

to make sure that the bills are reconciled and get them to my desk. And I look forward to signing a good Medicare bill.

Finally, there's one other issue I want to talk about. I mean, if we're concerned about health care which is accessible and affordable, we better be concerned about the number of lawsuits that are taking place all across America. You see, it's one thing for somebody to be able to sue a bad doctor. We're for that. But the problem is, we've got a lot of lawyers filing suits against any doctor. And let me tell you the effect of frivolous lawsuits, the effect it's having all across America.

It means that doctors are practicing what they call preventative medicine. In other words, if you think somebody's going to sue you, if you're in a litigious society, then you'll take extra care by prescribing more and more either procedures or whatever it may be. And that runs the cost of medicine up. It makes it more likely your bill is going to go up.

And secondly, lawsuit after lawsuit after lawsuit that oftentimes—you know, that people just settle in order to get it off the docket cause premiums to go up, which also makes medicine more costly. In a lot of cases around the country, docs have just had it. They said their premiums have gone up so high that they can't practice medicine anymore. So you know what they do? They take the shingle down, which makes it—there's less doctors available. We've got a problem.

I met with docs all across our country. The premiums are just going out of sight because of frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of doing business, and it costs you more money. It just does. And people say, "Well, you know, that's not a Federal issue. It's a State issue." And I want to applaud my brother, working hard on this issue. And I hope the legislature responds positively so that people all across this State are going to have affordable and accessible health care. But it also runs up the cost of the Federal bills.

I mean, if somebody is practicing preventative medicine, it's going to mean Medicare costs go up. Medicaid costs will go up. Veterans health benefits go up. I've looked at the cost of all these frivolous lawsuits to the Federal Government and have come to the conclusion we have a Federal problem as

well, which requires a Federal solution. In order to make sure health care is vibrant and viable, we need medical liability reform all across America, and we need a Federal medical liability reform.

I want to thank you all for—I want to thank you for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. Let me conclude by telling you something that I know is true. We are fortunate to be Americans. We live in a great country. We live in a great country that has got the best health care system in the world, and we need to keep it that way. We live in a great country because we believe in serving concepts greater than ourselves. We live in a great country because we believe in values and ideals from which we will not vary. We believe strongly in freedom. We believe in peace. We believe in human dignity. We believe in the worth of each individual. We are a great country, and I'm proud to be the President of this great country.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:19 a.m. at the Metropolitan Senior Center, Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush and Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings of Florida; Josefina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services; Representatives Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida; Dr. Rhonda Medows, secretary, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration; Mayor Manuel A. Diaz of Miami; Mayor Alex Penelas of Miami-Dade County; and Berta Ruano, assistant to Ramon Perez-Dorrbecker, president, Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Miami

June 30, 2003

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. It's a big deal to be introduced by your brother—[laughter]—especially one who's been so successful as the Governor of the State of Florida. I'm proud of him. I'm not surprised. We both share the same political consultant—[laughter]—our mother. [Laughter] Her fees are low, but her opinion is plentiful. [Laughter]

But it's been a successful event. We've raised a lot of money, and I want to thank you for that. We're laying the groundwork for what is going to be a victory in November of 2004. I'm getting ready. I'm loosening up for the task ahead. But I just need to remind you that I'm going to need your help, continued help. I believe our message is best for the country. It is a message that speaks to everybody. It's a message of hope and peace and freedom. And you're going to need to tell your friends and neighbors. We need a grassroots effort.

There will be plenty of time for politics. Right now I'm focused on the people's business in Washington, DC. We've got a lot on the agenda, and I'm going to work hard to continue to earn the confidence of each American by making sure this country is safe and secure and prosperous and free.

I just flew in from Crawford. I said goodbye to the First Lady. She sends her best. I'm sorry she is not with me. She is, by far, the best thing I've got going. I'm really proud of Laura. I'm proud of her steadiness and her calm in the face of storm. I love her dearly. She is a great First Lady for our country.

I'm honored that Members of the United States Congress are here. Congressman Foley and the two Diaz-Balart boys are with us as well. I'm proud to call them friends. I'm proud to work with them. They love Florida. They love America. And they're fine United States Congressmen. Thank you all for coming today.

I too want to thank Zach and Tom Petway for putting this event on. I want to thank them for serving in a big capacity for me in the Florida campaign. I want to thank Al Hoffman as well, as well as Mercer Reynolds, my longtime friend who is the national chairman. I want to thank the party chairman who is here, Al Cardenas. But most of all, I want to thank you all. I'm honored that you've given of your money and your time and your efforts. I appreciate your love for our country. I appreciate your willingness to participate in the process.

You know, we've been through a lot in 2½ years. We really have, but our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to office to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future

generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. We are meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We have captured or killed many leaders of Al Qaida, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. So we increased the defense budget to prepare for threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. Then the attacks came on our country, and we had scandals in corporate America, and we were at war. And all this affected the people's confidence. But we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, we have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

We believe that when Americans have more money in their pocket to spend, to save, or invest, the whole country benefits, and someone is more likely to find a job. We understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. We do not spend the Government's money. We spend the people's money. It's your money to begin with. And so we're returning more money to people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses proper incentives to expand and to hire people.

