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of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in Dallas, Texas

July 18, 2003

Thank you all very much. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. It is great to be home. It's really fun for us to see a lot of our old buddies—some of our young buddies too. [*Laughter*] This is our first trip back to Texas since I got back from Africa. You may remember we were over there, and we went to a park in Botswana. That's where we learned a lot about our party's mascot. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you all for your help. Thanks a lot. It means a lot to Laura and me. We love Texas, and we love our friends, and we want to thank our friends for helping us. You're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great victory in November of 2004.

I'm getting ready, loosening up. [*Laughter*] But I'm going to have to count on you to energize the grassroots and to make the phone calls and to put up the signs and to address the envelopes and remind everybody that our message is so positive and hopeful for every citizen of this State and this country.

The political season will come in its own time. But right now, I'm focused on the people's business in our Nation's Capital. I have a job to do, and we have a lot on our agenda. And I will continue to work hard to earn the confidence of all America by keeping this Nation strong and secure, free, and prosperous.

I am thrilled that Laura's here. She is a fabulous First Lady, and I love her dearly. She is just a steady rock and has been a great comforter for a lot of Americans during some of our difficult times.

I appreciate our Governor. I want to thank him for his introduction. I thank him for his introduction; more importantly, I thank him for his great leadership for the State of Texas. He is Governor during some tough times for this State, and he has led with courage and vision. And the State of Texas is better off with Rick Perry as the Governor.

I know we've got quite a few of the mighty Texas congressional delegation with us today. And I'm going to tell you something: It's really good to have steady support in the House of Representatives from our fellow Texans, Texans like Joe Barton and Michael Burgess and Kay Granger and Jeb Hensarling and Sam Johnson. I want to thank all of them for their service to our State and to our Nation.

I know our able Lieutenant Governor is here, and I want to thank David Dewhurst for his service to the State of Texas, and the speaker of the house, my fellow Midland, Texan, citizen Tommy Craddick; I want to thank Tom for his service. Thank you, Tom and Nadine. I saw Marchant and Branch out there, two fine members of the Texas House. It's good to see you all.

I appreciate so very much my close personal friend Mercer Reynolds. He's the national finance chairman for the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign. I want to thank Mercer for his hard work. I want to thank my close friend Fred Meyer for being the Texas State finance chairman. I thank Jeanne Johnson Phillips and Roger Williams for being the finance vice chairmen for our campaign here. I want to thank all of you who worked hard to raise this money. I appreciate your help.

Finally, I want to thank the Gatlin boys for bringing their mother. [*Laughter*]

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this 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 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 under freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. We increased the defense budget to prepare for the 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. And then the attacks happened on our country, and there were corporate scandals and war. All 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 people of this country.

We know that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or to invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. We understand whose money we spend in Washington, DC. It is not the Government's money. It is the people's money.

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 are giving small businesses incentives to expand and to hire people. With all these actions, we have laid the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs, so that every single American in our country can realize the great hope of 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 Congress passed, the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid, bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We believe and strongly believe that every child can learn the basics of reading and math, and we expect every school to teach the basics of reading and math. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in every classroom, so that not one single child in America 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 up new markets for our entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers and manufacturers. 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, has kept its word, and has made progress on behalf of the American people.

The United States Congress has shared in these great achievements. I appreciate the leadership of Speaker Hastert and Leader Frist. I want to thank the hard work of many Members of the Congress. We're going to continue to work together to change the tone in Washington, DC, and to focus on results.

And those are the kind of—the nature of the men and women I have asked to serve in my administration. I have put together a fantastic team on behalf of America. These are people who understand their job is to serve all Americans. Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney—although Mother may have a different opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 2½ years, we have come far, but we're only beginning. I have set great goals worthy of this 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, to succeed, and to realize the promise of our country.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend upon the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it. Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; 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. Free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and the deepest hope of every human heart, and we believe that freedom is the right of every person and 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 hopelessness, we will not turn away. Laura and I just came from Africa. America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children who suffer with AIDS. This great, strong, compassionate Nation is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

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

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

And for the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. I want to thank Governor Perry and the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker for passing meaningful, real medical liability reform. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor 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 cost of health care at the national level, medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. The House of Representatives has passed a good bill. It is stalled in the Senate. For the sake of a good health care system, the United States Senate must act.

I have a responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women like Priscilla Owen for our Federal courts, good people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Yet, some Members of the 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.

This Congress needs to pass a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation. We must develop cleaner technology. We must explore in environmentally friendly ways. Yet, for the sake of economic security and national security, we need to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, 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 hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

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

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more of our citizens owning their own home. We want people to own and manage their own health care account and their own

retirement account. We want more people to own their small business, because we understand when an American owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. We're changing the culture of America from one that says, ''If it feels good, do it,'' and ''If you've got a problem, blame somebody else,'' to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for your child. If you're concerned about the quality of the education in your community, you are responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in America, you are responsible to tell the truth to your employees and your shareholders. And in this new 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 the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need, and the response has been very strong. Our charities and our faith-based institutions are strong and vibrant all across our country. They're helping people who cry out for help. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. 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 have 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 are a strong country, and we use our 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, better days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. at the Wyndham Anatole Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Rick Perry and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst of Texas; Texas House of Representatives Speaker Tom Craddick and his wife, Nadine; Texas State Representatives Kenny Marchant and Dan Branch; Jeanne Johnson Phillips, Texas State vice chairman, and J. Roger Williams, north Texas chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; country music entertainers the Gatlin Brothers, and their mother, Billie; and Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

July 19, 2003

Good morning. Next week, the United States Treasury will begin printing and mailing more than 25 million child tax credit checks, putting over $12 billion back into the hands of American families. These rebates are the result of the Jobs and Growth Act I recently signed into law, which increases the child tax credit from $600 to $1,000 per child. And because this new law reduced income tax rates, businesses earlier this month lowered tax withholding for worker paychecks. Now, those workers and their families have a lighter tax bill and more take-home pay.

With the child tax credit rebates and the lower tax rates taking effect, America's families will have more of their own money to make purchases, pay their bills, save for their children's education, and invest in a new home or business. There are hopeful signs that our actions are contributing to economic growth. Individual investors are showing greater confidence, leading to a significant rise in the stock market. And thanks to our efforts to reduce taxes on stock dividends, dozens of major companies have announced plans to either increase their existing dividend payout or pay dividends for the first time, putting billions of dollars in cash into shareholders' pockets.