

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman, The RLJ Companies; Dwight L. Bush, president and chief executive officer, Urban Trust Bank; Timothy Sullivan, founder and chief executive of-

ficer, Fidelis Security Systems, Inc.; Tony Rome, president and chief executive officer, Maven Strategies; and Kathy Boden, president and chief executive officer, Bluehouse Water Solutions.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Vern Buchanan in
Sarasota, Florida
October 24, 2006

Thank you all. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate you turning out to give me a chance to say that Vern Buchanan is the right man to be the United States Congressman from the 13th Congressional District. He is smart; he is capable; he is successful; he shares your values; he loves his family; he practices his faith with sincerity. He's a decent, honorable man who deserves to be elected to the United States Congress.

And I want to thank you for helping him. I appreciate you coming out. It makes me feel good. I know it makes the Congressman-to-be feel good. But it gives us a chance to remind you that we're in the final stretches of this campaign. And he's been working hard, and his family has been working hard. And he's going to count on you to turn out the vote.

So I want to thank you in advance for what you're going to do, which is to find our fellow Republicans, to remind our fellow citizens we have an obligation to vote, and when you get them headed toward the polls, tell them if they want a country that's strong and an economy that's strong, send Vern Buchanan to Washington, DC.

I was pleased to meet Sandy and James and Matt—Sandy would be the wife—[laughter]—James and Matt, the sons. I told them how much I appreciated them supporting Vern for his run. I know what it's like to run for office, and it's important to have a wife and family stand with you.

It can kind of get lonely out there on the campaign trail sometimes. And to have that strong family standing with him means a lot for this candidate.

I know what I'm talking about because I married well, just like Vern married well. And Laura sends her love to our good friends down here in Florida. And we've got a lot of friends down here. As a matter of fact, I don't have a lot of friends down here—I've got some relatives down here. You know, Jeb and I share the same campaign consultant—[laughter]—our mother. [Laughter] And so for you little ones here, my advice is, listen to your mother. At 60 years old, I'm still listening to mine. But Laura sends her love, Mother sends her love, and I know Jeb Bush is strongly for Vern Buchanan to be the next Congressman from this district.

I, too, want to thank my buddy, the Senator from the great State of Florida, Mel Martinez. Thank you for coming.

There's a lot of issues that we can talk about. I want to talk about two today. And the first issue I want to talk about is the taxes you pay. It's an important issue. We have made our position clear. We believe in lower taxes, and we intend to keep them that way. The Democrats consistently oppose cutting your taxes. It should tell you how they feel. See, we just have a fundamental disagreement. They think they can spend your money better than you can. We

believe you can spend your money far better than the Government can.

When you go to the voting booth in 2 weeks, the lever you pull will determine the taxes you pay for years to come. Americans will cast their ballots on November the 7th, but you will feel the results every April 15th. We share a philosophy that when you have more money in your pocket to save, spend, or invest, the economy benefits.

He knows what he's talking about. It's important for people from this part of the great State of Florida to have somebody who has been a successful entrepreneur represent you. This is an entrepreneurial State; this is an entrepreneurial area; this is a man who has taken risks. He's built businesses, but more importantly, he's employed people. He is successful; he understands how the economy works. He has lived the American Dream.

The Republican Party is dedicated to making sure the American Dream is viable for every single American. We understand that if you have more money in your pocket, it's easier to save for a child's education. We understand if you have more money in your pocket, a young Floridian can afford a downpayment on a new home. We understand that when small businesses have more money in their treasury, it makes it more likely that small business will grow and expand and hire new people. Our economy grows and the American Dream expands when you keep taxes low, and therefore I was able to lead the United States Congress to pass the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States.

And now the results of the tax relief are in. Tax cuts we passed have left more than a trillion dollars in the hands of American workers and families, farmers, and small-business owners. And the American people have used that money to help fuel strong economic expansion.

The Democrats said the tax cuts were not the solution to solving an economy that

was slipping into recession, you might remember, back in 2001. The truth is, the tax cuts have helped make the American economy grow faster than any major industrialized nation. This economy is the envy of the world.

The Democrats said that the tax cuts would lead to a jobless recovery. The truth is that our economy has added jobs for 37 months in a row, and since August of 2003, our economy has created 6.6 million new jobs.

The Democrats said tax cuts would not help increase wages. Well the truth is, real wages have grown 2.2 percent over the last 12 months.

The Democrats said tax cuts would cause the deficit to explode. Well the truth is that tax cuts led to economic growth, and that growth has helped send tax revenues soaring. And as a result, the deficit has been cut in half 3 years ahead of schedule.