With all these actions, we are laying the foundations for greater prosperity and more jobs across America, so that every single person in this country has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I called for and the

Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reform in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We believe every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school in America to teach those basics. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. And now we expect results in every single classroom, so that not one single child is left behind.

We reorganized the Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to safeguard our borders and ports and to better protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open new markets for America's entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers and ranchers. We passed a budget agreement that is helping to maintain spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle; we have kept its word; and we have made progress on behalf of the American people.

The United States Congress deserves credit, and I will continue to work with the Congress. I'll work with them to help change the tone in Washington, DC, to focus on results. And that's the nature of the people that I've surrounded myself with. I've put together a fantastic administration of hard-working, decent Americans, there to serve the American people. Dick Cheney is a great Vice President of the United States, the greatest Vice President. I say the "greatest"; Mother might have a different opinion. [Laughter]

**Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.** I was wondering about that. [Laughter]

**The President.** In 2½ years we've come far. We really have. But our work is only beginning. We have great goals, worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace, for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion, so that every citizen has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the great promise of our country.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home, and we are freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it. The war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; and we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

Yet our national interest involves more than eliminating aggressive threats to our safety. Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror; free nations do not attack their neighbors; and free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror.

Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart, including those who live on the island of Cuba. And we believe that freedom is the right of every person, and we believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world, and when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, which I'll be visiting next week, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering from AIDS. This great land is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges here at home, and our actions prove that we're equal to those challenges. I will continue to work on our economy until everybody who wants to work and can't find a job is able to find a job.

We have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Last week the Congress took historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices of seniors and provide coverage of prescription drugs. The next step is for both Houses to come together to iron out some details and to get a bill to my desk.

And for the sake of a strong health care system for all Americans, we need to cut down and end the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the health—the cost of health care, they affect the Medicaid budget; they affect the Medicare budget; they affect the cost to our veterans. It is a—they affect the Federal budget, is what I'm telling you. Medical liability reform is a Federal issue. It requires a Federal solution. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. This country needs medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility as President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have submitted—I have nominated superb men and women for our Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. But some Members of the United States Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to pass a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation. We must develop cleaner technology. We must use our technologies to help us explore for more energy at home. For the sake of our economic security and for the sake of our national security, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism by applying the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow Americans.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act," so that more Americans can serve their communities and their country. Both Houses should reach a settlement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children, that are caring for the homeless, and offering hope to the addicted.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that comes from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society. We want more people owning their own home. We want people to own and manage their own health care plan. We want more people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want more small-business owners in America, because we understand that when a person owns something, they have a vital stake in the future of America.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make in life. We're changing the culture of America from one that has said, "If it feels good do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to one—to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child. If you're worried about the quality of education in your neighborhood, you're worried about doing something—you're responsible for doing something about it. If you are a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself.

We can see the culture of service and responsibility growing around us. I started what we call the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need. And I'm pleased to report the response has been strong. Our faith-based charities from all denominations are vibrant and strong, as people who have heard the call to serve something greater than themselves in life are doing so by helping somebody who hurts.

We've got policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform reminding us on a daily basis what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself in life. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you. And may God continue to bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Hilton Miami Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Zach Zachariah and Tom Petway III, Florida State finance cochairmen, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Al Hoffman, finance chairman, Republican National Committee; Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, Bush Cheney '04, Inc.; and Al Cardenas, former chair, Republican Party of Florida.

### **Proclamation 7688—Death of James Strom Thurmond**

*June 30, 2003*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

As a mark of respect for the memory of James Strom Thurmond, the longest serving member and former President pro tempore of the United States Senate, I hereby order, by the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, that on the day of his interment, the flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff at

the White House and upon all public buildings and grounds, at all military posts and naval stations, and on all naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions until sunset on such day. I also direct that the flag shall be flown at half-staff for the same period at all United States embassies, legations, consular offices, and other facilities abroad, including all military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:39 a.m., July 1, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 2.

### **Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Tampa, Florida**

*June 30, 2003*

Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming out. I appreciate the warm welcome on a warm day. [Laughter] I'm so honored to be here with my brother. You know, he and I share the same political consultant—[laughter]—our mother. [Laughter] She doesn't charge very much for her advice, but she gives plenty of it, I can assure you. [Laughter] But I appreciate Jeb—talk about swamping somebody—he knows the definition of “swamp” when it comes to political campaigns.

I want to thank you all so very much for your help today. We're laying the groundwork for a national campaign—a national campaign that I believe will result in a great victory in November 2004.

I'm going to count on you not only for help such as the help you've given tonight, but I'm going to count on you to energize the grassroots, to talk to your neighbors, talk to people who are making up their minds, to put the signs in the yard, and to help spread