

of partial-birth abortion. But Senator Kerry was part of a far left minority that voted against the ban.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He also voted against parental notification laws and voted against the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. I will continue to——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I will continue to reach out to Americans of every belief and move this goodhearted Nation toward a culture of life.

My opponent has said that you can find the heart and soul of America in Hollywood. [*Laughter*] Most of us don't look to Hollywood as the source of values. The heart and soul of America is found right here in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

All these choices make this one of the most important elections in our history. The security and prosperity of our country, the health and education of our citizens, the retirement of our seniors, and the direction of our culture are all at stake. The decision is in the best hands because the decision belongs to the American people.

I believe in the future of this country. We see a great day for the American people. One of my favorite quotes was written by a Texan, a friend of ours. He said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side that sees the day

that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." My opponent has spent a lot of this campaign talking about the day that is gone. I see the day that's coming.

We've been through a lot together. We've been through a lot together in the last years. Because we've done the hard work of climbing that mountain, we see the valley below. We'll protect our families. We'll build on their prosperity. We'll defend our deepest values. We will spread freedom and peace, and as we do, America will be safer here at home.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you honored me with this office, I would uphold the honor and the dignity. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. On to victory! Thank you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. at the Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks in a Discussion in Canton, Ohio October 22, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Go ahead and be seated, please. We've got some work to do. Thank you all for coming today.

First of all, George, thank you for that strong endorsement. I am proud to have George in my corner, just like I'm proud to have thousands of Democrats all across

the State of Ohio who understand if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America to put me and Dick Cheney back in office. Thank you, sir.

I'm keeping mighty good company today. So I don't know if you know this or not, but Laura and I were in the seventh grade

together at San Jacinto Junior High in Midland, Texas. And then we became reacquainted when she was a public school librarian in Texas. I asked her to marry me. She said, "Fine, I will marry you, but make me one promise." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Never make me give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you've got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. Laura is a great speaker, and when she does, the American people see a compassionate, warm, wonderful First Lady.

So I have been telling the girls, one of these days, we'll take the family camping trip. [Laughter] They envisioned the Grand Canyon, the wilds of Alaska. Girls, this is it, the 2004 campaign. [Laughter] We love them dearly. I'm proud of Barbara and Jenna. Thank you all for campaigning so hard.

Thanks for coming today. I'm back in the great city of Canton because I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here to describe to you what I intend to do over the next 4 years to make this country a better place. I believe you have to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote. We've got a very unusual way of making some points today. As you can see, I've been joined by some citizens from Ohio here on the stage. We will listen to their stories. I think it'll help the people of Ohio understand why I have made some of the decisions I have made.

Before I begin, though, I want to thank your Governor, Bob Taft, for joining us today. Governor, great to see you. I want to thank Jennette Bradley, the Lieutenant Governor. Thanks for coming, Governor. You look great.

Congressman Ralph Regula—appreciate you being here, Congressman. Laura and I were looking forward to seeing the wife, but, no, of course, she's probably out mowing the lawn like you should be doing. [Laughter]

Listen, you've got a great United States Senator in George Voinovich. He doesn't

need a poll or a focus group to tell him what to think. He stands on principle. You know where he's coming from. He doesn't shift in the wind like some other United States Senators I know. [Laughter] Put him back in office. And I'm proud of Mike DeWine, a fine United States Senator as well. We're—Laura and I are proud to call both George and Mike friends.

Today, when I landed at the airport, I met Dan Yeric, who's sitting right there. Dan, why don't you wave your hand. Thanks for coming. Dan has been a volunteer at the Akron Children's Hospital for 12 years. The reason I bring him up is the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. The true strength of America is not our military might; it's not the size of our pocketbook. The true strength of America is in the hearts and souls of citizens who are working to change this country one person at a time, those who've heard the call to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. Dan is a soldier in the army of compassion. Thank you for your example. Thank you for your care.

