

Remarks at a Missouri Victory 2006 Rally in Joplin, Missouri November 3, 2006

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's good to be here in Joplin.

Audience members. Welcome to Missouri, George W. Bush! Welcome to Missouri, George W. Bush!

The President. As I was saying—[laughter]—it's good to be back here in southwest Missouri. I like coming here. You've got pretty countryside, and you've got hard-working, commonsense people. And that's what you need in the United States Senate, someone with common sense, someone who brings good, sound Missouri values to the United States Senate, someone who has got the right priorities, starting with his family, in the United States Senate. And that someone is Jim Talent.

I appreciate you coming. I appreciate your interest in this campaign, and I urge you to do your duty as a citizen and vote. And when you vote, your vote is not only going to be good for Missouri; it's going to be good for the United States when you send Jim Talent back to the Senate.

There's unanimity in my family about who ought to be your Senator from Missouri; Laura believes that Jim Talent ought to be the Senator from Missouri as well. She's not with me today; she's campaigning elsewhere. Tomorrow evening, however, I'm going to celebrate with her her 60th birthday party. But don't tell anybody. [Laughter] I want it to be a surprise. [Laughter] She sends her love. She sends her thanks. She knows what I know: Jim Talent is about as fine a United States Senator as you'll ever have.

I'm proud to be with your Governor. I was a Governor one time, but I didn't look as young as he looks. [Laughter] But he's doing a fine job, and you did a smart thing by sending him to the statehouse. I'm proud to be with the Governor's father, Majority Whip Roy Blunt, and Majority Whip Roy Blunt's son Charlie, and today

happens to be his second birthday. And from the looks of things, he's trying to figure it out. [Laughter]

I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Peter Kinder for joining us today. Your mayor, Jon Tupper, is joining us today. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. Party Chairman Doug Russell, all the grassroots activists, I thank you for coming. Grassroots activists are those who put up the signs, make the phone calls, put the envelopes in the mail. In other words, you're the ones who are going to join Jim Talent in working hard until election day and turn out the vote. Thank you for doing what you're doing.

I want to thank the Pierce Arrow Band. I'm sorry I wasn't here to hear them. [Laughter] But from all accounts, they did a fabulous job.

Election is four days away, and I'm sprinting to the finish line, and Talent is sprinting to the finish line, and we're asking you to join us as we sprint to the finish line.

You probably heard all the reports from the punditry—[laughter]—in Washington, DC. Some of them are already measuring for new drapes. That's not the first time, by the way, people have said the election's over before the people vote. You might remember 2004. Some of the crowd up there was picking out their offices in the West Wing. [Laughter] Then the people of Missouri and people from around the country voted, and the movers were not needed.

And the same thing is going to happen on November the 7th, 2006. With your help, we'll send Jim back to the United States Senate, and we're going to keep control of the House and the Senate. And there's a reason why: Because our party understands the values and the priorities of the American people. We don't need to take an opinion poll to tell us what to think, and we've delivered.

First, let me talk about some of the work that Jim Talent has done in Washington. See, I've seen him up close. I know he cares a lot about the people of Missouri, and he understands that this Nation is at risk if we remain dependent on foreign oil.

When you get oil from parts of the world where people don't like you, it's a national security problem. And that's why I have worked closely with Jim to advance new technologies that will enable us to use Missouri farm products to power our automobiles. We understand, by the way, that when the farmers and ranchers are doing well, the American economy does well. And if you're a Missouri farmer or a Missouri rancher, it makes economic sense to send Jim Talent back to the United States Senate.

Jim understands small businesses. If you're a small-business owner, he understands you. See, he understands small businesses are having trouble getting insurance, and so he's proposed a plan called associated health plans, which enable small businesses to join together to pool risk so they can buy health insurance at the same discounts big companies get to do. If you're a small-business owner in the State of Missouri, it's in your interest to send Jim Talent back to the United States Senate.

Jim understands that this Nation must have a focus on eliminating methamphetamines. He's done something about it. He passed good law that gives law enforcement new tools to defeat this deadly drug and to shut down meth labs in Missouri and around the United States. If you're concerned about what meth does to your fellow citizens, send Jim Talent back to the United States Senate.

I want to talk about another issue that's important, and that is the nature of the judiciary. A lot of people in Missouri understand what Jim and I know, that in order to have a good, sound judiciary, we need judges who strictly interpret the law and not legislate from the bench. The people of this State have got to understand,

when you cast your vote on Tuesday, you're electing more than just a United States Senator. Your vote will determine what kind of judges we have.

