

wife, and a wonderful First Lady for our country.

Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. at Howard University. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

## Remarks During a Tour of Areas Damaged by Hurricane Wilma in Pompano Beach, Florida

*October 27, 2005*

I have come here with the Governor and the mayor of this area because I wanted to thank all the volunteers who've come down to help people in need. And it's—there's an amazing spirit after a disaster, and that spirit is the spirit of people willing to give of their time. I've also come to make sure the Federal response dovetails in with the State efforts. And people here—what I've heard are people concerned about gasoline. A lot of the gasoline—the lines that people are standing in will be alleviated by new ships coming in, and they'll be able to off-load the gasoline and make sure the stations have got fuel. But a lot of the gasoline issues relate to the fact that the electricity is not up and running.

I know people are frustrated because they don't have power on yet, but I've been told by Jeb and others that there are at least 6,000 people from out of State working with the power people here in-State to get people's lines up as quick as possible. In other words, this is a priority. People are working hard to get your electricity back on.

The mayor wanted me to make sure that I told the citizens here that water and ice

are moving quite rapidly, and that one of her concerns is generators. And Jeb and I spoke to her about the generators that are being moved from a central location to parts of Florida that need the generating capacity to get their life up and running.

Things don't happen instantly, but things are happening. Right here on this site people are getting fed. Soon, more and more houses will have their electricity back on and life will get back to normal. In the meantime, the Federal Government, working with the State and local governments, are responding as best as we possibly can.

Again, I'm impressed by the deep compassion and care of our fellow citizens. Out of these disasters oftentimes comes some good. And one of the good that comes out of a disaster is it gives people a chance to love a neighbor, to help somebody in need.

So thank you all for giving me a chance to come by.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Mayor Kristin D. Jacobs of Broward County, FL.

Statement Announcing the Withdrawal of the Nomination of Harriet E. Miers To Be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court  
*October 27, 2005*

Today I have reluctantly accepted Harriet Miers's decision to withdraw her nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States.

I nominated Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court because of her extraordinary legal experience, her character, and her conservative judicial philosophy. Throughout her career, she has gained the respect and admiration of her fellow attorneys. She has earned a reputation for fairness and total integrity. She has been a leader and a pioneer in the American legal profession. She has worked in important positions in State and local government and in the bar. And for the last 5 years, she has served with distinction and honor in critical positions in the executive branch.

I understand and share her concern, however, about the current state of the Supreme Court confirmation process. It is clear that Senators would not be satisfied until they gained access to internal documents concerning advice provided during her tenure at the White House—disclosures that would undermine a President's ability to receive candid counsel. Harriet Miers's decision demonstrates her deep respect for this essential aspect of the Constitutional separation of powers—and confirms my deep respect and admiration for her.

I am grateful for Harriet Miers's friendship and devotion to our country. And I am honored that she will continue to serve our Nation as White House Counsel.

My responsibility to fill this vacancy remains. I will do so in a timely manner.

Statement on the Launch of a Nationwide Effort To Respond to the South Asia Earthquake  
*October 27, 2005*

Five distinguished private-sector leaders have agreed to launch a nationwide effort to encourage private donations for relief and reconstruction in response to the South Asia earthquake that occurred on October 8. These leaders will work with other Americans to raise awareness and resources to help those in need as a result of this disaster.

This private-sector effort will complement the commitment the United States Government has made in terms of funding, relief commodities, and critical military logistical support. In addition, the United States has sent a delegation, headed by USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, to

the United Nations Emergency Donors' Conference for South Asia Earthquake Relief in Geneva.

The business leaders are Jeff Immelt, chairman and CEO of the General Electric Company; Hank McKinnell, Jr., Ph.D., chairman and CEO of Pfizer, Inc.; Sandy Weill, chairman of Citigroup, Inc.; Anne Mulcahy, chairman and CEO of Xerox Corporation; and Jim Kelly, former chairman and CEO of United Parcel Service of America, Inc. In the coming days, they will ask Americans to donate directly to a fund set up to provide help to the earthquake victims.