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available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative in New Orleans, Louisiana

August 29, 2006

The President. Laura and I want to thank the educators and students who have taken time to come over and help us make the point that renewal requires good education, and that there are a lot of good folks up and down the gulf coast who understand that, and that part of good education means having good books and strong libraries.

And so I'm going to turn it over to the person who's the strong, good library person in our family.

The First Lady. Well, I'm so excited today to get to see each one of you. I had a foundation already for school libraries, and we were just getting ready to disband the fundraising arm of that, the advisory committee, last year, last October. And when we met for our last meeting, they said, "Let's keep going; let's raise money now specifically for the gulf coast and try to raise enough money so that if every school comes up and is functional again and is staffed, that they can apply for a grant for—to stock their library."

And it's been a thrill to be associated with school people. I know how school people work. You're first-responders, just like firemen and policemen. You know you've got to get your schools up and going immediately. And I want to thank you for your determination and your very hard work, because I know that many of the people on every school staff who rebuilt their schools are also having to rebuild their own lives. They lost their own houses, or they are living in FEMA trailers. And so they're doing double work, and I want to thank you very, very much for that.

This is the second round of grants that we're announcing today—we gave 10 schools, 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi, earlier this summer. And this is our second round of grants to 10 more schools, once again 7 in Louisiana and 3 in Mississippi.

These grants, for the press, might want to know that these are for materials to restock a school library. They come in the form of a check because we know that school librarians want to build their library the way that it will support their curriculum and be most appropriate and perfect for their schoolchildren. So this is not—this is not a book distribution; this is a check to these schools so they can do what all professional librarians want to do, and that is restock their libraries with the best books possible, including the course books that are especially bound for libraries so they can get a lot of use.

So I'm so excited to be here with all of you. I especially want to thank four foundations which have been very, very generous with the second round of grants. The AT&T Foundation, Conoco/Philips, Target, and Enterprise Corporation have been very generous so that we can continue to give grants across the gulf coast. And I want to thank them, their representatives of their corporations here. Thank you all very much for that.

And I also want to thank Marshall Payne out of Dallas, who's the chairman of the Gulf Coast Recovery Initiative. He's back here—and Pam Willeford, who's our director.

So, Pam, I believe we'll take it over to you next.

[*At this point, the public portion of the event concluded; however, the discussion continued, and no transcript was provided.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at Warren Easton Senior High School. The First Lady referred to Marshall B. Payne, chairman, Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative; and Pamela P. Willeford, chair, advisory committee, Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in New Orleans

August 29, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Good morning. From our beginnings as a nation, the church steeple and the schoolhouse door have been enduring symbols of the American community, and so it is today in New Orleans. Earlier this morning, we gathered at St. Louis