You know, I named two really solid judges for the Supreme Court, smart and capable men who share our judicial philosophy. Thankfully, we had Senators like Senator Talent and Senator Bond from Missouri who worked hard to get these men confirmed. However, if the Democrats had control of the Senate, they wouldn't be sitting on the Supreme Court. You tell your friends and neighbors who are still undecided in this race that if you want a judiciary full of judges who will strictly interpret the law and not legislate, send Jim Talent back to the United States Senate.

There are big differences between what we think and what the other bunch thinks. Perhaps the two biggest issues can—two differences can be seen on two issues. One, what's going to happen to your taxes, and which party will take the necessary steps to defend you.

Let me start with taxes. We have a philosophy: We believe you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can. Democrats want to raise your taxes because they believe they can spend your money better than you can.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We believe that when you have more money to save, spend, or invest, the whole economy benefits.

We're not just people who philosophize. We're people who act. Thanks to Senators like Jim Talent and Congressmen like Roy Blunt, I signed the largest tax decreases since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States. Remind people of our record: We cut the taxes on everybody who pays income taxes; we doubled the child tax credit; we reduced the marriage penalty; we cut taxes on small businesses; we cut taxes on capital gains and dividends; and we put the death tax on the road to extinction.

If you're a farmer here in Missouri, you need to remember which Senator—or which candidate strongly supports making sure that death tax stays dead. We don't think it's right you pay taxes while you're alive and then you pay taxes after you die.

You might remember the debate. All the Democrats in Washington predicted the tax cuts would not create jobs. They predicted they would not increase wages, and they predicted the tax cuts would cause the Federal deficit to explode. Well, the results are in. The tax cuts have led to a strong and growing economy.

Just this morning, we got additional good news. The unemployment rate around the United States has dropped to 4.4 percent. That's the lowest rate in 5½ years. Our economy added 92,000 jobs in the month of October, and over the past 3 months, America has added 470,000 new jobs. People are working in the United States. The tax cuts have worked. Real wages went up 2.4 percent over the past year, which means an extra \$1,327 for the typical family of four with two wage earners.

And finally, you might remember all the forecasts, but we have cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule. If the Democrats' election predictions are as good as their economic predictions—[laughter]—we're going to have a good day on November the 7th.

Now in this campaign, whether it's here in Missouri or anywhere else across the country, the Democrats don't want you to know their tax plans. Listen to the words of the top Democrat leader in the House, when she said, "We love tax cuts." Well, given her record, she must be a secret admirer. [Laughter] She and her party voted against reducing the marriage penalty, against cutting taxes on small businesses, against lowering taxes for families with children, against reducing taxes on capital gains and dividends, and against cutting the death tax. I mean, time and time again, when they had their chance to show their love for tax cuts, they voted no. Now, if

this is their definition of love, I'd sure hate to see what hate looks like.

Now there's a difference of opinion in Washington, DC, about what to do with your money. If these tax cuts are not extended or made permanent, your taxes are going up. You see, if the tax cuts are not made permanent, you can bet the Federal Government is going to be in your wallet.

And that's precisely what the Democrats want to do. They asked the man who would be the chairman of the Ways and Means—that's the tax-writing committee in Washington—could he think of any tax cuts he would extend. And he said, "Not a one." Not a tax cut. Make no mistake about it, they may not be admitting it on the campaign trail, but they're going to raise your taxes.

If the tax cuts aren't extended, think about what that does to the child tax credit. Right now the tax credit is \$1,000 per child. If those tax cuts are not extended, those tax credits go down to \$500 a child, which means you've got yourself a \$500 tax increase per child. So tonight, when you're sitting around the dinner table, just count the heads. [Laughter] If you've got two children, you can count on a \$1,000 tax increase. If you got three little heads there, you can count on a \$1,500 tax increase. I know some people here in Joplin may have four children. Yes, there you are—the man right there has got four children, so when you're having dinner this evening, just go, one, two, three, four times 500; that's a \$2,000 tax increase, if the Democrats win.

That may not sound like a lot of money to Washington Democrats, but it's a lot of money to me, and it's a lot of money to Talent. It's a lot of money to you. So my strong advice is, if you're a small-business owner, if you've got children, if you pay income taxes, you're a farmer and you want to keep the money that you've worked hard to earn, vote for Jim Talent for the United States Senate.

This election is taking place in an historic time for our country. And when our children and grandchildren look back on this period, one question will overwhelm the rest: Did we do everything in our power to fight and win the war against the terrorists? That is the question which faces this generation.

