

## Remarks in Duluth, Minnesota July 13, 2004

*The President.* Thank you all very much. Thanks for inviting me, and thanks for coming. Laura and I last came to Duluth in November of 2000. It was a little colder that day. [Laughter] Any day is a good day to be here in this beautiful part of the world, and I'm really glad to be back.

I appreciate the good folks from Minnesota and Iron Ridge and Northern Wisconsin who are with us today. Thanks for coming. And by the look of things, I'm in Bush-Cheney country.

I'm here to ask for the vote. I'm here to ask for your help. I'm so proud you all came. Thanks a lot. Here's what I want to tell you today: To make sure America has strong, consistent, optimistic leadership, send us back to the White House for 4 more years.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* Today I want to explain how I want to continue to lead this country, but perhaps the best reason to send me back to the White House is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. I'm a lucky man. I'm a lucky man when she said yes when I asked her to marry me. What a fabulous lady and First Lady she has become. I'm sorry she's not here. But I am proud that one of our daughters, Barbara, is traveling with me today. I love that you're here, darling. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate the fact that the Governor was here. I'm proud to call him friend. I know you're proud to call him Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor for being here today. Thanks for coming, Governor. I'm proud you're here. I know the State auditor, Pat Anderson, is with us. Thanks for coming, Pat. I appreciate you coming. I want to thank all those who serve the State and serve your local community for your willingness to serve the people.

I appreciate so very much Lieutenant Colonel Joe Repya for being here today. Joe, thanks for coming, sir. I'm proud to have the Minnesota veterans for me. Thank you for your service.

I thank my friend Dan Urshan for being here. He's in charge of the grassroots campaign. His job is to turn out the vote, and so is yours. If you're interested in helping, get on the Internet for [georgewbush.com](http://georgewbush.com). It's a place where you can learn how to volunteer. See, I'm here to nurture those grassroots. I'm here to say I can't win it without your help. And I appreciate you coming.

I want to thank Bob Lessard, who's the Minnesota Sportsmen for Bush chairman. I'm honored that so many sportsmen, hunters, and fishermen are here. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank the Minnesota Teen Challenge Choir for being here today. Most of all, I want to thank you all. I'm so honored you came. We're going to win.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* When you're out rounding up the vote, remind the folks that the last 3½ years have brought serious challenges, and we have given serious answers. When we came to office, the stock market was in decline and the economy was headed into a recession. We delivered historic tax relief. And over the past 3 years, America has had the fastest growing economy of any major industrialized nation in the world.

We saw war and grief arrive on a quiet September morning, so we have pursued the terrorist enemy across the world. We've captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and we will stay on the hunt until justice is done and America is secure.

We confronted the dangers of state-sponsored terror and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We acted against two of the most violent and dangerous regimes on Earth. We liberated over 50 million people. America is once again proud to lead the armies of liberation.

When my really fine Vice President, Dick Cheney, and I came to Washington, the military was underfunded and underappreciated, so we gave our Armed Forces the resources and respect they deserve. And today, no one can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

These accomplishments are important to the security and the prosperity of America. It is the President's job to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. A President must make hard decisions and keep his commitments, and that is how I will lead our country for 4 more years.

I'm ready for the race. I look forward to it, and it's going to be a tough contest. Now, I'm running against an experienced United States Senator. He's been in Washington a lot longer than I have.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* He's been there long enough to take both sides of just about every issue. He voteded for the PATRIOT Act, for NAFTA, for the No Child Left Behind Act, and for the use of force in Iraq. Now, he opposes the PATRIOT Act, NAFTA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the liberation of Iraq.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* If you disagree with my—

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* If you disagree with my opponent on most any issue, you may just have caught him on the wrong day. Recently here in the Midwest, he even tried to claim he was the candidate with conservative values.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* I know—I know. But that's what he said. [Laughter] A bit hard to square that with my opponent's previous statement when he said, "I'm liberal and proud of it." [Laughter]

Now he has a runningmate. Senator Kerry is rated as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate, and he chose a fellow lawyer who is the fourth most liberal Member of the United States Senate.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* Back in Massachusetts, that's what they call balancing the ticket. [Laughter]

