

See, these volunteers show the true heart of America. Because we're a compassionate people, we care when a neighbor hurts; we long to help somebody when help is needed. They have the gratitude of all they've served, and they have the admiration for our whole country.

Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne have strained the resources of many relief organizations. People across the Nation have donated money and supplies to help their efforts. I'm grateful for their generosity. I hope many more Americans will continue to contribute. It's very important for our fellow citizens to understand the strain on the resources for the Red Cross, for example, or the Salvation Army or other faith-based groups. And if you want to help, if you want to participate in helping the good folks in this part of the country who hurt, contribute. You can contact the Red Cross at 1-800-HELPNOW or the Salvation Army at 1-800-SALARMY or the Florida Volunteer and Donations Hotline at 1-800-FLHELP1. Or you can contact one of the many other organizations that are providing help.

The Federal Government is working closely with State and local authorities to help people recover. FEMA is working with

Florida's Emergency Response Team and the National Guard to ensure safety. Medical personnel are treating the sick and the injured. Earlier today I visited a FEMA disaster recovery center where hurricane victims can go to register for disaster assistance.

I've asked Congress to provide \$12.2 billion in Federal funds to respond to these storms. I urge the Congress to pass my supplemental request quickly so the people of Florida can get the help they need.

People in Florida and many other States are coming through a trying time. I thank all those who've reached out to help the neighbors in need. I thank the leaders who have shown strength and composure during difficult times. And to our fellow citizens facing hardship, the prayers of our Nation are with you, and America stands with you.

Thank you all for coming. God bless your compassion.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. at the American Red Cross, Martin County Chapter. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage *September 30, 2004*

Today a bipartisan majority of U.S. Representatives voted in favor of a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. I am disappointed that the House failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote. Because activist judges and local offi-

cials in some parts of the country are seeking to redefine marriage for the rest of the country, we must remain vigilant in defending traditional marriage. I welcome the important debate underway across America on this issue.

Presidential Debate in Coral Gables, Florida September 30, 2004

Jim Lehrer. Good evening from the University of Miami Convocation Center in Coral Gables, Florida. I'm Jim Lehrer of the News Hour on PBS. And I welcome you to the first of the 2004 Presidential debates between President George W. Bush, the Republican nominee, and Senator John Kerry, the Democratic nominee.

These debates are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight's will last 90 minutes, following detailed rules of engagement worked out by representatives of the candidates. I have agreed to enforce their rules on them. The umbrella topic is foreign policy and homeland security. But the specific subjects were chosen by me. The questions were composed by me. The candidates have not been told what they are, nor has anyone else.

For each question, there can only be a 2-minute response, a 90-second rebuttal, and at my discretion, a discussion extension of 1 minute. A green light will come on when 30 seconds remain in any given answer, yellow at 15, red at 5 seconds, and then flashing red means time's up. There is also a backup buzzer system if needed. Candidates may not direct a question to each other. There will be 2-minute closing statements but no opening statements.

There is an audience here in the hall, but they will remain absolutely silent for the next 90 minutes, except for now, when they join me in welcoming President Bush and Senator Kerry. [*Applause*]

Good evening, Mr. President, Senator Kerry.

As determined by a coin toss, the first question goes to you, Senator Kerry. You have 2 minutes.

Preventing Future Terrorist Attacks

Do you believe you could do a better job than President Bush in preventing an-

other 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States?

Senator Kerry. Yes, I do. But before I answer further, let me thank you for moderating. I want to thank the University of Miami for hosting us. And I know the President will join me in welcoming all of Florida to this debate. You've been through the roughest weeks anybody could imagine. Our hearts go out to you, and we admire your pluck and perseverance.

I can make America safer than President Bush has made us. And I believe President Bush and I both love our country equally, but we just have a different set of convictions about how you make America safe. I believe America is safest and strongest when we are leading the world and when we are leading strong alliances.

I'll never give a veto to any country over our security, but I also know how to lead those alliances. This President has left them in shatters across the globe, and we're now 90 percent of the casualties in Iraq and 90 percent of the costs. I think that's wrong, and I think we can do better.

I have a better plan for homeland security. I have a better plan to be able to fight the war on terror: by strengthening our military; strengthening our intelligence; by going after the financing more authoritatively; by doing what we need to do to rebuild the alliances; by reaching out to the Muslim world, which the President has almost not done; and beginning to isolate the radical Islamic Muslims, not have them isolate the United States of America.

I know I can do a better job in Iraq, where I have a plan to have a summit with all of the allies, something this President has not yet achieved, not yet been able to do to bring people to the table. We can do a better job of training the Iraqi forces to defend themselves. And I