We're getting close to voting time. Who's counting the days? [Laughter] And I'm here to ask for your help. I believe with your help, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory in November.

So Laura and I and the girls are here to thank you for what you are going to do over the next less than 2 weeks: call the phone—get on the phone and call the voters; put up the signs; find those discerning Democrats like the mayor, independents, Republicans; get people to do their duty and vote.

And when you do, as you get them out to vote, remind them what this economy has been through. I know there's tough times here in Ohio. Remind everybody what we have been through. You might remind them, starting with this point: The stock market was in a serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. And then we had a recession. In other

words, that stock market decline was an indicator that the economy was heading south, and it did. And then we had some corporate scandals. We passed tough law to make it abundantly clear we're not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked. And those attacks cost us nearly a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th, 2001.

Our economy has been through a lot. But we acted. We cut the taxes to spur consumption and investment, and our economy is growing. We raised the child credit to help people with kids. We lowered the marriage penalty. Listen, we don't want a Tax Code that penalizes marriage. We want a Tax Code that encourages marriage. We reduced rates on everybody who pays taxes. I don't think you ought to be trying to pick and choose winners when it comes to tax relief. If you pay taxes, you ought to get relief. We helped our small businesses. We encouraged investment.

Our economy has been growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million new jobs since August of 2003. This month of September—in the last month, that being September, the State of Ohio added 5,500 new jobs. Your unemployment rate will drop from 6.3 to 6 percent. We're moving forward.

I signed a bill that's going to help our manufacturers. It will save \$77 billion over the next 10 years for the manufacturing sector of America. That will help keep jobs here. It's a bill that extended the \$100,000 expensing deduction, expensing allowance for small businesses. That will help keep jobs here in Ohio. It closes corporate loopholes. It repeals the 4.3 percent tax on railroad diesel and barge fuel. That will help keep jobs here in Ohio.

To keep jobs here, we've got to have less regulations on our job creators. To keep jobs growing in Ohio, we need to do something about the junk lawsuits that plague the job creators in the State of Ohio.

It's important for us to open up markets for U.S. products, for markets, for crops grown right here in the State of Ohio. Listen, we've opened up our market, and it's good for consumers. Here's the way the market works. If you have more products to choose from, you're like to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. So rather than hurting our consumers, what I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you; you open up your markets," because we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To keep jobs here, we need an energy plan. I proposed one to the United States Congress over 2 years ago. It's a plan that encourages conservation. It's a plan that encourages the use of renewables. It's a plan that recognizes we can use technology to protect our environment and, at the same time, burn coal and find natural gas. It is a plan that recognizes in order to keep jobs in Ohio, in order to expand the job base here in this State and other States, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we've got to do a good job of educating our people. I told the people when I ran I was going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, you know, the system that just shuffled kids through the schools, grade after grade, year after year, without teaching the basics. I kept my word. We passed the No Child Left Behind Act. It raises standards. It spends more money. But in return for more money, we're now measuring. You cannot solve a problem unless you've diagnosed the problem. We're diagnosing problems early now, and more and more of our children are learning to read and write and add and subtract, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity in our classrooms.

Education is more than just elementary school. We'll extend high standards to our high schools. We'll emphasize math and science. We'll continue to expand Pell

grants so low- and middle-income Americans can start their career with a college diploma. We're going to continue to expand access to community colleges so that people actually have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I'm going to also remind you that to make sure our economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And taxes are an issue in this campaign. They are a significant issue, and I'll tell you why. My opponent has proposed \$2.2 trillion of new spending thus far. That's trillion with a "T." [Laughter] That's a heck of a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [Laughter]

So they asked him, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he pulled out that same old line, that class warfare line, "Don't worry, we'll pay for it by taxing the rich." You can't raise enough money to pay for \$2.2 trillion of new spending by taxing the rich. He says he's going to raise the top two brackets. I'll tell you three things about that.

