

**Remarks on the National Day of Prayer**

*May 1, 2025*

*The President.* Well, good morning. This is a beautiful day. We could not have asked for a more beautiful day than this, and maybe that means something that brings us a little luck.

But it's a great honor, and I'm delighted to welcome you to this very special place, the White House, to celebrate the annual National Day of Prayer. And we're doing it up big. This is the first time they've done it this way, and you deserve it. We all deserve the White House. The White House is special.

We're bringing back religion in our country, and we're bringing it back quickly and strongly. Because for America to be a great nation, we must always be one Nation under God, a phrase that they would like to get rid of, the radical left. But, Ben, I don't think we're going to let them get rid of that, right? We're not letting them get rid of that.

I want to thank a man of incredible faith who's with us, Speaker Mike Johnson, for being here. He's done an incredible job. Thank you, Mike, very much.

We're working very hard on a great big, beautiful bill—beautiful bill. And we're trying to come up with a name, and I said: "Why don't we just call it 'the great big, beautiful bill'? That's what everyone"—[*laughter*]. You know, so we're going to probably do that, because everyone knows what it means.

But later today I'll be going to the University of Alabama to deliver the keynote commencement address to a record crowd. They have a big crowd. They have—I guess they have seven ceremonies. And they said, "Well, if you're doing it, we're putting them all together." I said, "That's a lot of people." So we're going to put them all together. This is the first time they've done that. And I'll give it a shot. All right? I hope we can entertain. I will give it a shot.

But before we begin, I want to let you know what I was just doing in a really great meeting with Speaker Johnson—we had also Majority Leader Steve Scalise; Chairman Brett Guthrie, who's a fantastic guy; and Chairman Smith, everybody knows Chairman Smith—he's the most knowledgeable person on taxes and finances there is—to be updated on the progress of the one big, beautiful bill. We love that bill.

I won't like it if it doesn't pass. Neither will you. It doesn't pass, your taxes are going to go up 68 percent. Think of it. Sixty-eight. And this is a religious ceremony to me, but that I—that's part of the religion—[*laughter*—because if your taxes go up 68 percent, you might give up your religion. [*Laughter*] You might have no choice. You'll be working too hard to try and make it.

And that's the Democrats. That's what they'll give you. They'll vote against it. It's not even believable. It's called Trump derangement syndrome—[*laughter*—because honestly, they—everything in there is good for Democrats, Republicans, and everybody else.

These will be the biggest tax cuts in American history, with 100-percent expensing, which is something that people cannot believe they're getting. We did it in the last one, and we had the most successful economy in my first 4 years that we've ever had the history of our country, and expensing was one of the things that led to that. But it's 100-percent expensing for companies investing in America and increasing take-home pay for the typical family by thousands of dollars a year.

And to show you how middle income this is, there'll be no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, no tax for the great seniors in Social Security. So you have no tax on Social Security for our great seniors.

And we have full deduction for interest. If you buy a car that's made in America, you get an interest rate deduction. That's going to be a big—it's got to be made in America. If it's not made in America, we really don't care if you buy it or not, but if it's made in America, we want you to buy it. We make the best cars anyway.

Things are moving along very well. And I just wanted to say the final details are coming together, and they're coming together rapidly, and I think we're right on schedule, Mike and everyone. And I want to thank you and this group and all of the people that are over there right now—not in the sun, they're working on the bill. It's bill—it will be the biggest bill ever passed in the history of our Congress—our Senate and Congress. That's a big achievement.

One of the things that's very important, we'll be saving Medicaid for Americans in need. We will not let the Democrats destroy it and all the waste, fraud, and abuse that they seem to love. And they will decimate Medicaid if they get the chance. We're not going to give them that chance.

So just remember, we will be saving Medicaid and strengthening it. It will be actually very strengthened, and they are going to decimate it. We can't let it happen. And very simply, to finish that, we will make America rich and healthy again. And why don't we say rich, healthy, and religious again? Okay, should I add that for this group? Right, Dan Patrick?

Thanks, as well, to the great people that are here. Pete Hegseth, who's doing a fantastic job. Pete, thank you.

Marco Rubio, unbelievable. Unbelievable, Marco. When I have a problem, I call up Marco. He gets it solved. He gets it solved.

Scott Bessent, he's got a very easy job now. He's negotiating with about 200 countries. Can you handle it? Do you get to sleep at all? He's got phone calls coming in. I was with him before, he had about 30 phone calls. I said, "Just see me later." They're calling—they're all calling.

Scott Turner, who's doing wonderful work. Recommendation of Ben. Then when Ben, you know, recommends you, I have no choice, right? But you're doing great. You're doing great.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, she's slightly busy. She's on the busy side with all of the—you have a big assortment of everything, when you think of it. She's got every form of crime known to mankind—and womankind, too. You always have to say that as a politician. But she's doing incredible work.

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Tulsi, thank you. Good job. A man that I can't talk about because he's—he goes undercover most of the time. His whole life is now undercover, but he's central casting when you get to see him. I tell you, he's a handsome guy. He just—if I was casting a movie for the CIA, I'd put this guy in it. Director of the CIA, John Ratcliffe. Where's John? John? See, he's undercover. He's here, but he's undercover. He's perfect. *[Laughter]*

U.S. Trade Representative, Jamieson Greer, another busy one, huh? Jamieson, good.

And another one who's negotiating along with Scott and Jamieson. He's negotiating all the time. He doesn't want to talk about it. He can't—he has no life. Howard Lutnick, Commerce. He has no life.

