we institute the No Child Left Behind Act so the great State of Illinois is on the leading edge of education reform.

If you want to be a good State, in which people risk capital, and a competitive State, you got to make sure you use your community college system wisely. The community college system is a vital part of making sure America is able to compete in the global economy because the community colleges have the capacity to work with employers to help train people for the jobs which actually exist. And I know Judy Baar Topinka is going to be—wisely use the community college system here in Illinois to make sure this State remains competitive and a good place for the entrepreneurial spirit to flourish.

I look forward to working with her to get rid of our dependence on oil, foreign sources of oil. We got a problem. When the demand for oil goes up in China or in India, it causes the price of crude oil to go up, which causes the price of gasoline to go up in Illinois. And we need people who have got good commonsense policies in place, and one commonsense policy is to make sure that we have the opportunity to grow ourselves out of dependence on oil.

I love ethanol, and I intend to work with the Governor here to make sure that is widespread, not only throughout Illinois but throughout the United States of America. Thank you for your understanding that we need alternative sources of energy.

One of the toughest jobs she's going to have is—fight off all the lawsuits. I don't know if the trial lawyers are that tough here in Illinois. I suspect they are. [*Laughter*] They're real tough in Washington, DC, too. You know, I met an ob-gyn coming through the line here. First of all, I can't think of a more noble profession than being an ob-gyn. But there's a problem in the United States of America. We got these junk lawsuits running good doctors out of practice. You know, there's over 1,500 counties in America that don't have an ob-gyn because of all these junk lawsuits. And that's not right, and it's not fair, and it's inexcusable. And you better have yourself a Governor who's willing to look those trial lawyers right in the face and say, "We need tort reform to make sure Illinois holds up the promise for all its citizens."

And by the way, I want to thank the Speaker. I think not one time but two times, he's passed medical liability reform out of the House of Representatives. When I first went to Washington, I thought it was a mistake for there to be a Federal medical liability bill. See, I thought the States can handle it. Then it was explained to me that all these lawsuits are costing the Federal Government—and you—an additional $28 billion a year.

So we got some pretty big health programs. We got Medicare and Medicaid and veterans' benefits. And so when you get all these junk lawsuits out there, it's not only causing premiums to rise, which you pay for, it's also causing doctors to practice defensive medicine, which you pay for.

And so they estimate the tab to the Federal Government is about $28 billion a year. So medical liability reform is not just a State issue, it's a national issue. And I appreciate the Speaker's leadership on getting a good bill out of the House. It's time for the Senate to stop playing politics and pass good medical liability reform for the sake of the patients in the United States of America, for the sake of good quality health care.

These are historic times we're living in, and this country can make the decision to be confident about the future or to retreat from the future. And I believe we ought to be confident. Our entrepreneurial spirit is strong; this economy is good; and we can put good policies in place—good educational policies, good research and technology policies. The Speaker passed a good bill, by the way, that will double the amount of Federal research—Federal monies that go into research for basic science. It's a smart thing to do. It's a way to make sure America stays

on the leading edge of change and technology.

In order to make sure that this country is competitive, you've got to have Governors who understand the proper role of Government and how to properly stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit. And I firmly believe Judy Baar Topinka is that right person, and I want to thank you for supporting her.

Before the Speaker and I get on the helicopter and go see one of the incredibly advanced plants, I do want to talk about the war on terror. Before I do so, I do want to say a really cool place—if you're wondering where a good place is to celebrate your 60th birthday—[*laughter*]—yes, you ought to try—yes, okay, thank you. Thank you. I'm saying, come to Chicago. It's a good place to celebrate your birthday. That's all I'm trying to say. Had a fabulous night last night with the mayor. They asked me at a press conference about the mayor. I said, the mayor is a man of his word. He said, "You're going to get clobbered in Chicago in 2000, and he kept is word." [*Laughter*]

By the way, if you go to the Science Museum, take your kids. It is a special place. I know there are some members of the board who are here—it is really great. And I'm looking forward to shedding my entourage one of these days and spending a little quality time there at the museum. [*Laughter*]

But at my press conference, they spent a lot of time talking about the world. And I told them today, like I'm going to tell you now, that my biggest job is to protect—is to work to protect the American people. And I think about it all the time. They ask, what's the job like, to be President. And the answer to that—job is, you make a lot of decisions. It's a decisionmarking experience. Governor, you'll find it to be a decisionmaking experience.