I wish I could report to you here in Joplin that we were not at war, but we are. We face a determined enemy. They have no conscience. They kill the innocent in order to achieve objectives. These people are totalitarian, and they share an ideology that is the exact opposite of what we believe. We believe in the right of every person to worship freely; they don't. We believe in the freedom to dissent, freedom to speak. We believe every life is precious. We believe in human dignity.

Their totalitarian point of view is dark and dismal, and yet they have objectives, and they want to spread that point of view. And they want to create enough chaos and havoc to cause people to withdraw so they can spread their attitude. The best way to protect you is to stay on the offense and bring these people to justice before they hurt America again.

You can't negotiate with these people. You can't try to talk sense in these people.

Audience members. Noo!

The President. You must be firm and determined to protect you. At the same time, here at home, we've got to do enough to be able to say, we're doing our duty. See, my most important job and the important job of people elected to Washington is to protect the American people. That's the call of this generation.

The enemy has to be right one time when it comes time to attacking us again. We have to be right 100 percent of the time to protect you. And therefore, I made sure that our professionals had the tools necessary to protect you. There was a wall that separated the intelligence community from sharing information with the law enforcement folks.

It's hard to rationalize that that happened, but that is what happened prior to September the 11th. In other words, you had—somebody had some intelligence about somebody who might be coming our way, and he couldn't share that information with somebody whose job it was to stop them. I know it doesn't make sense, but it's the reality of what we faced.

So I asked the Congress to pass the PATRIOT Act, which brought down that wall. The Senate Democrats tried to filibuster that reauthorization of that important bill. As a matter of fact, the Senate minority leader, the head Democrat in the Senate, bragged, "We killed the PATRIOT Act." See, there's a different mindset. If our most important job is to protect you, we've got to make sure our professionals have the tools necessary to do so.

I guess, maybe if—I'm just trying to guess the mentality, but they must not think there's an enemy that wants to hit us again. It's the only justification I can give you for not making sure those professionals had the tools.

I decided to institute another program. If Al Qaida or an Al Qaida affiliate is making a phone call into the United States from outside the United States, it seems like it makes sense to know why. They hadn't voted on this bill in the Senate, but they did in the House, and by far, the overwhelming majority of House Democrats voted against the program.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We have got to understand what the enemy is thinking, in order to be able to protect you. And that's why I authorized the program through the Central Intelligence Agency that would allow us to detain and question people we picked up off the battlefield.

And let me give you a reason why. See, we captured Khalid Sheikh Mohammed; our intelligence services think he's the person that ordered and masterminded the September the 11th attacks. And so when I heard we captured him, I thought it made

sense, common sense, to say to our professionals, "If he knew the first attack, he might have information on another attack, and why don't you see if you can find out if he does."

Seventy percent of the Senate Democrats voted against that bill.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We're at war. It's a different kind of war, but is, in fact, a war. That war came home on September the 11th, 2001. You should expect people in Washington, DC, to give our professionals the tools necessary to protect you. It's a big difference in this campaign, between what Republicans think and what Democrats think. I'm going to tell you something: You can't wait to respond after we're attacked. We must take the necessary measures to make sure we're not attacked in the first place.

That's why I feel so strongly about a person like Jim Talent. He understands the stakes. He also understands what I know: When we see a threat overseas, we must take that threat seriously. That's one of the lessons of September the 11th. It's important never to forget lessons. That lesson is a clear lesson to me. I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein; members of both political parties in the Congress saw the same threat; the United Nations saw the threat in Saddam Hussein. The decision to get rid of Saddam Hussein was the right decision, and the world is better off for it.

We're in a global war that's being fought on a variety of fronts, and Iraq is the central front of that war. Now I understand you hear the voices out of Washington, they say, "Well, Iraq is a distraction in the war on terror." To me, that's a dangerous point of view, but nevertheless, that's what they say. Well, the doubters about Iraq ought to listen to Usama bin Laden before they make up their mind as to whether Iraq is the central front.

See, Usama bin Laden calls the fight we're in in Iraq the third world war. He says that victory for the terrorists in Iraq

will mean America's defeat and disgrace forever. Now there's a difference of opinion. I want you to listen to the words of a senior Democrat in Washington who—she said this: "The President says that fighting them there makes it less likely we will fight them here." Yes, that's precisely what I said, and I strongly believe it's right. [*Applause*] She went on to say—hold on for a minute—she went on to say, "The opposite is true; because we are fighting them there, it may become more likely that we will have to fight them here."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. See, that's the kind of mentality that you're voting on on November the 7th. You do not create terrorists by fighting the terrorists.