And a very special person, a friend of mine for a long time, and she's doing an unbelievable job at small business, which is really big business. You know, when you add up all that small

business, it's probably the biggest bank in the world. But she is really capable and doing a fantastic job of working with Linda McMahon also on the student loans, getting them paid up. Administrator Kelly Loeffler. Kelly, thank you very much.

And we're also joined by some special Senators, Roger Marshall. Roger. Roger, you are a so—you are a great guy. Whenever I have a problem, he's calling, "Sir, don't worry about." I said: "Thanks, Roger. That's easy for you to say, Roger." [Laughter] But he always is so good. He's a good man.

James Lankford. James, I saw you on television. You were fantastic on television. James was defending me on television—something that's not easy to do, but he did a good job. [Laughter] Thank you, James.

And Markwayne Mullin. Markwayne, where are you? Don't ever fight Markwayne. Yes. Thank you, Markwayne. Don't ever fight him. He was a fighter.

And Cindy Hyde-Smith is here. Cindy. Hi, Cindy. Wow. And we have Representatives—thanks, Cindy, you're doing great. I looked at your numbers. You're very popular. You don't need me to go out and campaign with you this year. [Laughter] Isn't that good? [Laughter]

Representatives Mark Harris, Mary Miller, Gary Palmer, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Robert Aderholt, Jason Smith, Chris Smith, Tim Walberg, and Josh Brecheen. Thank you all for being here.

And we have some others, but I can't see them. I just can't. Cannot see them, so I'm going to get myself in trouble. They'll never vote for me again, Ben. That's the problem. You know, if you don't mention—hi, Mary. But Mary will.

Thank you also to Senior Adviser, Pastor Paula Wright—White, who has been so incredible. She's been right from the beginning, Paula, right? And we had like a 94 percent poll number, and I think Paula got it more than I got it. She's saying, "No, I'm telling you, he's a good person." "Well, we don't like him. We don't like"—"I'm telling you, he's done more for us than anybody." "Oh, okay." And she got us up to about 94 percent. And my old friends, they couldn't believe that I got that kind of a number with—you understand. [Laughter] But you have done a great job.

And Jenny Korn has done an unbelievable job. Jenny. And you know, they work right out of the White House. They've never done that. That's never been done before. No other President allowed that. I think, you know, they say separation—they say, "Separation between church and state," they told me. I said, "All right, let's forget about that for one time." We said, "Really, there's separation?" I don't know. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? I'm not sure.

But whether there's separation or not, you guys are in the White House where you should be, and you're representing our country, and we're bringing religion back to our country, and it's a big deal.

And I want to say, hello, Jon, the most talented man standing here today. He's one of the most successful artists, and his song is one of the most favored by people of religion. That I can tell you, Jon. You've done a great job. I always say he's the husband of Paula White, but actually, he's very successful. It's always—that's always tough to live with, right, Jon? But not really, because you have an incredible wife that you're proud of, right? I mean, that's good.

Oh, he just gave her a kiss. [Laughter] That was the first time they've kissed in years. [Laughter] I'm only kidding. Great job, actually.

The person that's been with me may be the longest, and she's been just an incredible person—never asks for anything, never wants favors or, "Gee, could I use your helicopter to get here or there?"—is named Alveda King, and she's here someplace. Is that—hi, Alveda. She was

here—she was here before it was popular, before I had record numbers with the Black vote. She was here long before I had record numbers, right? Alveda saw something——

*Center for the American Dream Chair Alveda C. King.* Yes, sir!

*The President.* ——and she was here at the very, very beginning, when we were polling on the low side with the Black population. Now we're setting records with the Black population. We got criminal justice reform done.

We got the Black colleges and universities. You know, I got that finance for—it was a very interesting story, because for 2, 3 years, I'd see these really great people—like 50 of them, or maybe a little more. They'd come up to Washington looking for money for historically Black colleges and universities. And they'd come up, and the first time was okay. I helped them get it. I got it for them, and that was it.

Then the next year, they came up. And I said: "Why are you up here? We took care of you." They said, "No, no. They make us come up every year." I said, "You've got to be kidding." So we took care of them, Speaker. We got them long-term 10-year financing, more money than they were asking for.

*Audience member.* Thank you!

*The President.* And I would say, I think I'm the most popular with those 50 people. They liked me. They couldn't believe it, because they were forced to come out—this was for 40 years, every year they'd come up—you know that, Ben—they'd come up, and they became—some of them became friends of mine because they'd come up looking for money all the time. And I said, "We've got to get you, like, some long-term money." And I said to him, "The only bad thing is, I'll probably never see you again." And largely—but I see a couple of them here—largely, that happened. But I took care of them, but they never had to come up. So it was a big thing. It was talked about last night, actually, on television.

Today, as the American people turn to God in prayer, we continue a tradition older than our independence itself. Nearly 250 years ago, on June 12, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed a day of fasting and prayer so that Americans fighting for their liberty could seek the help of the Almighty.

And when you look at that, June 12, 1775—so we have a very, very special day coming up. You know, we have a lot of them during this term. And interestingly, I had none of them had I not had a rigged election. Had the election not been rigged, I would have been out of here. I would have been gone. The radical left would have said, "We got rid of him finally." But no, now they have me for another 4 years. We talk about that.

And in the other 4 years, you know, I sort of said—I got the Olympics to come in, and I got the World Cup to come in, and I said, "You know, the sad part is it's going to be in the—would be the third term." None of it came in during the—what would be the normal—you know, the more normal way of doing it, like counting the proper votes, et cetera, et cetera, and just going on. I would have been—I wouldn't have been president.