Great events will turn on this election. The person who sits in the Oval Office will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. I'm asking for your vote because I have a vision and a strategy to win the war on terror and to extend peace and freedom throughout the world. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan to continue to create jobs and opportunity for every single American. I'm asking for your vote because I have a plan and a deep desire to rally the compassionate spirit of America, so every single American has a chance to realize his or her dreams. When the people give us 4 more years, America will be safer, America will be stronger, and America will be better.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* A big issue in this campaign and a big issue for every family in America is their tax burden—

[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]

*The President.* By providing the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President, we have left more money in the hands that earned it. By spending and investing and helping create new jobs, the American people have used their money far better than the Government would have.

Our economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Since last summer, our economy has been growing at its fastest rate in nearly 20 years. In less than a year's time, we've added more than 1.5 million new jobs. People are going back to work here in America. Here in the great State of Minnesota, the unemployment rate has dropped to 4.3 percent. Across this country, the manufacturing sector is growing stronger, with 64,000 jobs created since January. The homeownership rate is at an alltime high. Business investment is growing. Consumer confidence is at a 2-year high. Personal incomes are on the rise. The tax relief we passed is working.

My opponents look at all this progress and somehow conclude that the sky is falling. [Laughter] But whether their message is delivered with a frown or a smile, it's the same old pessimism. And to cheer us up, they propose higher taxes, more Federal spending, and economic isolationism. The surest way to end economic growth and put Americans out of work is their plan. This Nation is on the path to progress, and we're not going there.

To sustain economic growth, we need to keep taxes low. Higher taxes would undermine growth and destroy jobs. To help the American economy and create more jobs for American workers, my message to Congress is this: Make the tax relief permanent. Do not raise the taxes on the American people.

In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, we've got to be smart about how we spend your money. We need to set priorities. We need to make sure we don't overpromise with the people's money. The best way to make sure that we're wise with your money is to remember whose money we spend in the first place. It is not the Government's money we spend in Washington; it is the people's money.

And there's more we need to do. We need to stop the frivolous lawsuits. You cannot be pro-small-business and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to

choose. My opponent has made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. [Laughter] I made my choice. I will continue to push Congress for reform to end the junk lawsuits that are hurting our small businesses all across America.

In order to make sure people work in America and to make sure this economy is strong, we've got to help more Americans better afford health insurance by giving people better access to health care through association health plans, giving Americans more control over their health care through tax-free health savings accounts. And to make sure you've got a doctor around here and to make sure the cost of health care goes down, we need to pass medical liability reform in Washington, DC.

In order to make sure America is a good place to invest so people can find work, we need to pass sound energy legislation. I submitted a bill to the United States Congress 2 years ago. They need to get the bill to my desk. It's a bill that will modernize our electricity system. It is a bill that will encourage conservation. It is a bill that encourages alternative sources of energy. But it is also a bill that recognizes we can explore for coal and natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. For the sake of economic security and national security, we need to be less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

The Minnesota farmers are doing well. You know why? Because we're selling farm products all over the world. When you're good at something, you ought to encourage it. We're good at growing things. We're good at building things. And we ought to be opening up markets rather than falling prey to the false hopes of economic isolationism. This country needs to have a President that's willing to knock down the barriers so that we can compete anytime, anyplace, anywhere on a level playing field.

What I'm telling you is in order to make sure this economy is robust today and tomorrow, you need to put back in the White House a pro-growth, a pro-entrepreneur, a

pro-farmer, a pro-small-business President, and that's George W. Bush.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* America's future also depends on our willingness to lead in the world. The momentum of freedom in our time is strong, but we still face serious dangers. Al Qaida is wounded but not broken. Terrorists continue to attack in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regimes in North Korea and Iran are challenging the peace. If America shows weakness or uncertainty in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. That's not going to happen on my watch.

After the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, this Nation resolved, and I resolved, to fight the terrorists wherever they dwell. We resolved to hold regimes that hide and sponsor terrorists to account. Afghanistan was a terrorist state, a training camp for Al Qaida killers. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy and an ally in the war on terror. Because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in their life.