One, most small businesses are Subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships, which mean they pay tax at the individual income-tax level. And when you're running up the top two brackets, you're taxing about 900,000 to a million small businesses all across America. Guess what, 70 percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. It makes no sense to tax job creators.

Secondly, there is a tax gap. There is a difference between what he has promised, 2.2 trillion, and what he can raise. Now, guess who usually gets to fill that gap? Yes, you do.

Thirdly, the so-called rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason when it comes to tax time: to slip the bill and pass it onto you. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you. Taxes would be bad for our economy. If you want to make sure you keep jobs here in Ohio, you keep the taxes low. We're not going to let him tax the American people because we're going to win in November. He can run.

He can run—he can even run in camo—[laughter]—but he cannot hide.

A couple of other things I want to share with you, and then we're going to talk about health care, as you can see. I want to talk about promoting an ownership society in America. You know, it's said that no one ever washes a rental car. [Laughter] There's some wisdom in that. [Laughter] When you own something, you care about it. If you own your own small business, you care about the future of America. Do you realize that the homeownership rate under my administration is at an alltime high in America. We're going to talk about health savings accounts in a minute, but this is a way for people to own their own health care and manage their own health care in a way that makes sense for American families and American small businesses.

I want to talk about Social Security and ownership. The 2000 campaign, I remember it clearly. During that campaign, people ran advertisements that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors will not get their Social Security checks." You might remember those ads. It's kind of the old typical political scare tactic. Well, as you're out gathering up the vote, remind our senior citizens, I did get elected, and you got your checks. And I'm going to get elected again, and you're still going to get your checks.

The reason I bring that up is because I'm willing to talk about how to make sure the Social Security system is available for our children and our grandchildren. It is necessary to do so. See, we're in good shape as a baby boomer. The money in the trust—there's enough people paying in that we'll be taken care of. We need to worry about the children and grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be available for them.

In order to make sure Social Security is available for our young, I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and set up a personal

savings account that will earn a greater rate of interest—rate of return on their money than it does in the current Social Security trust, a personal account they can call their own, a personal account they can pass on to whomever they want, and a personal account the Government will never take away.

And here we have another difference in this campaign. See, I believe a President ought to confront problems and not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. And we have a problem in Social Security. You might remember one of our debates when my opponent said, “Well, the status quo was fine.” Let me remind you of two things about that. One, he is the only person on that stage during the debate that voted to tax Social Security benefits, not once but eight times. And secondly, the status quo is not fine when it comes to our children. A President must be willing to confront problems. And in a new term, I’ll bring Republicans and Democrats together to make sure Social Security is available for the younger generation.

Now, let me talk about health care. We have a clear choice when it comes to health care in this campaign. I have a common-sense approach to make sure health care is available and affordable. Available through places like community health centers, where the poor and the indigent can get health care and relieve pressure off of the emergency rooms of the hospitals all across the country. Available by making sure our children of low-income families are fully subscribed in the Government health care program for them.

Affordable by recognizing that most of the uninsured in America work for small businesses, and therefore, small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. Affordable through health savings accounts, which we’ll discuss. Health care more affordable by moving ge-

neric drugs quicker to the market so our seniors are able to better afford prescription drugs.

Affordable because I’m the first President to have taken on Medicare—I shouldn’t say that; other Presidents have talked about Medicare. It used to be called “Medi-scare” because anytime you talked about it, somebody would club you over the head with it as an issue, political issue. But I went to Washington to solve problems. And we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing. Medicine was modernizing; Medicare wasn’t. We’d pay tens of thousands of dollars for a heart surgery for a Medicare patient but not a dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn’t make any sense. So I brought Republicans and Democrats together. I signed a good Medicare bill that says, in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we have got to do something about these frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. We’re going to talk about that issue in a minute.

