

Commission to create a national Do-Not-Call Registry, a tool that will help ensure that telemarketers respect the privacy of our Nation's citizens. This registry will allow people to limit most unwanted telemarketing calls by registering their home or cell phone numbers. Registration can be completed by phone or over the Internet, and it is free of charge. The service also comes at no expense to the taxpayers. After all, it is fully funded by the telemarketing industry.

Response to the initial proposal to create the do-not-call list was very strong. The FTC received more than 60,000 comments that overwhelmingly supported the registry's creation. After a number is registered, commercial telemarketers will be required to remove that number from their call list within 3 months. In addition, most States that already have similar do-not-call lists will transfer their numbers to the national registry.

Citizens interested in finding out more about the Do-Not-Call Registry and how to register telephone numbers should visit donotcall.gov—should call up on the Internet, donotcall.gov, and they will find out

how to place their number in the registry. Chairman Muris and Chairman Powell told me that as of today—starting last night, as of today, 108 persons per second are now registering their phone numbers.

I want to commend the FTC and the FCC and the United States Congress for their good work on behalf of American consumers.

I'm also pleased by the votes last night in the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives to improve Medicare and to extend prescription drug coverage to our seniors. A stronger Medicare system that gives our seniors more choices and better benefits has been a central priority of my administration. I urge the Congress to reconcile their differences and to get a bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:42 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in San Francisco, California June 27, 2003

Thank you all very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for coming. It's great to be back in the bay area. Bradley, if that is a short introduction, I hate to see a long one. [Laughter] But I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your leadership. I want to thank you all very much for supporting our efforts. I want to thank you for coming and giving of your hard-earned dollars. You are laying the foundation for a nationwide victory next year.

I'm getting ready. I'm loosening up. [Laughter] And I'm going to need your help. I'll need your help not only financially

but also to pass our positive, inclusive message around the bay area. I want you to remind your citizens, fellow citizens, that our vision is one that is hopeful and optimistic.

Listen, there's going to be plenty of time for politics. The political season will come in its own time. Right now, I'm focused on the people's business in Washington, DC. And we have a lot on the agenda. And what I want to tell you is that I will continue to earn the confidence of all Americans, regardless of their political

party, by keeping this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

I've just come from Washington to here, obviously. I'm going down to LA. I wish I came with my wife. I wish she were with me. She has done a fabulous job. I will see her tonight in Crawford, Texas. Well, she'll be the lump in the bed next to me, since I get in at 1:30 in the morning. [Laughter] But you drew the short straw. Had she come and spoken, you would have had the long straw. She is a—she's a remarkable person. She has been calm and steady in the face of significant crisis. She can smile; she can listen. She is a fabulous First Lady for the United States of America.

I do want to thank Brad and Gerry Parsky and the people that put on this dinner and worked hard to raise the money. I'm so honored that—for your help. I also appreciate Dennis Miller. Obviously, after your one-liners, Brad, he doesn't have anything to fear for his job. [Laughter]

We've been through some remarkable times in America during the last 2½ years. This Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. We are meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many of the leaders of Al Qaida. And the rest of them know we're hot on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill,

the strength, and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. Then the attacks on our country and scandals in corporate America and war affected the confidence of the people. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, we have twice led the Congress to historic tax relief for the American people.

Here is what we believe and what we know. When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or to invest, the whole economy grows, and someone is more likely to find a job. We understand as well whose money we spend in Washington, DC. The money we spend in Washington is not the Government's money. It is the people's money. And we're returning more money to the people to help them raise their families, and we're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to expand and hire new people. With all those actions, we are laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America, so that every single person in this country has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years later—2½ years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We believe that every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school in America to teach those basics. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in every classroom all across America so that not one single child is left behind.

We reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for our entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. We passed a budget agreement to help maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and is making progress on behalf of the American people.

The United States Congress shares in these great achievements, and I appreciate the hard work of the Members of Congress. We will continue to work together to change the tone in Washington, DC, by focusing on the people's business and by focusing on results. And that's the nature of the men and women I asked to serve our country in my administration. I have put together a really good team of people. And the reason, they understand, is our jobs are to represent something greater than ourselves, and that is the great country called America.

And I'm proud of our Vice President. Dick Cheney is the best Vice President this Nation has ever had, although my mother may not agree. [Laughter] In 2½ years, we have come far. We've come far in 2½ years. We've accomplished a lot. But our work is only beginning. We have great goals worthy of this great Nation.

First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace, for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen has a chance to work and succeed and realize the great promise of this country.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it. Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are

we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; and we will not stop until this threat to civilization is removed.

Yet our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror, free nations do not attack their neighbors, free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And we believe that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world. And when we see disease and starvation and hopelessness, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, a continent I'll be visiting in 10 days, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges at home as well, and our actions will be equal to those challenges. I will continue to work on economic prosperity until anybody who wants to work and is not working today can find a job.

And we have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Last night—or actually, this morning—or last night here; this morning in Washington—[laughter]—the Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices of seniors and provide coverage for prescription drugs. The next step is for both Houses to come together, iron out some details, and get the bill to my desk. The sooner the job is done, the sooner Americans will get the health care they deserve.

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, at the Federal level, the medical liability issue is a Federal problem that requires a Federal solution. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. [Laughter] We need Federal medical liability reform now.

I also have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well. And I have met that duty. I've nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the United States Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

This Nation needs a comprehensive energy plan. We need more natural gas for California's electric plants. We need to promote new technologies. We need to promote new conservation techniques. We need to explore in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of our national security and for the sake of our economic security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and compassionate Nation must also be a prosperous and, at the same time, compassionate place for all. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, applying the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through work. We must build on the success of welfare reform

to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so that more Americans can serve their communities and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children, that are caring for the homeless, that are offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. My administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more of our citizens owning their own home. We want people to own and manage their own health care plan, their own retirement plan. We want more people owning their own small business. We understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake into the future of this country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to one in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you are a—concerned about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving a neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We can see the culture of service and responsibility growing around us. I started what we call the USA Freedom Corps to

encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need, and the response has been strong. And our faith-based charities are strong and vibrant all across America. Policemen and firemen and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right Nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner in America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our country and for our cause, better days lie ahead.

May God continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the San Francisco Airport Marriott. In his remarks, he referred to Brad Freeman, California State finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Gerald L. Parsky, chairman, Team California, California Republican Party Board of Directors; and comedian Dennis Miller.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Medicare Reform Legislation *June 27, 2003*

I applaud the House for taking a significant step to help our Nation's seniors.

This Medicare legislation broadly reflects the reforms outlined in my framework that give seniors the right to choose the health care that best meets their individual needs, including the option of staying in their traditional plan. It also modernizes Medicare so seniors will have access to the newest

medical technologies and most effective medicines.

Seniors have waited too long for more choices and better benefits, including prescription drug coverage, similar to the kind now enjoyed by Federal employees and Members of the Congress. I will continue working closely with Congress during conference to make improvements and pass meaningful Medicare reform.

Statement on Senate Action on Medicare Reform Legislation *June 27, 2003*

I commend the Senate for passing legislation to strengthen and improve Medicare for America's seniors.

This legislation is largely consistent with my framework for reform that allows seniors to choose the health care that best