Rule one on decisionmaking is you make decisions based upon principle, not based upon polls and focus groups. You can't make good decisions if you're chasing a poll. You can't make the hard decision necessary to secure this country and to yield peace if you're worried about whether somebody thinks you're popular. You got to stand for what you believe and do what you think is right. And after September the 11th, I vowed that I would use our national assets to protect the American people. I think about it; I talk about it; I act on it every day of my Presidency.

The enemy we face are a bunch of totalitarians. They have a philosophy. They believe that if you don't adhere to their view, that you ought to be punished. They don't believe in freedom of worship; they don't believe in freedom of speech. They're willing to kill innocent people in order to achieve their objectives. They have clearly stated their objectives, which are to drive the United States out of parts of the world so they can develop safe haven from which to launch further attacks.

There are some people who want to see the world the way they'd like it to be, and I can understand that. My job is to see the world the way it really is. And therefore, so long as I'm the President, we will stay on the offense and bring these people to justice before they hurt the American people again.

We must keep the pressure on all the time. And one of the central fronts in the war on terror, one of the theaters of the war—not the sole theater but a theater in the war on terror—is Iraq. And I know it's on your minds. It's on my mind. We're facing a group of killers there that can't stand the advance of freedom. It should say something about the nature of the people we face when they see a young democracy beginning to grow and they're willing to kill innocent people in order to try to stop the march of freedom. That's one way to describe the enemy.

What is it about a free society that bothers these people? What's troubling about a society in which people are able to worship an Almighty freely if they choose to do so? How come you can't stand dissent in the public square? The reason why is because they have a vision that is opposite of that. And that's why they're doing—taking desperate measures to stop the advance of a democratic society.

And the enemy has got the capacity to kill on a daily basis, which clouds our TV screens. And therefore, some Americans are wondering whether or not we can win. And to those Americans, I say, not only can we win, we are winning. I want them to remember that 12 million people went to the polls in

the face of incredible threat; 12 million people stood up and said, "We want to be free." There's now a unity Government. Victory will be achieved when Iraq, a free Iraq, can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself. And the mission of the United States of America is to help that Government succeed. It's in our national interests there be a free Iraq.

People have often asked me, "Would I have made the same decision I made before, knowing what I know today?" And the answer is, I didn't have that luxury, but getting rid of Saddam Hussein has made America and the world a better and safer place.

And now the question is, does this country have the will and the patience to stand by a new democracy so they can realize the benefits of liberty? And when I flew over to Baghdad to see Prime Minister Maliki, one of my missions was to determine whether or not he had the capacity to lead and to make the tough decisions. I came to the conclusion he does. And my other part of the mission was to tell the Iraqi people, when America gives her word, America will keep her word.

You know, there's a lot of talk about troop levels. Let me just tell you this—and I spoke to a reporter today who asked about Illinois National Guard troops going overseas, and my answer to him was this—it was a long answer, but this is part of the answer: I'm going to make my mind up based upon the measured judgment of the commanders on the ground, and they will make their mind up about what is necessary to achieve victory in Iraq. We will not be set—determining troop levels based upon politics. I will be making the troop level decisions based upon what General George Casey recommends. We owe that to our troops; we owe that to their families; we owe that to the Iraqi.

I do not want the enemy to think that we will withdraw because of politics. The enemy should not think that when they hear talk about artificial timetables for withdrawal, that's what the American people think, nor that's what the Congress will do. This United States Congress and this President will stand squarely behind our troops and stand squarely behind a strategy for victory.

So our short-term strategy is to defeat the enemy overseas so we don't have to face them here at home. And we're keeping the pressure on them. And I appreciate the Speaker's steadfast support. The long-term strategy, we will defeat the ideology of hatred with an ideology that's hopeful and light. And that's the ideology of freedom. And it's worked. It's worked in the past. Freedom has been able to convert enemies into allies.