The Democrats have made a lot of predictions. Matter of fact, I think they may be measuring the drapes. *[Laughter]* If their electoral predictions are as reliable as their economic predictions, November 7th is going to be a good day for the Republicans.

And here's the truth. One of the reasons that the Democrats will lose on election day: Because they want to raise your taxes. No, I know they don't want to tell it that plainly, but that's what they're going to do. You know, the top Democrat leader in the House made an interesting statement recently. She said, "We love tax cuts." Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. *[Laughter]*

When we cut taxes on everybody that paid income taxes, she and her colleagues—most of her colleagues—voted against it. When we reduced the marriage penalty, she and most of her colleagues voted against it. When we cut the taxes on small businesses, she voted against it. When we lowered taxes for families with children, she voted against it. When we

reduced the taxes on capital gains and dividends, she voted against it. When we put the death tax on the road to extinction, she voted against it. Time and time again, she had an opportunity to show her love for taxes. *[Laughter]* If this is the Democrats' idea of love, I wouldn't want to see what hate looks like.

You know, you listen to the debate, and they're trotting out the same old stuff. They're saying they're only going to raise taxes on the rich. It's important for people in this district not to be fooled by that language. It's important for people all across the United States who are making up their mind who to vote for in these elections not to be fooled by the language, "Oh, we'll only tax the rich."

Some of you are old enough to remember 1992. *[Laughter]* They campaigned on saying they will—for a middle class tax cut. You might remember that rhetoric. But when they took office, the middle class tax cut they promised turned out to be one of the largest tax increases in history. See, here's what happens. You get up to Washington, DC, and you start spending the people's money if you're a Democrat, and you start making all these promises on the campaign trail. Then you get up and you say, "Well, I think I'm going to spend money here or there."

Earlier this year, the Democrats in the House, for example, put a budget alternative to call for 177 billion additional dollars than that which we're going to spend. The problem is, if they only raise taxes on the rich—raise taxes on people making \$200,000 or more—they would fall far short of meeting their spending promises. So guess who gets to pay the bill? All of a sudden, the tax cut on the rich means you have to pay. It means the middle class in America have to pay. America should not be fooled by the empty rhetoric of the Democrats running for Congress. The best way to make sure that the Democrats don't raise your taxes is to put Congressman Vern Buchanan in Washington, DC.

It's important for you to understand this fact as you're rounding up people to go to the polls, as you're getting ready to get on the telephone, dial people and remind them to vote—and if somebody says, "Well, tell me about this election"—when it comes to taxes, here's the way it works in Washington. Under the current law, the tax cuts we passed, many of them, are set to expire. In other words, if Congress doesn't be proactive, the tax cuts will go away. And if the tax cuts go away, you're paying higher taxes. In other words, if Congress fails to act, your taxes go up.

And so they asked the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee—that's the tax-writing committee; he would be the one who would take the lead in taxes—and his response to a question was, he couldn't think of one of our tax cuts he would extend. See, this is the attitude of those who want to run the House of Representatives on the Democrat side. He said, he couldn't think of one of the tax cuts—he couldn't even think of one that he would extend. Asked if he meant that would consider—asked if that meant he would consider tax hikes across the income spectrum, he said, "Of course it would." See, they're genetically—*[laughter]*—disposed to raise your taxes.

If there is no legislation renewing or extending the tax cuts, every tax rate will go back up to the old level. The marriage penalty will return. The death tax will spring back to life. The child credit will be cut in half, from \$1,000 per child to just \$500 per child. So I want people who are listening to the debate in this election to think about what that would mean, if the Democrats take control.

If you're sitting around the dinner table and there's two children, your taxes just went up \$1,000, if they take control. If you're got three children at the dinner table, your taxes went up by \$1,500. If you're a family of four and you're working hard to make ends meet and the Democrats take control of the House, your taxes

just went up \$2,000. The best way to make sure you have more of your own money in your pocket to spend on your family is to vote for Vern Buchanan, and we'll work to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

I want to talk about another issue, if you've got some time. The most important issue facing this Nation is to protect you. The most important job in Washington, DC, is to do everything we can to protect you from another attack. We face an enemy that is brutal; they have no conscience. They have an ideology which is the opposite of our ideology. They can't stand freedom. They have desires, and that is to spread a kind of caliphate, a governing organization, throughout the Middle East from which to launch attacks and spread their dark vision of the world. They use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. There is no negotiation possible with these kind of people. You can't reason with them. The best way to protect the American people is to stay on the offense and bring them to justice so they don't hurt us again.

We had a series of interesting votes in Washington, DC, recently that should explain the fundamental differences between how we view the war on terror and how the Democrats view the war on terror. I felt that the President should do everything in his power, within the Constitution, to protect you.