But now we end up with 4 years later, and we have the 250-year anniversary, and that will be June 12—250 years. And you have Flag Day, so there's something happening on Flag Day. That's my birthday. But so, you have 250 years in this term. You have the Olympics in this term. We have the Olympics going to Los Angeles. And we have the World Cup.

And I was very instrumental in all three of them. They said, "Would you do it?" Because another president refused to call—refused—they—they needed—for the Olympics and the World Cup, they needed the support of the President, and that particular President refused to talk to them. He didn't want to talk to them. I don't know why exactly, but he didn't want to talk. So, they

said, "Could you talk?" And so I talked and I talked them into it, and we got those two, and we have 250 years.

So this is going to be really 4 years of celebration. So get ready. And we're going to always bring God with us. We're going to bring God to those celebrations. We're not going to forget about God.

In a letter to wife Abigail, John Adams wrote of his first National Day of Prayer, "Millions will be upon their knees at once before their great creator, imploring his forgiveness and blessing and asking for his favor on the American cause." Beautiful.

Today, more than 2½ centuries later, in the heart of a free and proud America, we rejoice that God answered those prayers. And I think God answered other prayers because he's put in an administration to run this country that's going to make you proud again, it's going to make you believe and believe more again, and we're going to have a country that's very strong.

We're already—in just a hundred days, we're respected all over the world. Every leader is calling, want to have a meeting, appointments. They weren't calling so much last few years. They had no respect for our country. Our country was doing very, very poorly, as you know. Millions and millions of people pouring into our borders from—from jails and mental institutions and gang members. It was terrible situation.

And yesterday—I don't know if Kristi Noem is here or Tom Homan—but yesterday we had the lowest, safest border in history: 99.999. In other words, three people got in. Three. And in the previous, it was hundreds of thousands of people were coming in. We had three people.

And we have it locked down, but we are allowing people in, but they have to come in legally. So it's a big thing. So I think it's a very big thing. It's just so appropriate that here we are, so many things are happening, so many great things, and we won't let countries rip us off anymore.

You know, a lot of people like to talk about tariffs. Well, tariffs is exactly what they were doing for us. You know when—when you want to defend that, they're a beautiful thing for us. If you can use them—if you can get away with using them, it's going to make us very rich, and we'll be paying off debt. We'll be lowering your taxes very substantially, because so much money will be taken in that we'll be able to lower your taxes even beyond the tax cut that you're going to be getting, hopefully, with the big, beautiful bill.

And so it's one of those things which just—I think it's just a really amazing time. The spirit that we have in this country right now is greater than I've ever seen it before. And it started on November 5, when we won every swing State. We won the popular vote by millions. We won every district.

Think of this, the districts—it was 2,750 versus 505, and we got 312 electoral votes. Everyone said, "Maybe he can get 270." We got 312. It was a great election, and it has just revitalized the country.

And I think I can say one other thing that's, to me, really incredible, that it can go quick—so quickly. If you remember, 6 months ago, prior to the election, we were unable to get people to join our military. We had a waiting list that was a mile long of empty spaces, and we couldn't get anybody to join. We were—we didn't know, actually, what to do—and I wasn't in the administration, but they didn't know what to do, and it was embarrassing to them, frankly, and it should be.

And that included police and firemen. You couldn't get people to join anything having to do with any of the military groups, any of the law enforcement groups, first responder groups. You

couldn't get anybody to join. And as of yesterday, we had the largest number of recruits in the history of our country. Think of that.

And the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, all of it—Coast Guard, all of them—they're full, and they—we have a waiting list, and we're actually picking the ones we want. And we're trying to take care of everyone—but you're picking the ones you want, and it's been amazing.

And to think just 6 months ago, you were hearing that people weren't signing up, and that includes now our police force. Our police forces were really starving for people. And this includes our police forces. They're all full up and—full up, and they're in great shape. It's amazing the turn.

And mostly that spirit—you know, they have spirit. It's nothing else. It's a—they have spirit. They love our country again, and we're making our country great. We're making our country greater than ever before.

I created a historic White House Faith Office in the West Wing, and that's going to be an office that's been very well—I see already, you have a lot of people going back and forth, and that's good. That's what we want—to defend and represent people of all faiths and their religious freedoms at home and at—and abroad.

But they're coming—really, it's probably doubled the action in the White House. It's been amazing to watch and beautiful to watch. The White House can handle it.

This important office will work to protect vulnerable women and children, strengthen the American family, promote the dignity of work and choice and education. And people that are in trouble can come in and they take care of them. Sometimes they'll send them to a doctor. Sometimes they'll—Paula does this and Jenny—others that are in the office. They're doing an amazing job, and I wanted them to have that office.

It's never happened before. I don't think that's ever happened before, right? The people of faith have never been allowed in the White House. We'll probably be sued tomorrow, because they're going to say: "Church—separation of church and state. Can't do that, right?"

But we'll—and Pam will win that suit. She wins them. She—ultimately she wins them. She gets them. Sometimes they get a little—a judge that's not so good, but she ultimately wins. That's what it's all about. Right, Pam?

I pardoned Americans of faith thrown in jail for praying in peaceful protest. We reinstated servicemembers thrown out of the military over religious objections to Biden's vaccine mandate.

We did a vaccine, but we didn't do a mandate. He did a mandate and threw him out if they didn't take it. Can't do that.