We’re going to talk about that issue in a minute, but I do want to make it very clear there is a difference of opinion between me and my opponent on health care. In one of the debates he said—he looked right in the camera, he said, “The Government doesn’t have anything to do with it,” referring to his health care program. Stared right in the camera and said it. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eight out of ten people that will be signed up for health insurance on his program will end up on a Government program. When you raise the limits of Medicaid, it provides an incentive for small-business owners to provide no insurance

for their employees because the Government will pick it up. And therefore, millions of people will go from private insurance to the Government rolls. His is a plan that creates 225 new mandates for small businesses. Government-run health care does not work. We have got a great health care system in the world because it's innovative, because it's—private medicine is at the center of our health care system. And my opponent's plan would increase the scope and the size of the Federal Government when it comes to your health care decisions.

In all we do to make sure health care works, we'll make sure the decisions are between patients and doctors, not by officials in Washington, DC.

Up here with me is Michael Gordon. No, not Michael Gordon. He didn't make it. Michael Gordon was supposed to be here. He's a small-business owner. Let me talk about Michael Gordon right quick. He's stuck out there, probably behind a barricade chanting, "Four more years." [Laughter]

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Oh, Michael, you made it. [Laughter]

Anyway, he's from Tendon Manufacturing. He's a small business. He's adding employees. He's optimistic—a small manufacturing company here in Ohio. He is a Subchapter S corporation. I wish Michael were sitting up here so you could see him. He's a Subchapter S. He's expanding his business. When you run up the top two brackets of the Tax Code, you're taxing Michael. You're taxing his company. It makes no sense to tax the small-business job creators, which is precisely what Senator Kerry will do.

Now, let me talk to you about Bruce, Bruce McDonnell. That's you.

Bruce McDonnell. That's me.

The President. Okay. [Laughter] What do you do, Bruce?

Mr. McDonnell. I'm a CPA.

The President. You are? Good. And he is here to discuss with us health savings accounts. Some of you have heard of health savings accounts; some of you haven't heard of health savings accounts. But it is an innovative way to make sure the health care costs are reasonable.

Describe to us, if you don't mind, for this great crowd how it works.

[At this point, Mr. McDonnell made brief remarks.]

The President. Let me stop you. That's to pay for major medical bills. So anything above 1,000 for an individual will be taken care of by the insurance company. Go ahead.

[Mr. McDonnell made further remarks.]

The President. Right. So here's the way it works. He says—what he just said is, a health savings account, one, is a combination of a tax-free saving account plus a high deductible insurance policy. So say you've got a \$1,000 deductible, from zero to 1,000, you're responsible for paying, or in his case, his company contributes from the zero to 1,000 a portion of that. And then above 1,000, the insurance company pays for it.

But think about the benefits of that kind of plan. First of all, if you don't use all 1,000, it's rolled over to the next year tax-free, so that you begin to accumulate savings for your own health care. Secondly, if he were to start a new firm, which I'm not suggesting you're going to do, but if you were, and you moved, the health care account would go with you. It's yours. You own the health care account. You make the decisions. Decisionmaking between patient and doctor is a part of how we introduce market forces into a health care industry. One way to control cost is to let consumers have more decisionmaking, which is precisely what a health savings account does.

Isn't that right?

Mr. McDonnell. Absolutely right.

The President. Did we get it right?

Mr. McDonnell. You got it right.

The President. This is a very interesting way to help small businesses hold down—[applause].

Guess who else is a health savings account owner? Doc, you're a health savings account owner—Dr. Schwieterman. Where are you from, doc?

Tom Schwieterman. I'm from Mercer County, which is on the other side of the State, Mr. President.

The President. Welcome. Glad you're here. You are a doctor of?

Dr. Schwieterman. Family practice, and I provided obstetrics up until a month ago.

The President. Yes. We've got a problem. "Provided up until a month ago"—helps define what we're here to talk about, which is good health care for people.

Doc, tell me, you have been—you've told me something really interesting. I don't know if you know this, but my grandfather was raised in Columbus, Ohio. He ended up being a Senator from Connecticut—Connecticut, yes. My dad, as you know, was in politics. I'm in politics. Anybody in your family ever been a doctor before?