Iraq is not the reason the terrorists are at war against us. We weren't in Iraq when the terrorists bombed the World Trade Center in 1993. We were not in Iraq when they bombed our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. We weren't in Iraq when they bombed the USS *Cole*, and we weren't in Iraq when they attacked us on September the 11th, 2001.

The best way to protect you is to bring the terrorists to justice wherever we find them. And they are fighting us in Iraq because they can't stand the thought of a democracy in their midst. And so they're fighting with brutality, the likes of which we haven't seen in a long time. See, they'll kill innocent people.

Our goal in Iraq is victory. Our goal in Iraq is an Iraq that can sustain itself, an Iraq that can govern itself, Iraq that can defend itself, an Iraq that will be an ally against these extremists and radicals. But this enemy, which understands the stakes, also understands that their violence, their unspeakable violence against innocent life gets on our television screens. And they are trying to shake our will because they think our will is shakable.

Audience members. Noo!

The President. They don't think we have the stomach necessary to defend ourselves

in the long run, but they don't understand this administration and many in our country. We will not run from thugs and assassins.

We are constantly adjusting our tactics to meet the enemy. The enemy adjusts; we adjust. I've given our commanders the flexibility necessary and whatever they need to win this war. And we've got a lot going for us. We got a strategy that helps us achieve victory, and we got a military that is the finest military any country has ever assembled.

And whether or not our citizens agree with my decision to fight the enemy in Iraq, all citizens owe a debt of gratitude to those who wear our uniform. And those of us in Washington owe it to our troops and their families to make sure they have the full support, all they need in order to do the jobs I've asked them to do.

Our troops have got no finer supporter than Senator Jim Talent, another reason to send him back to Washington. We've also got something else going for us, and that is brave Iraqis. Listen, these people have suffered unspeakable violence, and yet they still want to live under a free society. I was pleased at the outcome of the elections when the Iraqis voted, but I wasn't surprised. I believe freedom is universal. I believe there's an Almighty, and a great gift of the Almighty to each man and woman and child on the face of the Earth is the desire to be free.

I'm not surprised when 12 million people say, "I want to be free." It's in our interests we help this young democracy. It's in our interests we defeat the enemy where we find them. It's in interests we help people realize the blessings of liberty. And that's why our strategy is to help the politics of Iraq succeed, to help their economy grow, and to train Iraqi troops so they can take the fight. One day Iraq will be a government of, by, and for the people—unless we quit.

If I didn't think we'd win, I wouldn't have our troops there. If I didn't know

this mission is noble and important, I wouldn't have our troops there.

You know, the debate is interesting about this vital part of protecting the country. If you listen carefully to what the Democrats say about Iraq, you think about what they're saying about their plan for success, there isn't one. This is a major political party that has no plan for success in Iraq. As a matter of fact, their only plan is to leave before the job is done. Oh, you listen to some of them—they say we pull out the troops now. And then they got a bunch of them saying, "Let's have a fixed date," and we'll leave on that fixed date, regardless of whether the job is done. They've actually got a Member of the House of Representatives who has recommended moving our troops 5,000 miles away on another island—on an island. Nineteen House Democrats introduced legislation that would cut off funds for our troops in Iraq.

Here we are in the middle of a national campaign that will determine our future, and one of Jim Talent's Democrat colleagues put it this way—she said, "We haven't coalesced around a single plan, but we're in general agreement on the basic principles." She's right. The principle they agree on is, get out before the job is done.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Look, I'm not saying these people are unpatriotic; I'm just saying they're wrong.

On this important issue of Iraq and the global war on terror, the Democrats have taken a calculated gamble. They believe that the only way they can win this election is to criticize and offer no plan of their own. Here's how one senior Democrat describes their strategy: "The election is about them," talking about me and us. So far, they've refused to tell how they plan to secure this country; but there's still 4 days left. *[Laughter]* There's still time. There's still time for them to tell us how they intend to prevail.

Listen, if you happen to bump into a Democrat candidate, you might want to ask

this simple question: What is your plan? [Laughter] If they say they want to protect the homeland but opposed the PATRIOT Act, ask them this question: What is your plan? If they say they want to uncover terrorist plots but oppose listening in on terrorist conversation, ask them the question: What's your plan? You know, if they say they want to stop new attacks on our country but opposed letting the CIA detain and question the terrorists who might know what the plots are, ask them the question: What's your plan?

Audience members. What's your plan?

The President. If they say they want to win the war on terror but called for America to pull out from what Al Qaida says is the central front in that war, ask them this question—

Audience members. What's your plan?