Iraq, only last year, was controlled by a dictator who threatened the civilized world and had used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. For decades, he tormented and tortured the people of Iraq. Because we acted, Iraq today is a free and sovereign nation. Because we acted, the dictator is now in a prison cell and will receive the justice he denied so many for so long.

September the 11th, 2001, taught a lesson this Nation must never forget. It's a lesson I will never forget: America must confront threats before they fully materialize. And so my administration, remembering the history of Saddam Hussein, looked at the intelligence, and we saw a threat. Members of the United States Congress from both political parties looked at the same intelligence, and they saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat. The previous administration and

the Congress looked at the same intelligence and made regime change in Iraq the policy of our Government.

In 2002, the United Nations Security Council yet again demanded a full accounting of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs. The world came together. The world saw a threat and said, "Declare, disarm, or face serious consequences." As he had for over a decade, he defied the free world. He refused to comply. As a matter of fact, he systematically deceived the inspectors. What was he trying to hide?

So we had a choice to make—I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman, or defend our country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq. America and the world is safer because we did. We removed a declared enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them. In the world after September the 11th, that was a risk we could not afford to take.

We still have important and difficult work to do. Our immediate task in Iraq and Afghanistan is to capture or kill the terrorists and foreign fighters. You see, you can't talk sense to them. You can't negotiate with these people. You can't sit back and hope for the best. We must engage our enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

In a country as big as ours, there's no such thing as perfect security, and threats to our homeland are real. We know that the terrorists want to strike the United States again to spread fear and disrupt our way of life. So we have reorganized our Government to better protect the homeland. And a lot of good people—I mean, a lot of good people—are working long

hours to protect you and the American people. I know I speak for everybody here when I thank the Nation's first-responders—the police and firefighters and emergency teams of Duluth, Minnesota.

We're defending our homeland. We're defeating the terrorists abroad. Yet, in the long run, our safety requires something more. We must work to change the conditions that give rise to terror in the Middle East, the poverty and the hopelessness and the resentment that terrorists can exploit. Life in that region will be far more hopeful and peaceful when men and women can choose their own leaders and the people can decide their own future. By serving the ideal of liberty, we are bringing hope to others, and that makes America more secure. By serving the ideal of liberty, we're also serving the deepest ideals of our country. We understand that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

The world is changing because of our leadership. Three years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Now the terror camps are closed, and democracy is rising, and the American people are safer. Three years ago, Pakistan was a safe transit point for terrorists on missions of murder. Now Pakistani forces are rounding up the terrorists. They're joining us in the war on terror, and the American people are safer. Three years ago in Saudi Arabia, the terrorists were finding little opposition. Now the Saudi Government is taking the fight to Al Qaida, and America is safer for it. Three years ago, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Now thousands of Libya's chemical munitions have been destroyed. Libya has given up nuclear processing equipment, and the American people are safer for it.

The world is changing for the better. Three years ago, a dictator in Iraq had the capability of producing weapons of mass destruction. He had ties to terrorist organizations. He hated America. He was paying

families of suicide bombers. That dictator is no longer a threat, and the American people are safer.

We have more work to do. We're determined to finish the work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Those nations now have courageous and responsible leaders. And nations around the world are rallying to help. The NATO Alliance, the EU, and United Nations are standing behind the newly liberated people of Iraq and Afghanistan. These good people are taking more and more responsibility for their own security. They want to live in freedom, just like you and I love to live in freedom. And those people need to know they can count on America. We promised to help deliver them from tyranny, to restore their sovereignty, and to set them on the path to democracy. When America gives its word, America keeps its word.

Our men and women in the military are keeping America's commitment. They're taking great risks on our behalf. At bases across our country and the world, I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country and those who sacrifice for our country. I've had the privilege of meeting the family members of those who have been lost in combat. The best way to honor their memory is to complete the work before us.

We've got a fantastic military because we've got fantastic people in the military. I've seen their great decency and their unselfish courage. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the cause of freedom is in really good hands.