Dr. Schwieterman. I am the fourth generation family physician in the same town and actually in the same building in rural Mercer County.

The President. Yes. Nothing wrong with following the old family footsteps. [Laughter]

Dr. Schwieterman. Little easier, though.

The President. Right, girls. [Laughter] Oops.

So, we were backstage talking. I mean, this is, obviously, not the first time I met Tom, or the doc, I call him. We have a—he's a rural doc. Rural health care is really important for the quality of life in a State like Ohio. And so tell me, describe your problem.

Dr. Schwieterman. We have a family practice that has a very long heritage, of course, 113 years of providing general medical care and obstetrics. Over those 113 years, we have delivered over or near

10,000 children, and—[applause]. Thank you. See, my dad's right there. He delivered 5,000.

The President. Is that Dad?

Dr. Schwieterman. That's my dad.

The President. Hey, Dad. You raised a good boy.

Dr. Schwieterman. And during those 110–13 years, we have never had a claims made against our practice. We have retained a majority of those births within the practice. And unfortunately, last month, we were forced to do our last delivery, and this was a fourth generation patient. And she unfortunately ended the legacy that we have enjoyed for so long.

The President. And why? Tell people why. They need to know the truth. The people of Ohio need to understand what's taking place as a result of all these lawsuits.

Dr. Schwieterman. For the past 3 years, we've pretty much done ob at cost. What we took in is what we paid out in malpractice, and this year, we—our premiums went up 40 percent, and it became a point where we could not afford to maintain a small business with our employees, take care of our patients, with the premiums going from 25 to 80 thousand dollars in 48 months.

The President. Yes. Let me tell—people need to hear this. This is an issue in this campaign. The quality of life in the State of Ohio depends on whether or not you've got good docs and good, strong hospitals and people being able to find health care in cities and in rural America.

Let me talk to you about these lawsuits. First of all, docs practice what's called defensive medicine. If you've got a lawyer looming right behind you all the time, if you're worried about what happens in the court—in the—okay, fine. Everybody needs a good lawyer. I've got too many myself. Anyway—[laughter]—it's the difference between some lawyers and personal injury trial lawyers that are constantly out there trying to convert this legal system into what looks like a lottery. And guess who ends

up paying for the ticket? The taxpayers and the people, because the quality of health care is going down.

If you've got a lawsuit, if you think you're going to get sued, you're going to practice more medicine than is needed so you can defend yourself in a court of law. That's what happens, and guess what that does to the Federal budget, for example. The defensive practice of medicine costs our budget about \$28 billion a year. I say "our" budget, because when I talk about the Government budget, you pay for it. It's your money, 28 billion a year in excess costs in Medicaid and Medicare and veterans' health benefits. This is a national issue.

Secondly, because of the lawsuits, because many people just settle whether the suit has merit or not, premiums go up. And guess who pays the premiums? You do.

And thirdly, as a result of a lot of these lawsuits, people just can't simply practice medicine anymore. And you just talk—you just heard the story that unfortunately is being repeated over and over and over again in America. This country needs medical liability reform—now.

And this is an issue in this campaign. This is an issue in campaign—this campaign. Oh, I heard him in the debates, my opponent. I heard him talking about medical liability reform. But let me tell you something. We had a bill on the floor of the United States Senate to provide liability protection to ob-gyns, and my opponent voted "no." He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times in the United States Senate. He can run, but he cannot hide from that record.

Barb Coen is with us. Doc, thanks. Where do you work?

Barbara L. Coen. I work in Norton, Ohio, at a practice called Generations Women's Health Care, with my partner, Dr. Susan Clark, who's here.

The President. Where's the doc? Oh, there you go. Thanks for coming. I appreciate you. Very good. Dr. Clark?

Dr. Coen. Dr. Clark.