I signed an Executive order to combat anti-Semitism and set up a DOJ Task Force To Eradicate the Anti-Christian Bias. We've taken away a lot of—you know what? Sit—sit down, please. I didn't even know you were standing. What an honor that you stood so long. *[Laughter]* Wow, that's a great honor—thank you—because I know if Biden were up here, you would have been seated. *[Laughter]* You might have never stood up. *[Laughter]* No, that's a great honor. I didn't realize it.

I signed an Executive order to combat anti-Semitism. It's a big thing—a big thing. And I set up a DOJ task force, which is really a big thing—and, Dan, you're going to be involved in it—to eradicate [eradicate; White House correction] anti-Christian bias. You haven't heard that, but there's anti-Christian bias also.

And in just a few moments, I'll also be signing an Executive order creating a Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty, which is really why we're here, more than any other reason.

Many of the new Commissioners are here with us, including people that have been with me from the beginning.

The Chairman is Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, whose idea this was and—stand up, Dan. What a great guy. What a great political person. He's an amazing politician, lieutenant governor, and he's a very—a man of great religion. Thank you very much, Dan.

As well as Dr. Ben Carson. Ben—I don't have to say much about Ben. I don't have to say much. He's been with me from the beginning.

You know, he was campaigning against me originally. Can I tell that story, Ben? You mind? Are you sure you don't mind? Because he was campaigning—he was very effective—and he was going up in the polls. And he looked at me about three or four debates in, and he said, "You know you're going to win by a lot, don't you?" This was during 2016. And I said: "What do you mean, Ben? What do you mean? You're campaigning. Don't say that, Ben, you're campaigning. You have a shot." He was little bit behind to pretty far—far enough. But he said: "You know you're going to win. These people can't beat you. Nobody's going to be able to beat you." And I said, "Why?" He said, "Because God is with you." I said, "That's nice."

And he said it once again in the church. Remember that, Ben? He pulled me over. He said, "Remember what I told you. God is with you." And we went on to win. Three times we won. [Laughter] We won the first time. We did great the second time. We won the second time. Everybody knows it. But we made it too big to rig the third time. Too big to rig. They tried. They tried.

So I want to thank Ben, who has been with me right—right from the beginning. You're an amazing person, and you gave us a great recommendation in this young gentleman, who's doing a fantastic job at HUD. Thank you very much. Really good.

Also, we have Dr. Phil McGraw. Where is Dr Phil? Oh, you are so big. Come here. Come here, Phil. Come here. This guy. He came up. He wanted to do an interview, and I knew him as a very—I mean, everybody sort of knows him, right? But he wanted—he said, "You know, they don't really understand the real Trump. I want to do a"—and he did the nicest interview.

Talked about things that nobody ever asked me, and a lot of people watched it. I was a little surprised. He's got his own network. [Laughter] You know, he's got—he's become seriously rich. He said, "I'll put it on Merit." And I said, "What the hell is Merit?" He said, "That's my network." I said, "Well, I did it as a favor for him, but it turned out to be a favor for me, because so many people—millions and millions of people—watched it."

Would you like to say a few words or are you shy?

Television personality Phil McGraw. Oh, I'll speak.

*The President.* Let's go. [Laughter]

*Dr. McGraw.* Mr. President, I can't tell you, first off, how proud I am to see religion coming back to the White House. God bless you. God bless you for doing this. And let me tell you, it's not a popular thing to do in America right now.

And Speaker Johnson and—is here, and you know he's a man of religion, but you know, I've sat with President Trump, with no cameras around, nobody listening, nobody watching, and I'm telling you, this is a man of deep faith, a man of deep conviction. And this—this is a man that wants this country to—to have a heart and have religion.

And God bless America for giving us President Donald Trump.

And when nobody's listening and nobody's looking, this man cares about every single person in America, independent of race, color, creed, whatever, and it comes from the heart with him.

And I am proud to call him my President. And God bless you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you. Very nice.

*Dr. McGraw.* God bless you.

*The President.* Great guy.

*Dr. McGraw.* God bless you.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Dr. McGraw.* And don't be so surprised when millions of people watch my interviews.

*The President.* No, I know. It's—I'm very impressed.

*Dr. McGraw.* This—with you, it's tens of millions. With me, it's millions. You go—you're a 10x whenever I talk to you.

*The President.* Thank you, Phil. Thank you very much. Be careful.

*Dr. McGraw.* And thank you for letting me be on this commission.

*The President.* We love you. Be careful, Phil.

I asked him, "Please be careful, Phil." We don't want you falling, because when you fall, it doesn't work. That's been proven. [*Laughter*] That's been proven, but he doesn't fall. He doesn't know how to fall.

I also want to look at Bishop Robert Barron, who has been so great. Bishop, thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you. Great job.

Pastor Paula White. If you would stand up, Paula, please. Thank you very much.

Rabbi Meir Soloveichik. Rabbi. How are you, Rabbi? Thank you very much, Rabbi. Good job. Kelly Shackelford.

*Audience member.* Right here.

*The President.* Good. Nice seeing you, Kelly.

Ryan Anderson. Thank you, Ryan. These are great people. Carrie Bowler. Hi. Hi, Carrie.

Attorney General Pam Bondi. Star—this is a star. Thanks, Pam. That's great. Secretary Scott Turner. Scott, thank you.

As well as a man—he has—really an excuse—it's Cardinal Dolan, and Cardinal Dolan is in Rome. I just left Rome. It's a beautiful service. But he's in Rome having to vote for the next Pope. I got extremely upset. I said: "You can't do that. This is much more important." [*Laughter*] He actually was very—he was actually torn—[*laughter*]—if you want to know the truth, which is pretty good. But he's on Council too, and he's a great guy, and I've known him for a long time.