I—one of my alltime favorite stories is to talk about my relationship with Koizumi. It was enriched, by the way—my relationship reached a new level of friendship when we went to Graceland. [*Laughter*] Isn't that interesting? It should be, when you really put that visit in the context of—in historical context.

After all, my dad and his dad were both old enough to be participants in—observers of World World II. They were enemies. And yet, here his son is getting on the airplane—the son of the Japanese fellow getting on the airplane with George H.W. Bush's son, on Air Force One, to fly down to go to Graceland. And we were talking about the peace. That's what we were talking about. We were talking about the issue of North Korea and the need for Japan and the United States, as well as South Korea and China and Russia, to send a clear message to the leader of North Korea: Your behavior is unacceptable.

I was thanking him for the thousand troops he had in Iraq. It's pretty remarkable, when you think about it, that the Japanese Self-Defense Forces were sent to Iraq to help secure liberty for a new democracy. We talked about how to help people in Afghanistan. We talked about HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. We're talking about how to make the world a better place, yet 60 years ago we were at war.

You've got to ask yourself what happened. How can that possibly be? Is it just circumstance? My answer is, no. One of my predecessors, Harry S. Truman, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy to an ally, and so he worked to see to it that the Japanese were able to adopt a Japanese-style democracy.

Liberty has got the capacity to change the world. We shouldn't be surprised when 12

million people vote in Iraq, because I believe—and I hope you do too—that the concept of liberty is universal; that it's not just a concept for Americans or Methodists, it's a concept that rests in the soul of everybody. That's what we believe in America. That's the basis of our founding.

And so the idea of our enemy becoming a friend shouldn't be a surprise. The lessons of World War II and the aftermath should be lessons applied today in helping us chart our path to victory in the war against these terrorists. Someday, an elected leader of Iraq, a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East, will be sitting down with an American President talking about keeping the peace. And generations of children will be better off for it.

Thanks for helping Judy Baar. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. at the Drake Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Andy McKenna, chairman, Illinois Republican Party; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL; former President Saddam Hussein and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks at Cabot Microelectronics Corporation in Aurora, Illinois

July 7, 2006

The President. Listen, thanks for the tour. The Speaker and I really enjoyed coming. Bill, appreciate you.

William P. Noglows. It's an honor.

The President. It is an honor to be here.

This is an innovative company that is a sign of the times that are coming. This is a company that strives upon our country's greatest asset, which happens to be the brainpower of our citizens. And what's amazing as you walk through the labs and meet the people working here, you say, "What's your degree in?" Let me just say, there wasn't a lot of history majors—physicists, chemists, Ph.D.s, people with advanced degrees. It is clear that in order for this country of ours to be competitive in the future, we've got to understand the nature of the jobs of the future, and these jobs are going to require people who have got math and science skills.

And so one way to make sure this country is competitive is to enhance math and science in early grades and encourage people to take math and science in the later years. And there's all kinds of ways to do that. One is to encourage Advanced Placement programs in our Nation's schools and help train 30,000 teachers in Advanced Placement. Another is to get people from institutions like this to go into our middle schools and high schools and say, "It's okay to be a scientist," you know, "Math and science will be important for your future." In other words, try to inspire people. We call that an adjunct professor program.

We've got a role at the Federal Government to make sure that we're research oriented in a technology-driven economy, and that is to spend your money on basic research, so that, for example, nanotechnology is a really important part of the economy—an important growing part of the economy. And I believe and the Speaker believes—as a matter of fact the House of Representatives believes that it makes sense to double the basic research budget of our Federal Government to help companies like this stay on the leading edge of change.

And so we're here because we want our fellow citizens to understand that we've got some really innovative people here in our country, and that in order for us to be competitive in the future, we've got to emphasize math and science and research and technology.

And so I want to congratulate you for running a good company. I want to thank the people who work here for making you look good. And I thank the Speaker for getting a bill out of the House that funds the American Competitiveness Initiative that I sent up to Congress. The Speaker did good work on that. I call upon the Senate to get it done. This will be a commitment to our Nation's future, so that people won't have to fear the future, because we intend to shape the future.

Anyway, thanks for letting us come by. Proud to be here. You're a great company. Thanks for the good work you do. God bless.