The President. Yes, Dr. Clark. Good to see you, doc. You must have drawn the short straw, so you're the one who had to actually get up here and talk in front of all the cameras. [Laughter] Tell us about your practice. Just give—tell people exactly what's happening.

[*Dr. Coen made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Dr. Coen. And as all of you know who've had a baby, the relationship between an ob-gyn and a pregnant patient is pretty special. They trust you with not only their life but the life of their unborn child. I can't tell you what an honor it is to be the first person to touch a new life when it comes into the world. There is absolutely nothing like it.

The President. Listen, it was pretty cool to be the second person when I touched Barbara and Jenna. [Laughter] Go ahead. They'll be happy to hear I let the doc go first. [Laughter]

[*Dr. Coen made further remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, doc. I appreciate you. Thank you. [Applause] Okay, thanks, hold on. We've got more work to do here. Thank you. Stay right there. Thank you all. And not only do we need legislation, we need something that works. Legislation that doesn't work is not a good deal. We're not going to do that. We need to make sure that there is a real cap on non-economic damages. If you want docs to be in practice, we need to make sure that the reform of the medical liability law works. That's why I believe in firm caps to keep docs in business.

Andy Kazar is with us. Andy, tell us your story. This is—just, again, I want people listening to understand the consequences of not getting a good medical liability law out of the United States Senate, a law that my opponent has consistently opposed. Please.

[*Aundria D. Kazar made brief remarks.*]

The President. See, this is—the story is being repeated all across the country. I was in Pennsylvania yesterday—ob-gyns can't practice. Women have to drive miles in order to find a doc. This is not the quality of life that we expect here in America. And it's caused by frivolous lawsuits. Make no mistake about it, it is a legal culture.

When you're out rounding up the vote or if you're listening and trying to determine who you're for, remember the stories up here, remember the stories of good-hearted docs who are worried about practicing their skill. And remember the story about moms who are deeply concerned about their child. This is a big issue in this campaign.

Now, I want to talk about a couple of other issues, and then we'll all go home and start working. Actually, I'm going down to Florida; you're going to go home and start working. [*Laughter*] The—and I'm not going down there to sit on the beach, either. [*Laughter*] I'm going down there to campaign.

Two other—a couple of other things. I talk about time of change, and these are changing times. Some things don't change. The values we try to live by don't change, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. And we stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for institutions like family and marriage, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for judges—Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Talking about education and health care, these are very important issues. But let me say to you that it all goes to naught if we don't secure this country, that the security of the American people is the most important responsibility of the President. If we show any uncertainty or weakness in this decade, this world of ours will drift toward tragedy. This isn't going to happen so long as I'm your President.

Let me talk to you—I want to talk to you about some of the lessons that I've learned as your President after September the 11th. First of all, we face an enemy which has no conscience. They are cold-blooded. Therefore, you can never hope for the best with them. You cannot negotiate with them. You can't say, "Oh, well, maybe we'll sign a peace treaty, and therefore, they'll change their ways." The only way to secure America, to keep us safe, is to find them and bring them to justice before they hurt us again. And therefore, any strategy has got to be one that is consistent, firm, and resolved and never relenting. [*Applause*]

Hold on a second. Hold on for a—I've got some more I've got to tell you.

Secondly, this is a different kind of war. You've got to understand, I wish I wasn't talking about war. No President ever wants to be the President of a country—of our country during war. War is horrible. But it's necessary to be realistic during these times. Our most solemn duty is to protect you, and it's a different kind of war than we're used to. It's a kind of war when you say something, you need to speak clearly and mean what you say.

And so when I said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," I meant what I said. I was speaking to the Taliban in Afghanistan. And see, I was talking to the Taliban because they were providing safe haven for Al Qaida. Al Qaida was training there. And we said, "Listen, get rid of Al Qaida." They didn't believe the United States of America. But because of a great military and because I meant what I said, Al Qaida and—the Taliban is no longer in control of Afghanistan and Al Qaida is on the run.