I'd like to ask, if I might, to have Dan Patrick, one of the most highly respected men in politics—we worked on something having to do with your Governor. We worked on something having to do with school choice, and we knocked it over the fences—first to really—and that's the ultimate—school choice—in Texas. And he's been fighting for it for years, and we got it over the line pretty easily, as it turned out.

So please come up and speak. Thank you.



*Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick of Texas.* Thank you, Mr. President, for making this happen.

The President. Thank you.

*Lt. Gov. Patrick.* Mr. President, thank you for establishing what I think will be one of the most important presidential commissions in history. It will be one of your great legacies, of which you will have many. We have in this country—we have a magnificent inheritance of religious liberty. And every believer today, no matter your faith, has a claim to that inheritance.

[ *At this point, Lt. Gov. Patrick continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

I'm proud to represent you as Chair, proud to have Ben Carson as our Vice Chair and every member of this Committee. We will serve you, we will serve the people, and most importantly, we will serve God.

Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Wow. [Applause] Thank you very much, Dan. Beautiful. You're going to do an incredible job.

He came to me with this idea. Called Paula, called Jenny, called all of us, and it just came together. And we'll be adding some incredible names—some of the people that are here right now that have been with me from the beginning, some sitting right over there. My friends, my pastors, and ministers and rabbis. We'll be adding quite a few. It's very important.

And they'll be—largely be—when they can, we're going to be using the White House. We have plenty of room, so we'll be using the White House to have some of your meetings. And it's a real honor to have you, Dan. You've been so respected for so long.

As we defend religious freedom in America, we're also standing up against religious persecution around the world. With us today are the parents of Edan Alexander, the last living American held hostage by Hamas. Thank you. Thank you.

And we don't know how he's doing really, do we? We don't know. We think we know, and hopefully positive. Two months ago, we were pretty sure. It looked like he was getting out, but they've toughened up a little bit, and it's a terrible thing. I know what you're going through.

A New Jersey boy, Edan moved to Israel in 2022 and was taken hostage on the vicious October 7 attack on Jewish people.

And now, I will tell you, that's an attack that would have never happened because the money was given by Iran to Hamas. Iran had no money when I was President. They were out of money. They were bust. They had no money. They weren't giving it to Hamas. They weren't giving it to Hizballah. They weren't giving it to anybody because they didn't have any money. They were just about bust.

And in fact, I put sanctions on last night: Any oil that anybody takes from Iran is not allowed to do business in the United States of America—which is what I did the last time. That drove them into a very bad state, and they were ready to make a deal, except for the election. It didn't turn out the way it should.

It was a rigged election, and we might as well say it, but it was totally rigged. It was disgraceful. I think it's going to go down as one of the biggest disgrace—we wouldn't have—think of it: Your son would be home. You wouldn't have had October 7. You wouldn't have had the Ukraine-Russian horror show that's going on that we're trying to stop, where 5,000 young Russians—mostly Russians and Ukrainian soldiers are being killed every single week. Five thousand a week.

So think of those parents, you know? They're from Russia, they're from Ukraine, for the most part, and—and other people, but for the most part.

And that would have never happened. It was never going to happen. No chance of it happening. Putin and I talked all the time. He knew it wasn't going to happen. I told him it wasn't going to happen. And through gross incompetence, it did take place, and it's a horrible thing.

And you wouldn't have had inflation. Think of it. You wouldn't have had inflation.

You wouldn't have had the horror show at Afghanistan, which I think is what gave Putin the resolve to go in and do what he did, because he looked at how badly we got out. We lost 13 soldiers. Forty-two were horribly injured. Nobody ever talks about them—the legs, the arm—the arms, the face horribly injured. That would have never happened. It—not even possible to have happened, and we would have been out before he was out. I was the one that got it down to the 5,000, but we were going to keep Bagram, the big Air Force base, which is 1 hour away from where China makes its nuclear weapon—that's what they do. They make their nuclear missiles in—1 hour away from Bagram.

And I said, "You can't give up Bagram." They gave up Bagram. And right now China occupies Bagram. So sad. So crazy. One of the biggest air bases in the world, among the strongest and longest runways anywhere in the world, 1 hour away from where China makes its nuclear missiles. It would have been great to have. Well, we were keeping it, but they ran out of there like—like, nobody can believe.

And I think Putin saw that and he said: "Wow, this is a great time. I can go get"—because it was the apple of his eye. I could always see that. I talked to him for hours. It was the apple of his eye. But I said, "Vladimir, don't even think about it." And he wouldn't have thought about it. But when he saw that, I think that's the reason, actually, he gained some additional courage, and he went in.

Adi and Yael, I cannot imagine your pain. I just can't. The—Adi and Yael—but we're all alongside of you. We stand by you, and we're going to.

We're going to do everything possible in the very short period of time. You know, as you know, things are heating up there. I got—I've gotten a lot of hostages out. We were getting nobody out. A lot of them are out, but they want to do it as slowly as possible, because they use them as pawns. It's a horrible thing, but we're working very, very hard to save your son. We have news coming out, both good and bad, but we're working very hard.

And I have many parents seeing me. I was with the hostages—10 hostages I got out. They came about three weeks ago to the Oval Office right here, and they said to me—it was just terrible. And I said—interestingly, because, you know, you see—there's always some heart in somebody, you think. I said, "So you've seen, like, hundreds of Hamas, right?" "Yes, yes."