And therefore, after 9/11, I made a couple of decisions that recently were brought to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, which should give you an indication about the differences of opinion. I believe that we must work to prevent attacks from happening in the first place, but here in the homeland—by staying on the offense. But here in the homeland, I understand that the enemy has to be right one time, and we have to be right 100 percent of the time, in order to protect you. And therefore, I feel it's important

to make sure our professionals have the tools necessary to protect you.

I felt like that if Al Qaida or an Al Qaida affiliate was making a phone call into the United States of America from outside our country, our intelligence professionals need to know why. This is a different kind of war. Past wars—in past wars, you could watch flotillas of ships or count airplanes to determine the intent or the strength of the enemy; you could watch manpower being moved. This is a different kind of war. It's a war that requires intelligence so that we can make sure our professionals are able to protect you.

The idea of people—professionals being able to listen to Al Qaida and its affiliates came to a vote on the floor of the United States Congress. The American people must fully understand that the vast majority of Democrats opposed the right of this administration to have a tool necessary to protect you. We just have a different view. They must not think we're at war. They must think that the best way to protect you is to respond after the attack. I understand this is a war, and the United States of America will do everything we can to protect you before the enemy hits again.

This is a different kind of war, and we pick up people off the battlefield, and we want to know what they know. I'm sure you've been reading recently about some of the people that we have picked up since that fateful attack on us on September the 11th, 2001. We captured a man named Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who our intelligence officers believe was the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks. I felt it was important that our professionals find out what he knew, in order to make sure I could say to you, standing right here, that we're doing everything we can to protect you.

I felt it was important for these brave souls who work for the intelligence service to have the tools necessary to inquire to these killers what they know, in order to be able to stop a further attack. This vote

came up on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. The vast majority of Democrats voted against giving our professionals the right to interrogate to protect America. These are patriotic souls, but their vision of the world is wrong, and we need to make sure that we continue to control the House of Representatives to provide the protection necessary for—[*ap-
plause*].

This is a global war. There are many fronts in the war on terror. We've got some fantastic men and women who wear our uniform. The best way to protect the American people is to keep the enemy on the run. It is hard to plot and plan when you're hiding in a cave. It's hard to plot and plan when you know the mighty United States military and/or our intelligence services are breathing down your neck. And therefore, it is important to have Members of the United States Congress who understand the stakes of the world in which we live and will join me in making sure our troops have all the equipment, all the support, all the pay that is necessary for them to do their job.

A central front in this war, a central part of protecting America from an enemy that would like to strike us again, is Iraq. It's tough fighting in Iraq. It is tough fighting because the enemy understands the stakes of success in Iraq. A lot of people in Washington, a lot of Democrats, say that Iraq is a diversion on the war on terror. As you know, I have a difference of opinion. I believe it is a central front in the war on terror.

And that's an honest debate to have, but if you haven't made up your mind yet, listen to the words of Usama bin Laden or his number-two person in Al Qaida, Mr. Zawahiri, both of whom made it clear that their objective is to inflict as much pain as possible so America will withdraw from Iraq, so they can have safe haven from which to plot and plan attacks, so they can have more resources to develop the weap-

ons they would like to use against us, so they can topple moderate governments.

It is conceivable 20 years from now, people would look back on this period of time in the midst of a world in which radicalism and extremism was prevalent, in which allies such as Israel were surrounded by incredibly hostile forces, in which Iran had a nuclear weapon, in which governments were in control of these radicals who then cut off oil supplies to the West. That's the scenario that will happen if we withdraw before we achieve our objectives. People will look back and say, "What happened to them in the year 2006? How come they couldn't see the threat?" I see the threat. That is why we have got a strategy for victory in Iraq.

The stakes are high, and the enemy understands that. Our goal is to have a country that can defend itself, sustain itself, govern itself, and be an ally in the war on terror. Our goal was to remove a threat. I made the right decision in taking Saddam Hussein out of power. And now our goal is to help this young democracy succeed, is to help these brave souls defeat the thugs and the sectarians and the Al Qaida, from toppling their dreams.

Twelve million Iraqis went to the polls. They said, "We want to be free." You shouldn't be surprised. Freedom is universal. We don't own freedom in America. I believe there is an Almighty, and I believe one of the great gifts of the Almighty is the deep desire to be free.

For those of you who understand military, I'm running the war this way: I set the goal, and I count on our commanders on the ground and our Ambassador in Baghdad to set the tactics in order to achieve the goal. We're constantly changing. The enemy changes, and we change. The enemy adapts to our strategies and tactics, and we adapt to theirs. We're constantly changing to defeat this enemy.