We're making progress. Three-quarters of Al Qaida and their associates have been brought to justice. I assure you, we're after the rest of them. And the Taliban no longer is in power. And as a result of our action, America and the world are safer.

But I want to tell your sons and daughters about what has taken place in an incredibly brief period of time. It wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan that young girls were not allowed to go to school. Think about a society that was run by such barbarians that girls were not allowed to be educated. These ideologies of hate had a dark vision about the future. As a matter of fact, if their moms didn't toe the line, they'd be whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. In defending ourselves and upholding doctrine, we liberated the people of Afghanistan. Twenty-five million people now live in freedom. Millions went to the polls to vote for their President, and the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Three-and-a-half years ago, if you would have asked anybody whether or not women would be voting in Afghanistan for President, they would have said, "You're crazy. You're wrong." And freedom is on the march. Darkness has turned to light in Afghanistan, and America is better off for it. We're better off to have an example of freedom in that part of the world. We're better off to have an ally in Afghanistan, an ally in the war on terror. And we're making progress in Iraq.

The third lesson of September the 11th, by the way, is we've got to take threats seriously before they fully materialize. You can't hope—you cannot hope for the best. It used to be, prior to September the 11th, that if we saw a threat, we could deal with it or not deal with it because we didn't ever think it would come home to hurt us. That's what we thought. That all changed on September the 11th. You better have a President who fully understands that.

My opponent in his convention speech said, "Oh, we'll respond if attacked." That is a pre-September the 11th mindset that is dangerous in the world in which we live. We've got to take threats seriously before they come to hurt us.

And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. The world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. [Applause] Thank you all.

There will be Presidential elections there in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers.

You know, I told the story one time about the seven—there's a lot of docs here and healers here. One of the most poignant stories of my Presidency was when the Oval Office door opened and in came seven men from Iraq, all of whom had had their right hand cut off by Saddam Hussein because the currency of that country had devalued and he needed scapegoats. It's a true story, I'm telling you. And I asked one of the men there, I said, "Why you?" He said he was a small merchant who needed gold to make jewelry, and he sold dinars to buy another currency so he could buy the gold, and it just happened to be on the day that Saddam was looking for a scapegoat. He found seven small merchants, seven individuals, hauled in, Xs carved in their foreheads, and their right hands cut off.

They had come to see me in the Oval Office because, guess what happened? Great compassion existed for them when their stories were known. They had been to Houston, Texas, to get new hands put on. And the guy who did it is a guy I know, and he said, "Would you mind welcoming these citizens of the world into the Oval Office," which I was more than happy to do. They came in; they were in awe of the Oval Office, of course. You know, I'm kind of a weeper at times; and they were weeping; I was semi-weeping. The guy grabs a Sharpie with his new hand and folds it and writes a prayer in Arabic blessing the United States of America. I told the guy, I told him, I said, "Freedom is on the march in your country. There will be institutions greater than the people there. One of the great things about the American Presidency is the office is always greater than the person. And someday in

your country, the institutions will be bigger than the individuals, so that no leader will ever be able to pluck you out of society and cut off your right hand again.”

People want to be free in this world. There will be elections in Iraq. Listen, these enemies are trying to stop us. This guy Zarqawi, he’s trying to stop the march of freedom. Freedom frightens these ideologues of hate. It is the worst thing that can happen to them. They can’t stand the thought of free societies.

I love to tell the story about our friend Koizumi. I’m getting kind of wound up here, yes. *[Laughter]* She wants me to—all right, hold on a second. I kind of felt the invisible hook, you know. *[Laughter]*

I want to share this with you, though, because it’s important for you to know my thinking about how to make this world a better place. I have a deep desire for your children to grow up in a peaceful world. I understand my duty to protect this country. I believe that liberty can transform societies. I believe that, and living proof of that is the fact that Prime Minister Koizumi is a good friend of Laura and mine. That probably doesn’t seem much to some, but remember, it wasn’t all that long ago, 60 years ago, that we were at war with the Japanese. The Japanese were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. My dad fought against the Japanese. I’m confident many of your relatives fought against the Japanese.