They lived in a pipe. They didn't really live in a tunnel. They lived in a pipe that was this big. They could barely breathe. It's amazing. One was in for 305 days. One was in for over 500 days. But I got them out and through very tough—it was very tough. The whole thing was very tough.

I said: "Did you ever see any love or kindness? Like did any of these people that were guarding you, the Hamas people, did they ever look at you and say, 'Don't worry, you'll be all right'? Or did they ever look at you and say, 'I'm going to sneak you a little extra bread or a little extra something for eating'? Did they ever give you any hope?" He says, "No, not one." I said, "You mean, so not one person looked at you during your 1½ years in there"—one was there longer than that; one was there a little shorter than that—different times. I said, "Not one?" "No, they used to give us a smack on the face. They would never do that. They—not one."

So there wasn't one person out of hundreds that said, "I'm going to sneak you a little bread. I'm going to make sure you get home safely." Not one.

And that amazed me, because in some really bad situations, you'd have some people like that. You'd have some people like that, but not one. I was am—and they were telling the truth. I mean, they were telling the absolute truth.

And when I talked to them about the way they suffered, it was incredible. In fact, I'd say four or five looked very, very solid and normal, and four or five looked like they'd been through hell, but they were all through the same hell.

And I looked at them, and I said, "I can't imagine what you've gone through, but we're going to what we have to do." But I asked them a question. One was wearing "59," and I said, "What does 59 represent?" "That's how many are left." And I said: "All right. We'll get them out." I said, "Are they all living?" "No, 24 are living." I said, "24?" He said: "Yes, 24. Only 24." So 24 out of the 59 are living. And they knew because they had just gotten out. "And what are the others?" "The others are all dead."

But I spoke to the parents of the others, and as much as you want your beautiful boy out, they want their beautiful boy—and, for the most part, as you know, boys—young boys, for the most part—but they want him out so badly.

I said, "Is he okay?" "No, he's dead." But they want him out so badly, almost as much as if he were alive. It was an amazingly sad thing to see, the level of love for the children. And they didn't even view them as dead. They needed the body of their son, and they knew they were dead.

But think of that. Out of 59, you had 24 that were living. And now I understand it's not even that number. And young people don't die. They're very resilient. You know, you don't have young people dying. Young people are killed. Old people die. They can't take it. They couldn't breathe, in some cases, couldn't—they had them in a pipe closed at both ends. If you're claustrophobic, it's a big problem, and many people are claustrophobic.

But young people live. Old people die. But these were young people that were dying, so you know what—you know what took place.

As we bow our heads this beautiful day in the Rose Garden on the National Day of Prayer, we once again trust our lives to—our liberties and our happiness to the hands of the Creator who gave them to us and who loves us—who loves us. Think of it. Where you are now and—so beautiful, but you're—it's so nice, because here you are in this unbelievable setting. I think no setting like it in the world, when you add up the importance.

I take people into the Oval Office and—the biggest people, foreign leaders, Princes, Kings, Queens, and Presidents and Prime Ministers and a couple of dictators, I guess. They don't say that. They say, "No, I'm a Prime Minister" or "I'm a President." And I say, "No, you're a dictator, but that's okay." [*Laughter*] But I bring them into the Oval Office, and they just want to look. They can't believe it. It's the most important. And they all have beautiful offices. They are, in some cases, the wealthiest people in the world; in some cases, the most powerful people in the world. But they go into the Oval Office, and here you are right outside the Oval Office.

And in one way, you're so lucky, but in another way, you're all fighting for people that you know are not so fortunate right now because of people like your beautiful son, people that are being really tortured because the level of anger and meanness thrown off by human—the human being.

You know, they say the lions and the tigers aren't nearly as vicious as the human, because they—they only kill for food. They kill for food. They don't kill. They kill for food. The human

being kills for sport. They try and destroy people—killing or otherwise—for sport. And we've got some bad ones out there—really bad ones.

We have some bad ones here. We have some bad ones in this Government, but we picked good ones. But we had some bad ones in the last 4 years. The things that they did, and the things they didn't do.

Your son shouldn't have been there for long. That would have been so much easier to solve immediately, instead of years later, and it should have never happened. October 7—remember—would have never happened.

So, as we bow our heads on this beautiful day, once again we have to trust our God, because our God knows exactly where we're going, what we're doing, knows every inch of our life. And may he continue to hear our prayers, to guide our steps, and build up our beloved nation to even greater heights.

We're in the process of doing some great things. I get criticized no matter what, but I just go forward, because everyone knows we're right. All we're doing is what they've done to us for 40 years, but we're doing it bigger and better. That's the only thing we're doing.

And now I'd like to ask our faith leaders, including some of the ones that will be our faith leaders on the Council, to come up, if you will. The ministers, rabbis, please come up. Imams, who I got to know in Michigan. I love them. They were great, by the way.

They said, "We don't want to die." I said, "You want to die?" They said, "We don't want to die." I said, "What about the 38 virgins?" They say: "That's nonsense. We don't know anything about it."

And we won the State of Michigan, Speaker, by a tremendous—and we had tremendous support. But we have some people in the audience. And, Ralph, come on up. Get up here, Ralph. If you see anybody, just get them up here, because these are people that have been just unbelievable supporters of what we're doing and doing it right.

And I'd like to start by asking Paula White to lead us in prayer to start off, and each person is going to say a few words and a prayer. Thank you.

