

For more than two centuries, Americans have demonstrated the ability of free people to choose their own leaders. Our Nation has flourished because of its commitment to trusting the wisdom of our citizenry. In this year's election, we will see this tradition continue, and we will be reminded once again that we are blessed to live in a free nation guided by the will of the people.

Thank you for listening.

Remarks on the 2008 Presidential Election *November 5, 2008*

Good morning. Last night I had a warm conversation with President-elect Barack Obama. I congratulated him and Senator Biden on their impressive victory. I told the President-elect he can count on complete cooperation from my administration as he makes the transition to the White House.

I also spoke to Senator John McCain. I congratulated him on a determined campaign that he and Governor Palin ran. The American people will always be grateful for the lifetime of service John McCain has devoted to this Nation, and I know he'll continue to make tremendous contributions to our country.

No matter how they cast their ballots, all Americans can be proud of the history that was made yesterday. Across the country, citizens voted in large numbers. They showed a watching world the vitality of America's democracy and the strides we have made toward a more perfect union. They chose a President whose journey represents a triumph of the American story, a testament to hard work, optimism, and faith in the enduring promise of our Nation.

Many of our citizens thought they would never live to see that day. This moment is especially uplifting for a generation of

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 31 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 31, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Americans who witnessed the struggle for civil rights with their own eyes and, four decades later, see a dream fulfilled.

A long campaign has now ended, and we move forward as one nation. We're embarking on a period of change in Washington, yet there are some things that will not change. The United States Government will stay vigilant in meeting its most important responsibility: protecting the American people. And the world can be certain this commitment will remain steadfast under our next Commander in Chief.

There's important work to do in the months ahead, and I will continue to conduct the people's business as long as this office remains in my trust. During this time of transition, I will keep the President-elect fully informed on important decisions. And when the time comes on January the 20th, Laura and I will return home to Texas with treasured memories of our time here and with profound gratitude for the honor of serving this amazing country.

It will be a stirring sight to watch President Obama, his wife Michelle, and their beautiful girls step through the doors of the White House. I know millions of Americans will be overcome with pride at this inspiring moment that so many have waited so long. I know Senator Obama's beloved

mother and grandparents would have been thrilled to watch the child they raised ascend the steps of the Capitol and take his oath to uphold the Constitution of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Last night I extended an invitation to the President-elect and Mrs. Obama to come to the White House, and Laura and I are looking forward to welcoming them as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska; and Natasha “Sasha” and Malia Obama, daughters of President-elect Barack Obama. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to White House Staff November 6, 2008

Thank you all for coming. Mr. Vice President and Lynne, thank you for being here with us. Laura and I welcome you to the South Lawn, better known as Barney’s playground. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who’ve joined us. We’ve just finished a Cabinet meeting, and I gave them—it gave me a chance to tell them how much I appreciate the good work they’re doing during this critical time for our Nation.

I also appreciate the men and women who make up the Executive Office of the President for joining us today. Some of you have been at the White House for just a few months, others arrived the same day that we did nearly 8 years ago. You’re the ones who can tell that my hair has gotten a little grayer. [*Laughter*] Others here are career employees who have been here for 30 or 40 or sometimes 50 years. I can tell that your hair has gotten grayer. [*Laughter*]

People on this lawn represent diverse backgrounds, talents, and experiences. Yet we all share a steadfast devotion to the United States. We believe that service to our fellow citizens is a noble calling and the privilege of a lifetime.

This is an exciting time for our country. Earlier this week, more than 120 million people voted for a new President and Congress, one of the largest turnouts in the

history of the country. No matter how we cast our ballots, this election gives us all reason to be proud of our democracy and our country. And I hope you will join Laura and me in congratulating President-elect Obama and wishing him the very best for his family and our country.

Just before our Inauguration in 2001, Laura and I went back to Midland, Texas. She was born there, and I was raised there. I said that Laura and I would never quite settle in Washington. I told them, “While the honor is great, the work is temporary.” This is true for many of us here today. This peaceful transfer of power is one of the hallmarks of a true democracy, and ensuring that this transition is as smooth as possible is a priority for the rest of my Presidency. We face economic challenges that will not pause to let a new President settle in. This will also be America’s first wartime Presidential transition in four decades. We’re in a struggle against violent extremists determined to attack us, and they would like nothing more than to exploit this period of change to harm the American people.

So over the next 75 days, all of us must ensure that the next President and his team can hit the ground running. For more than a year now, departments and agencies throughout the Federal Government have