And after we won the war in World War II, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, and others in our country believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. There was a lot of skeptics then. You can understand why. “An enemy couldn’t conceivably become a democracy,” some would say. “Why do we even care about working with a country that had inflicted* so much harm on the citizens of this country?” But there was great faith in this view. And as a result

of that and as a result of helping Japan become a democracy, I sit down at the table with the Prime Minister of a former enemy, talking about how to keep the peace in a troubled world, talking about doing what we all want, and that is to extend the peace.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with the duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it. *[Applause]*

Hold on for a second. I have a—I believe that people want to be free. Freedom is not America’s gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God’s gift to each man and woman in this world.

In the closing days of this campaign, it’s very important for you to remind your friends and neighbors we have—my opponent and I have a different vision about how to keep America secure. He talks in terms of a “global test” before we commit troops. I didn’t make that up. The man was standing right there when he said it—well, right here to my right during the debate. He wasn’t there physically right now. I saw a lot of heads turn. *[Laughter]*

Listen, I work with our friends and allies. We’ll continue to build alliances. But I will never turn over America’s national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I want to thank you all for coming to greet us. I want to thank you for your help. I know where I want to lead this country. I know what it takes to continue to expand this economy so people can find work. I’ve got a vision for a health care plan that empowers patients and docs. I believe in high standards in our schools, and we’ll continue to press for educational excellence for every child. And I understand that the President of the United States must be consistent and firm and resolved in these troubling times.

You know, when I campaigned across your State, I said if you gave me—in 2000—if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity

* White House correction.

of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, with your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. And thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. at the Canton Palace Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor George M. McKelvey

of Youngstown, OH, who introduced the President; Gov. Bob Taft and Lt. Gov. Jennette B. Bradley of Ohio; Mary Regula, wife of Representative Ralph Regula; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

The President's Radio Address *October 23, 2004*

Good morning. In the 3 years since September the 11th attacks, our Government has acted decisively to protect the homeland.

This week, I took another important step by signing the 2005 Homeland Security Appropriations Act. This bill provides essential resources for Coast Guard patrols and port security, for the Federal Air Marshal program, and for technology that will defend aircraft against missiles. With this law, we are adding new resources to patrol our borders and to verify the identity of foreign visitors to America. The new law also includes vital money for first-responders and for better security of chemical facilities and nuclear plants and water treatment plants and bridges and subways and tunnels.

All these measures show the unwavering commitment of our Government. And since 2001, we have tripled overall spending for homeland security. We are doing everything in our power to protect the American people. There is more to do, and we are moving forward.

To protect America, our country needs the best possible intelligence. Chairman Tom Kean and other members of the 9/11 Commission made thoughtful and valuable recommendations on intelligence reform. My administration is already implementing the vast majority of those recommendations that can be enacted without a vote of Congress. We are expanding and

strengthening the capabilities of the CIA. We are transforming the FBI into an agency whose primary focus is stopping terrorism. We have established the Terrorist Threat Integration Center so we can bring together all the available intelligence on terrorist threats in one place.

But other changes require new laws. Congress needs to create the position of the National Intelligence Director, with strong authority over the personnel and budgets of our intelligence agencies. These and other reforms are necessary to make our intelligence community more effective and to stay ahead of the threats. My administration has sent proposed legislation to Capitol Hill, and we are working with Congress to pass a good bill. I urge Congress to act quickly, so I can sign these needed reforms into law.

The surest way to defend our country is to stay on the offensive against terrorists. In an era of weapons of mass destruction, waiting for threats to arrive at our doorsteps is to invite disaster. Tyrants and terrorists will not give us polite notice before they attack our country. As long as I am the Commander in Chief, I will confront dangers abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

My opponent has a fundamental misunderstanding of the war on terror. Senator Kerry was recently asked how September the 11th had changed him. He replied,