*Senior Adviser to the White House Faith Office Paula White-Cain.* Thank you, sir. Thank you, President Trump. You are truly the greatest champion of faith we've ever had. Can someone say, "Amen"?

Just a few words. What a sacred and historic moment to stand in the Rose Garden, in the people's house. And President Trump has graciously welcomed us in, surrounded by leaders of faith and government from every background and every tradition, to honor what anchors us all, and that is prayer.

*[Senior Adviser White-Cain continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]*

We call for a spiritual reset in our Nation, a return to what is right, a reverence for what is sacred, a realignment with your divine purpose. Let your favor rest upon every righteous leader. Let justice flow through our government. Let healing go to every broken place.

And we pray this boldly. We pray this strong. We pray this by faith. And I pray this in the name which is above every name, the name of Jesus. And everybody said, "Amen."

*Audience members.* Amen.

*The President.* Great. Thank you, Paula. Great job.

Could I ask Dan to come on up and John come up? Ben, come on up here, please. You've got to be up here.

Come on, Phil. Who knew that Phil was a man of great religion? Who knew this? I watched him so long, I can't believe it.

I would love to have you come up, representing your religion. Right there, representing your great—so highly respected. Please come up.

Mary, come on up.

And I'd like to have this whole first row come up, if you would. We have room—plenty of room, even if we go back. Mike, come on up. Marco, Scott, Pete, Pam. Oh, look at Howard. Okay. That's great. That's great. Marco is doing such a good job. Get up here, please. Because somebody's keeping him—somebody's helping him. Come on up. I want to thank you.

Marjorie. Come on up here, Marjorie.

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Pastor Maldonado.

*The President.* Pastor—where's Pastor Maldonado?

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Right there.

*The President.* Pastor, come on up. Come on up.

Yes, come on. These are people that have been from the beginning.

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Mark Burns.

*The President.* Where is—yes, come on up, Mark.

And anybody else feels that——

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Gary Bauer.

*The President.* ——that they should be here—where is Gary? Gary Bauer? Is Gary here?

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Mm-hmm. Yes.

*The President.* Come on, Gary. Gary won't take up too much room. [*Laughter*]

I had Ohio State here, and I had, yesterday, the Philadelphia Eagles here, so they took up a little more room than Gary. I got very good at this.

Good, Gary. Nice to see you.

And all of you, I just really appreciate everything you've done. Yes, Jenny——

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Rodney and Adonica Howard-Browne.

*The President.* That would have been terrible.

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Rodney and Adonica.

*The President.* Glad we saw that.

Rodney, come on up. Come on up. This is built to hold a lot of people, don't worry. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Pastor Brad and Rachel Knight.

*The President.* That's great.

So I could ask, please, Rabbi Levi Shemtov to come up, say a few words. Rabbi, please.

*American Friends of Lubavitch Executive Vice President Levi Shemtov.* Almighty one and only God, who was, is, and always will be, who created us all and everything that we see, we seek your grace and humbly ask for your blessing. Our Nation and our world ache as disaster, conflicts, and division rage.

*[Rabbi Shemtov continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

And may we usher in the long-awaited time your prophets have promised of peace and understanding between peoples, kindness and grace, no more war or conflict with the coming of Mashiach, our righteous redeemer, soon in our day. Amen.

*Audience members.* Amen.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

*Rabbi Shemtov.* Thank you.

*The President.* *[Inaudible]*

*Rabbi Shemtov.* Thank you very, very much. Thank you.

*The President.* Mike, please.

*Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson.* Sure.

Mr. President, it was in 1952 that the Reverend Billy Graham took 40,000 Americans to the east steps of the Capitol and petitioned Congress to establish this day the National Day of Prayer.

It didn't take long. It was 2 days later, a unanimous vote in the House of Representatives. Congress worked together well because they knew that priority. They knew we're a nation of faith. It's in our DNA. We are one nation under God, as the President said.

Thank you for your leadership, sir.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Speaker Johnson.* Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the friends and the faithful gathered here in the Rose Garden in this beautiful place. We thank you for your extraordinary blessings upon our nation—almost 250 years now, as we near the great anniversary of this grand experiment in self-governance that you've given us.

*[Speaker Johnson continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

So, Father, we commit our Nation to you. We ask you for wisdom, discernment, and stamina for the President; for the Vice President, J.D. Vance; for everyone in the Cabinet and all the leaders in Congress; and all these faith leaders here, assembled in this garden; and all the Americans around the country who look to you for guidance, who trust you for your protection, and who humbly bow before you. And ask for your guidance and your blessing as we continue to bless you.

We ask and pray, and I believe this all, in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Audience members.* Amen.

*The President.* Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Mike.

Bishop Robert Barron, please. Bishop. Good. Thank you.

*Bishop Robert Barron of Winona-Rochester, MN.* Well, thank you very much, Mr. President, for the formation of this Commission, which I think is of extraordinary significance for our country.

And thank you to so many of the top leaders of our country who are here, which show the priority you give to this very important theme. And with that, let us pray.

*[Bishop Barron continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus, whose resurrection from the dead we celebrate this Easter season and who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

*Audience members.* Amen.

*The President.* Beautiful job. Beautiful. Thank you very much.

I'd like to ask Imam Habash to come up please. Imam, thank you.

*U.S Air Force Chaplain Walid Habash.* Well, greetings, everyone, and happy Thursday. Let us pray.

Today is a great day, made even more memorable by this event.

*[Chaplain Habash spoke briefly in Arabic; no translation was provided. He then spoke in English as follows.]*

In the name of God, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful. O God, the source of peace, the bestower of wisdom, the one who is near to all, who call upon you with sincerity.