And we better make sure they have all they need. Last September, I proposed what we call supplemental funding to support our military in its mission. The legislation provided funding for body armament and vital equipment, for hazard pay, health benefits, ammunition, fuel, and spare parts for our military. This was an important vote. In the United States Senate only a

small, out-of-the-mainstream minority\* voted against the legislation. And 2 of those 12 Senators are my opponent and his runningmate.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* Senator Kerry tried to explain his vote by saying this: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it," end quote. [*Laughter*] That really clears it up. [*Laughter*] Now he is offering a different explanation. Yesterday, Senator Kerry said he is proud that he and his runningmate voted against the funding for the troops. Now listen, he's entitled to his view. But Members of Congress should not vote to send troops into battle and then vote against funding them.

America is leading the world with confidence and moral clarity. We have built strong coalitions to make the world a safer place. We've got over 60 nations in the Proliferation Security Initiative; nearly 40 nations are in Afghanistan; more than 30 countries are in Iraq. As your President, I will continue to build our alliances and work with our friends in the cause of peace and freedom and security. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

This Nation is prosperous and strong, yet we need to remember that our greatest strength is in the character of our citizens. The other day, my opponent said that a bunch of entertainers from Hollywood conveyed the heart and soul of America.

*Audience members.* Boo-o-o!

*The President.* I believe the heart and soul of America is found in places like Duluth, Minnesota.

Our Nation is strong because of the values we try to live by: courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. We're strong because of the institution that helped to give us direction and purpose: our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. These values and institutions are fun-

damental to our lives, and they deserve the respect of our Government.

We stand for high standards in our public schools, local control of our public schools, accountability in our public schools, so no child is left behind in America. We stand for the fair treatment of faith-based groups so they can receive Federal support for their works of compassion and healing. We stand for welfare reforms that require work and strengthen marriage, which would help millions of Americans find independence and dignity. We stand for institutions like marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for judges who strictly and faithfully interpret the law, instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We're making progress on building that culture of life here in America. Members of both parties believe that moms and dads should be involved in important decisions by their minor daughters. Members of parties came together to pass the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, to punish violent crimes against mothers and their unborn children. Members of both parties voted to end the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Republicans and Democrats can agree on these issues. Yet on the positions that so many Americans share, my opponent is on the other side. That's not the mainstream of this country. We stand for a culture of responsibility in America. The culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture 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're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for

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\* White House correction.

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 a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. You and I are living in a period when the stakes are high and the challenges are difficult, a time when firm resolve is needed.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I'll never forget that day. Workers in hardhats were chanting, "Whatever it takes." I remember working—trying to console people, and either a firefighter or a policeman said, "Do not let me down."

As we all did that day, these men and women searching through the rubble took it personally. I took it personally. I have a responsibility that goes on. I will never relent in bringing justice to our enemies. I will defend the security of America, whatever it takes.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

## Remarks in Waukesha, Wisconsin July 14, 2004

*The President.* Thanks for coming. It's good to be back here in Waukesha. What a beautiful day. Listen, I was talking to Tommy, and I said, "You know, I need to get back to Wisconsin." He said, "You sure do." I said, "Do you know your way around there?" [*Laughter*] So he and I have gotten on this modest little bus here.

*The President.* In these times, I have seen the—witness—I have been witness to the character of this Nation. I've seen the unselfish courage of our troops. I've seen the heroism of Americans in the face of danger. I've seen the spirit of service and compassion renewed in our country. And we've all seen our Nation unite in common purpose when it mattered most.

We will need all these qualities for the work ahead. We have a war to win. And the world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace. We have the duty to spread opportunity to every corner of this country. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our blessed country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Lt. Col. Joe Repya, USA (Ret.), Minnesota veterans cochair, and Dan Urshan, Minnesota leadership team, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

[*Laughter*] And we're going to travel your beautiful State.

I'm here asking for the vote. I've come back to this important State to say to the people of Wisconsin, I know what I need to do to lead this country. I know what I need to do to make the world more peaceful, America more hopeful. I know what I want to do to make America safer,