

a responsibility as Americans to put our arms around somebody who hurts. And each of us can make a difference. The true strength of this country is the fact that there are millions of Marisas all across America, who without a Government law or without the President picking up the phone and saying, "Would you help somebody in need," are doing it on their own. And as a result, this society is and can and will continue to change, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time, so that the bright lights of hope of this great country will be able to shine in every neighborhood, in every part of our land.

No, listen, we're tough, which will make the world a more peaceful place and a more free place. But the true strength of the country, the true strength of America, happens when a neighbor loves a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves, and it happens every day in America.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Wyndham Newark Airport Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rose Marie Wilkinson and Michael Savignano, co-owners, Andrea Foods, and their parents Andrea and Dora Savignano; John Cicero, machinist, MBC Food Machinery; Paul Harvey, manager, Royal Master Grinder, and his wife, Lisa; John Memmelaar, Sr., president and chief executive officer, and John Memmelaar, Jr., salesperson, Royal Master Grinder; Pat Mulhern, owner, Mulhern Belting, Inc.; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Marisa Fountainhas, New Jersey Nets and Devils Foundation scholarship recipient; and Scott Stevens, team captain, New Jersey Devils. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia

June 17, 2003

Thanks for the warm welcome. It's a pleasure to be here at Northern Virginia Community College. I am not the first person named Bush to come to this place, at least not the first person from my family named Bush to come to this place. It turns out my dad was

here. President Templin was describing to me that he signed an important piece of legislation here on this stage. And then the Northern Virginia Community College wised up and invited my mother—[*laughter*—who gave the graduation speech here. And as I explained to the President, they're now working their way down the food chain. [*Laughter*] But thanks for having me.

I appreciate the opportunity to come and talk about the fantastic opportunities that people can find in our community college system across the country; about the idea of the need to have flexibility to make sure that training programs actually work to help people for jobs that exist; to thank the teachers not only here at this community college but around our country for being a part of a necessary and fine profession; to tell the students there are better days ahead when it comes for finding work.

And to thank the Congress—Congressman Tom Davis is with us—and to thank Members of the Congress for coming together to pass a piece of legislation which will encourage job growth in our economy. As Elaine said, that I am concerned when I hear that anybody who wants to work can't find a job. And therefore, it was incumbent upon us, because too many of our fellow citizens were looking for work, to figure out ways to create an environment in which people would be willing to risk capital and expand the job base.

And we did that by passing a really important piece of legislation. The jobs-and-growth bill will pass back money to the people who sent the money to Washington in the first place. And it will help with a—it helps because when people have more money in their pocket, they're going to demand an additional good or a service. And we need an increased demand in a sluggish economy. And when somebody demands an additional good or a service in our economy, somebody's going to produce that good or a service. And when that happens, someone is likely to find work.

The jobs-and-growth bill came at the right time. And I want to thank the Congress for passing that bill. And as we expand the number of jobs in our economy, we better make sure that we have retrained people or trained

people to fill those jobs. And that's what I want to talk about today. And that's why I'm grateful for President Templin for opening up this hall for me to speak, because it's here at our community colleges that people are likely to find the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

I want to thank Elaine Chao for her service to our country. She is a member of my Cabinet. And she's doing a really fine job on behalf of the American people. And I want to thank you, Elaine, for your service.

I want to thank the attorney general of the State of Virginia for joining with us. General Jerry Kilgore is with us. I appreciate your concern; and I appreciate your interest; and thank you for coming.

I've already mentioned Tom Davis, and now I've mentioned him twice. We just had our discussion with people that—people who are either helping people find work, or people who needed to find work and have found work, or people still looking to find work.

And I want to thank those roundtable participants. Yvonne Golden is with us. She is a lady who is working, got laid off, didn't quit, and is now an independent bookkeeper. I appreciate your willingness to never give up hope and to be willing to retrain so that the skills that you have are honed to find—to find the work which exists.

Connie Mitchell is with us. She used to work at the postal service. She left, struggled for a while, went to—is now a—wants to become a nurse. It turns out, as Elaine said, there's a lot of people that are looking for nurses, a lot of institutions looking for nurses around America. Connie and Andrea Weeks, who is with us as well—that's her little squirt making some noise over there. *[Laughter]* She's a single mom, which means she's got the toughest job in America, being a single mom. Yet she hasn't given up hope. She's here at Northern Virginia Community College. She wants to be a nurse. To the extent possible, the community college is providing courses for would-be nurses.

The President explained to me there is a bottleneck when it comes to the training programs. We need to do something about it. We need to make sure that when there's demand for talent, people willing to acquire the skills necessary to meet that demand, that

there is a smooth transition. And evidently there's a bottleneck in our community college system, which I've asked Elaine to look into and Congress must address when it comes to providing flexibility for worker trainer money—worker training money.

Ralph Orlandella is with us. He was gainfully employed. September the 11th of 2001 affected his employment picture; he was laid off shortly thereafter. He went to a One-Stop program run by Dai Nguyen who is with us; he's the program manager of the Falls Church SkillSource Center. He walked in the place; he found help from one of Dai's fellow workers. He's now a teacher at Hayfield Secondary School. He didn't give up. He went for help; help was available; the system worked. And now he's practicing a noble profession. And I want to thank you very much for doing that.