But if the Democrats were to take control, their policy is pretty clear to me: It's cut-and-run. Oh, they try to claim it's not.

They try to claim it's not, but if you listen to their leaders, the man I ran against for President in 2004 said we need a date certain from which to withdraw. My attitude is, look, I want to bring our troops home as much as anybody, but I want to make sure they come home with victory, not with defeat.

For the sake of these little kids here, we will fight in Iraq, and we will win in Iraq. And when we achieve our goal, we will have dealt the enemy an incredible blow. You know, we've got great assets on our side. We've got a fantastic country, people that are strong. We've got a military that is bold and courageous. We got one other thing going for us, too, and that is the great power of liberty.

Liberty is a powerful, powerful tool. You see, liberty will yield the peace we want. Free societies will yield the peace. We're in an ideological struggle between extremists and radicals who hate and between moderate people who simply want to live in peace. It's a struggle between good and decent people and evil killers. It's a struggle that is going to take a while to achieve. But it is an ideological struggle, and you can defeat an ideology of hate with an ideology of hope, and freedom is that ideology of hope.

You know I—recently, I had an interesting experience. I share this with people all around our country because I want to bring to life that which we are now accomplishing. I went to Elvis's place—[laughter]—with the former Prime Minister of Japan. He was the sitting Prime Minister of Japan then. I went. I had never been there. [Laughter] The Prime Minister wanted to go there. [Laughter] See, he was an Elvis fan. [Laughter]

But I wanted to tell an interesting story. It's the story about a family—my family—and a story about liberty. My dad fought the Japanese. You've had relatives—I know people here whose families fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States. It was a bloody conflict.

Thousands of people lost their lives. Young kids volunteered to defend their country, just like people are volunteering today to defend our country, and a lot didn't come home.

As a matter of fact, it took us a while to get Japanese—slurs of Japanese people out of our vocabulary, the hate was so bad. I find it interesting that I'm on the airplane flying down to Elvis's place with the Prime Minister of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about bringing peace to the world. For some of you young ones out there, 60 may seem like a long time. For those of us who are 60, it just seemed like a snap of the fingers. [Laughter]

Something happened between 18-year-old Navy fighter pilot George H.W. Bush and his President—and his son, the President, talking about keeping the peace with the Prime Minister of a former enemy. And what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Liberty has got the capacity to change hate into hope. Liberty has got the capacity to help change an enemy into an ally. Someday, someday an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off.

The stakes in this election are high. I ask you to vote for Vern Buchanan. He'll be an ally in making sure your taxes stay low so the economy grows and an ally in making sure the United States Government does everything in our power to protect the American people and to make sure that a generation of Americans can grow up in peace.

God bless, and thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. at the Sarasota Bradenton International Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

**Remarks Following a Tour of Gyrocam Systems, LLC, in Sarasota
*October 24, 2006***

I wanted to stop by here at Gyrocam for a couple of reasons. One, low taxes encourage small-business growth. One of the reasons why we're adding jobs in this country of ours is because our small-business sector is flourishing. And in order to make sure that companies such as this little company continue to expand, you got to keep taxes low. If we run up taxes, it's going to make it harder for the small businesses to expand.

There's a big—there's a significant issue in this campaign. Make no mistake about it, if the Democrats take control of the Congress, they'll raise taxes by letting the tax cuts expire. And we intend to keep taxes low.

The other thing that's interesting about this little company is one of the products they make is an IED detector. And I've been saying to the American people that our goal in Iraq has not changed, which is a country that can sustain itself, defend itself, govern itself. Our tactics are adjusting. And one of the adjustments we had to make in order to protect lives and

achieve our mission was to better detect IEDs. And this little company right here makes an IED detector that enables our troops to be able to ferret out an IED before they come across it.

And one of the interesting things I was able to do was talk to a couple of Iraq vets who now work for this company. They're bringing their expertise off the battlefield to help this company design a product which will work. Interestingly enough, they then send people back to maintain the detectors.

At any rate, I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by. I'm proud to be with you. The entrepreneurial spirit must remain strong in this country. It is strong inside this company, and we intend to keep it strong by keeping taxes low, less regulation, hopefully less lawsuits, and our economy will remain strong. If we run up taxes, it will falter.

Thank you. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m.

**Statement on the Retirement of Chief Usher Gary Walters
*October 24, 2006***

Chief Usher Gary Walters has been a valued public servant to seven First Families for more than three decades at the White House. We have known Gary for many years and are especially grateful for making our family feel at home and for managing and overseeing the operations of the White House, a museum of American

history. While we are sad to see him leave, we wish Gary all the best in his future endeavors.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.