The President. They're not going to be able to answer that question. They have no plan. When you're rounding up the vote, remind people, harsh criticism is not a plan for victory. Second-guessing is not a strategy. You cannot win the war on terror if you don't have a plan to win the war.

The most important duty we have is to protect you. We have a plan, a strategy that we're implementing every single day, and part of our plan to make sure that America does everything we can to protect you is to send Jim Talent back to the United States Senate.

Retreat from Iraq before the job is done would embolden the enemy, make our country more vulnerable to attacks. This is a different kind of war. It's unlike any other war we have fought. If we retreat from Iraq before the job is done, the enemy will follow us here. Leaving before the job is done would enable these extremists and radicals to recruit better. Leaving before the job is done would dash the hopes of millions of people who reject the ideology of hate and who want to live a simple life that is a peaceful life. Retreating before the job is done would dishonor the sacrifice of the men and women who have

worn the uniform of the United States of America. Retreating before the job is done would be felt for generations to come.

The enemy has said they expect us to retreat, and they want us to retreat. This is their words, not mine. In a time of war, you must take the words of the enemy very seriously. They would like to have another safe haven from which to plot and plan attacks, similar to the safe haven they had in Afghanistan before we removed that safe haven. The enemy would like to be in a position to topple moderate governments. They would use any means necessary to do so. Can you imagine what the world would look like if they were able to get ahold of oil resources which they would then use to extract economic blackmail against those of us who want—need to protect ourselves, and, two, to help freedom expand.

See, imagine what would happen if they were able to control enough energy, if they pulled enough off the market to run the price of oil up, and then said, "Fine, we'll let the price back down unless you give up your alliance with Israel," or, "until you withdraw," so that they could establish their—what they've declared they want to do, which is a caliphate.

And in the midst, put a country that doesn't like us with a nuclear weapon. And what's going to happen 30 years from now is, people will say, "What happened to those folks in 2006? How come they couldn't see the impending danger? What clouded their vision?"

I want to tell you all, my vision is clear. I see the threat. I understand the consequences of the world in which we live. America must lead. We will support our troops in Iraq. We will fight in Iraq, and we will win in Iraq.

If you got a second, I'd like to share one other story about the power of liberty.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Thank you. [Laughter] Recently Laura and I took our friend, who was then the Prime Minister of Japan, to

Elvis's place. You might remember that. Oh, they said, "Why did you go to Elvis's place?" Well, I had never been there. [Laughter] Prime Minister Koizumi wanted to go there—he was an Elvis fan. I also wanted to tell a story. It's important for all people to understand this story, but particularly for people who are trying to figure out the world in which we live and the power of liberty.

See, after the Japanese attacked our country, a lot of young Americans signed up. You've got relatives who signed up to fight the sworn enemy, the Japanese. So did I: my dad. And then he, like thousands, went through a bloody battle. We lost a lot of Americans, and the Japanese lost a lot—it was a brutal war, brutal war. And yet it's amazing, isn't it, that years later his son is on the airplane with the Prime Minister of the former enemy flying to Elvis's place. And guess what we talked about? Keeping the peace. Isn't that interesting?

We talked about working together to convince the North Korean leader to give up his nuclear weapons. We talked about the fact that Japan has 1,000—had 1,000 troops in Iraq. The Prime Minister and I understand that when you find a young democracy in this ideological struggle against reason versus extremists, you got to help those young democracies. It's in our long-term interests that we help people realize the blessings of liberty. We talked about the need to help fight the pandemic of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa, which the United States is doing. We talked about feeding the hungry. We talked about keeping the peace.

My dad fought the Japanese; his son is talking about keeping the peace with the Japanese. Liberty—the lesson is this: Liberty has got the capacity to change an enemy into an ally, and liberty has got the capacity to change a region of despair and hopelessness into a region of light and hope. Liberty is the best way to defeat the enemies of freedom in the long run.

Someday an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about keeping the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off.

These are the stakes in this election, and I'm asking you to go from the hall and find fellow Republicans, discerning Democrats, and openminded independents, and remind them about the stakes in this election. If you want your taxes low so you can have more money to spend and this economy continues to be strong, vote for Jim Talent. If you want the United States to do everything that we can to protect you and to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come, vote for Jim Talent.

It's such an honor to be with you. I thank you for your time. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at Missouri Southern State University. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks at an Iowa Victory 2006 Rally in Le Mars, Iowa November 3, 2006

The President. Thanks you all very much. Thanks for coming. I've got something on

my mind, but before I tell you, I want