And I want to thank Dai and his fellow coworkers for making the One-Stop worker training center effective. After all, that's what we're interested in, is effective programming and effective use of taxpayers' money to help willing worker find a job and to have relevant skills for the 21st century.

We faced challenges. The biggest challenge we faced in order to get this economy going was for people to have confidence in the future. And there had been some uncertainty. September the 11th created a lot of uncertainty in America. After all, it changed how we—our strategic outlook. Oceans could no longer protect us from an enemy which hates what we stand for. And we made a determination as a country that no matter how long it took, we would hunt down those who hate freedom, the terrorists, and bring them to justice, which is precisely what this country has done and will continue to do.

We have engaged in two major battles in the war on terror, one in Afghanistan, where we made it clear that if you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist. And the Taliban paid a price for harboring and training Al Qaida. And as a result of the actions of the United States and our coalition, the people of Afghanistan are now free from the clutches of a barbaric regime and many young girls now go to school for the first time, thanks to the United States of America.

And we acted in Iraq as well. We made it clear to the dictator of Iraq that he must disarm. We asked other nations to join us in seeing to it that he would disarm. And he chose not to do so, so we disarmed him. And I know there's a lot of revisionist history now going on, but one thing is certain: He is no longer a threat to the free world, and the people of Iraq are free.

The world is still a dangerous place, but America will rise to the challenge. The security of our country is of paramount importance. And no matter how long it takes, no matter what the sacrifices may be, that the United States of America will fight for freedom and will defend the security of our people. It is a charge that we have been given, and it is a charge that we will keep.

We've also got a challenge here at home with our economy. As I mentioned to you, anytime anybody is looking for work, we've got an issue. And the tax relief plan is going to have a positive effect on the outlook of the American investor and the American consumer. After all, starting in July, there will be checks sent to American families with children reflecting the difference between the \$600 child credit today and the \$1,000 child credit that the Congress passed into law, which I signed. As we say in America, the check is in the mail—[laughter]—soon.

The point is, people will have more money in their pocket. And that's important. After all, it's not the Government's money we're talking about. It's your money. It's the people's money. And the Congress did the right thing in passing back the people's money. And in so doing, and reducing individual rates, we also provided impetus for growth in the small-business sector of America. After all, most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S corporations, which means they pay tax at the individual income tax rate.

And when you reduce all rates on people who pay taxes, you're providing capital infusion into the small-business sector of America. And when you couple that with the—increasing the amount of money that can be deducted for capital expenditures in the year of expenses from \$25,000 to \$100,000, there is tremendous incentive for small-business growth. And that's vital, because 75 percent

of new jobs are created by the small businesses of America.

And the bill I signed is going to be positive for job growth. And that's the whole focus of the legislation, is how do we create the number of jobs around our country so people can find work. And if one of those jobs are created, we must have a system which trains people for the jobs which actually exist. We invest \$15 billion each year on job training and employment services, which Americans can now access through the more than 1,900 One-Stop Career Centers around the country. And that's positive. That's a consumer-oriented system where we take the opportunities to people in 1,900 different places for people to go and get help. People can check job listings there. They can get help to prepare a resume. And, equally important, they can sign up for job training programs.

And we're taking other measures to improve people's chances of finding work. First, we're working to train Americans for jobs that exist—I've said that twice. That's not the way it used to be. It used to be, "Are you training people?" And it didn't matter what you were training people for, the question was, "Are you training people?" Now we're asking the question, "Are you training people for jobs that exist so we can actually help the people we're trying to help?"

In this current economy, in spite of slow times, there are industries such as health care and high technology manufacturing that are looking for well-trained employees. That's a fact. The Department of Labor has got a program called High-Growth Job Training Initiative. What that means is we're forming partnerships with businesses to train unemployed workers in the skills that are in demand.

Connie Mitchell is a person who is involved in one such program. As I mentioned to you, she lost her job. She was at Dulles Airport. And this year she applied to a job training program funded by the Hospital Corporation of America, which is working in concert with the Department of Labor. If anybody here is from HCA, I want to thank you for being a good corporate citizen in America. I know you're working in your self-interests to find people to fill the slots you're looking for, but it's also helpful to team up

with the Department of Labor to provide a partnership to help people find work—you're pointing at that; thank you.

The program is paying for Connie's classes at Northern Virginia Community College. She will have a job with HCA when she graduates with her nursing degree. And she said she will have a career with really good training and a really good income. And that's important. We want Connies all across the country to have the same experience that she has had.

The administration is combining Federal resources with private funding to support these kinds of job training partnerships, and we intend to expand them into new areas. Right now, Secretary Chao is developing partnerships with companies in biotechnology and information technology. And these industries are growing rapidly, and as they do so, they need well-trained workers. And that's our mission, is to help more Americans to get the training necessary to qualify for the new jobs.