*[Chaplain Habash continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

Unite us as one Nation committed to serve one another with dignity, respect, and steadfast hope in your mercy. Truly God, you are the listener of supplication, the one who responds to the call of the caller when they call upon you.

*[Chaplain Habash spoke briefly in Arabic; no translation was provided.]*

Amen, and amen.

*The President.* Thank you. That was fantastic.

Bishop Kelvin Cobaris, please.

*Pastor Kelvin L. Cobaris of Dreams United Church in Plant City, FL.* Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Heavenly Father, Eternal God, we gather in your majestic and presence today, grateful for the blessings and freedom and peace that you have bestowed upon each and every one of us and this great nation.

*[Pastor Cobaris continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

So we pray that thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, and that your will will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. And we pray all of these blessings in the magnanimous, matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God's people said, "Amen."

*Audience members.* Amen.

*Pastor Cobaris.* Amen.

*The President.* Fantastic. Fantastic.

*Senior Adviser White-Cain.* Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you very much. That was something, Bishop. You're something.

So thank you all. This has been an incredible day.

I'm going to now ask the musicians who are so wonderful and talented and loyal to our country to conclude this celebration by leading us in two more songs, and I will then simultaneously begin the process of signing the Commission and signing the Commissioners to—join me, everyone who's not on the stage that's a part of it. Please come up.

And I just want to say this was a great honor. This was a great day. We could not have asked for more beautiful weather, that's for sure. And I want to thank you all for being here.

We're bringing back religion in our country, and we're bringing it back, as I say, bigger and better and stronger than ever before.

Thank you all very much. Musicians, please. Thank you.

*Announcer.* Ladies and gentlemen, please enjoy "Great Are You Lord," followed by "Amazing Grace."

[Musicians performed "Great Are You Lord" and "Amazing Grace," with participants joining.]

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. Thank you.

[The President signed an Executive order titled, "Establishment of the Religious Liberty Commission." He then greeted participants and invited them to visit the Oval Office.]

*Participant.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you, everybody. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, everybody, very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Benjamin S. Carson, Sr.; Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Jason T. Smith; Jennifer S. Korn, Faith Director, White House Faith Office; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Jonathan Cain, husband of Senior Adviser White-Cain; Meir Y. Soloveichik, senior rabbi, Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City; Kelly J. Shackelford, president and chief executive officer, First Liberty Institute; Ryan T. Anderson, president, Ethics and Public Policy Center; author and former Miss California Carrie Prejean Boller; Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York; Gov. Gregory W. Abbott of Texas; Adi and Yael Alexander, parents of Tenafly, NJ, resident and Israeli soldier Edan Alexander, who was captured during the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Ralph Reed, founder and chairman, Faith and Freedom Coalition; Guillermo Maldonado, senior pastor and founder, King Jesus International Ministry (KJM) in Miami, FL; Mark Burns, founder, NOW Television Network; Gary Bauer, senior vice president of public policy, Dr. James Dobson Family Institute; and Rodney Howard-Browne, founder, Revival Ministries International, the River at Tampa Bay Church, and River University in Tampa, FL. Senior Adviser White-Cain referred to Adonica Howard-Browne, wife of Mr. Howard-Browne; and Brad and Rachel Knight, pastors, StoryLife Church in Apopka, FL. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on May 2.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : National Day of Prayer.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Aderholt, Robert B.; Alexander, Adi; Alexander, Edan; Alexander, Yael; Anderson, Ryan T.; Barron, Robert; Bauer, Gary; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela



J.; Bowler, Carrie Prejean; Brecheen, Josh; Burns, Mark; Cain, Jonathan; Carson, Benjamin S., Sr.; Cobaris, Kelvin L.; Dolan, Timothy, Cardinal; Gabbard, Tulsi; Greene, Marjorie Taylor; Greer, Jamieson L.; Guthrie, S. Brett; Habash, Imam; Harris, Mark; Hegseth, Peter B.; Homan, Thomas D.; Howard-Browne, Rodney; Hyde-Smith, Cindy; Johnson, J. Michael; King, Alveda C.; Korn, Jennifer S.; Lankford, James P.; Loeffler, Kelly L.; Maldonado, Guillermo; Marshall, Roger W.; McGraw, Phil; McMahon, Linda E.; Miller, Mary E.; Mullin, Markwayne; Newsom, Gavin C.; Noem, Kristi L.; Palmer, Gary J.; Patrick, Dan; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Ratchliffe, John L.; Reed, Ralph; Rubio, Marco A.; Scalise, Stephen J.; Shackelford, Kelly J.; Shemtov, Levi; Smith, Christopher H.; Smith, Justin T.; Soloveichik, Meir Y.; Turner, E. Scott; Walberg, Timothy L.; White-Cain, Paula.

*Subjects:* 2024 Presidential election; Afghanistan, withdrawal of U.S. military forces; Anti-Semitism; Armed Forces, U.S., recruitment efforts; Attorney General; Border security; California, Governor; Central Intelligence Agency; Director of National Intelligence; Federal deficit and debt; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Holy See (Vatican City), Pope; House majority leader; Illegal immigration; Iran, oil supply and refining; Iran, regional involvement; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Medicare and Medicaid programs; National Day of Prayer; Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty; Religious freedom; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; School choice and voucher programs; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Small Business Administration; Social Security program; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; Texas, Lieutenant Governor; U.S. Trade Representative; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; White House Border Czar; White House Faith Office.

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