The second way we're helping people build careers is to direct aid for education at schools like this school right here. Community colleges make it possible for people to brush up on skills or to develop new skills. I mean, this is a place where you can get—can take your talents and convert them to meet the jobs of the 21st century.

And so, therefore, helping students attend community colleges like Northern Virginia Community College is good for the students; it's good for the colleges; and it's good for the economy. More than 1.8 million community college students rely on Pell Grants to help pay for their education and training. Pell Grants are very important for the future of this country. And therefore, I have asked for more than \$12.7 billion of Pell Grants in—for the '04 budget. This is a 45-percent increase in funding since I took office. I've asked for that increase so more benefit—students can benefit from the opportunities made possible by Pell Grants.

Third, I'm asking Congress to establish what we call Personal Reemployment Accounts for unemployed Americans. Americans who face the greatest difficulty finding work under this vision will receive up to \$3,000 to use in their job search. Different

workers have different needs, so the concept is to provide flexibility to help those workers meet those needs. A person will be able to use the account for job training, or for child care, or for transportation, or money to help relocate to a city where there is a job. If a worker finds a new job quickly within three week—13-week period, he or she will be able to keep the balance in the account as a reemployment bonus.

The idea is to empower the person, not the system. The idea is to focus money on each individual and to give that individual the opportunity to use additional monies to help meet needs.

Yvonne Golden, who I just talked about, is a person who could have benefitted from such a program. She had 20 years of experience in banking and accounting. She wanted to get extra training quickly to qualify for additional jobs. She knew what she wanted to do, yet she had to wait a long time. The Personal Reemployment Account would have given her monies to meet certain needs in order to get into the job market a lot quicker, in order to get the training necessary to achieve her dream, which was to work and to get her own business going.

Now, these accounts are important accounts. I hope Congress takes them up soon. It is a way to help those who are supposedly tough to employ develop the skills necessary and to give them the flexibility necessary to meet their dreams.

The idea of trusting people and giving people flexibility to become better prepared for a—in a complex society makes eminent sense. That's why I've asked Congress to provide \$3.6 billion for this initiative. The money would go to the States, and the States would be able to set the criteria for those who could qualify. And we believe that more than a million unemployed men and women across America would be helped by this amount of money. Congress needs to pass the proposal right away, because we've got people looking for work who need help.

The other thing is that Elaine and I are working with Congress to make sure that the monies we actually spend are used effectively. Right now the Federal Government funds adult employment and training programs through three different sources, all of

which have got different rules and regulations. These funding sources ought to be streamlined into one source and one set of rules and regulations. And the States ought to be given flexibility to expand services for people looking for work.

In other words, the system needs to be simplified and focused on the consumer, who happens to be the person we're trying to help find a job. A complex system makes it much harder for people to succeed. A complex system makes it hard to get results, the results we want, which is an educated workforce, people educated to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The House of Representatives—and Davis was very much involved in this—passed a bill that includes the reforms I'm talking about. And the Senate must act so that we can better get unemployed people back to work in America, so that we can make sure as our economy changes, the workforce changes with it.

Technologies race through our economy, and as they do so, the workforce can become much more productive. But the problem is, is that unless there is a concerted, focused effort to help our citizens stay up with technological change, people will be left behind. And that's not what we want in America. We want an educated workforce to keep this country the most productive in the world. And with the right focus and the right policies out of the United States Congress, this is an objective that I'm confident we can achieve, because I believe this country can achieve everything—anything we set our mind to. I believe in the greatness of America. And our greatness is not just our military might. We're great at that, by the way, but that's not our greatness. Our greatness is the ability for the American people to rise to any challenge. That is our greatness.

Look what we've been through. We've been through a terrorist attack and a national emergency; we've been through a recession; we've been through corporate scandals where CEOs forgot what it means to be a responsible citizen. People didn't tell the truth. They were not responsible to their shareholders and employees. They will be held to account for their irresponsible behav-

ior. And that was a shock to our system. We've been through war.

And yet we're a strong nation and we're a confident nation, because we're a nation full of people who are hard-working and dedicated, people who love freedom, people who love our country, people who are responsible citizens.

But most importantly, we're a nation that is made up of compassionate people who care deeply when one of us hurts. There's a lot of people in this Nation who want to help those who are looking for work. The Federal Government has a role. The people who are involved in education have a role. Employers have a role. But the thing that gives me most heart is that the nature of the American person—the American people is such that when we face a challenge, we will rise to that challenge on an individual basis and a collective basis.

This is a fabulous country called America, and I'm proud to be your President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 a.m. in the Ernst Community Cultural Center. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Templin, president, Northern Virginia Community College; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring NCAA Winter Champion Teams

June 17, 2003

Thanks for coming to the White House on Champions Day, the day we honor our Nation's champs.

I first want to say that, obviously, you know how to play hoops in the East—[laughter]—as our Texas teams found out. [Laughter] And it seems like Minnesota is pretty good at hockey too.

I now know why we've got all these Senators from New York and Minnesota and Connecticut, as well as Members of the House from those three States. Welcome, and thank you all for honoring these fine student athletes. We're glad you're here.

I want to welcome the University of Connecticut women's basketball team back to the