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your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at Tinker Field. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings, and State Attorney General Charlie Crist of Florida; Richard T. Crotty, Orange County chairman; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida; and country music entertainer Mark Wills.

Remarks in Miami, Florida

October 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. We're honored you're here. Thank you all. Thank you for coming. Thank you for being here. Thanks for taking time out of your Sunday morning to come by and say hello. Laura and I are honored you're here. I'm here to ask for your help. You need to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. You're voting today; you're voting on Tuesday. Tell your friends and neighbors, in a free society, we have an obligation to vote. Tell them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America *por todos,* to vote for me and Dick Cheney. *Con su apoyo, vamos a ganar.*

The most important reason—perhaps the most important reason to put me back in is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. *Que bella. Que magnifica.*

I want to thank my Vice President, who's working hard. He does not have the waviest hair in this race. I don't want to offend some of you out there who are follically challenged—you'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment. He's getting the job done.

I want to thank my *hermanito.* What a great Governor he is. He loves Miami, and he loves the people of Miami. And I want to thank First Lady Columba Bush for being such a gracious first lady for Florida.

It's really important that when you get in that booth and get your friends to go to the booth to remember there's an important Senate race here in Florida. I'm going to say it as strongly as I can, Mel Martinez is the right man for Florida. And we love Kitty Martinez as well. She's a classy lady.

I want to thank the three Congressmen from this part of the world that are here, starting with the Congresswoman from this district, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, *mi amiga. Y tambien los hermanos,* Diaz-Balart, Lincoln *y* Mario. Thank you all for your steadfast and strong support.

I appreciate Tom Gallagher being here. I want to thank Marco Rubio, who's here with us today.

Listen, there are a lot of Democrats supporting my candidacy. There may be some here. You know the Democrat Party left you; you didn't leave it. And I want to thank Miami Beach Mayor David Dermer, Democrats for Bush. Mr. Mayor, we are proud you're here. Thank you, sir. I want to thank all the other State and local officials.

I know that there are some members of the 1972 Miami Dolphins football team here. Thank you all for coming. You guys haven't aged a bit. [*Laughter*] Thanks for setting such a great example.

I want to thank the grassroots activists. I want to thank you all for putting up the signs. I want to thank you for making the phone calls. No doubt in my mind, we'll carry Florida again and win a great victory on Tuesday.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This election takes place in a time of great consequence. The person who sits in the Oval Office for the next 4 years will set the course of the war on terror and the direction of our economy. America will need strong, determined, optimistic leadership. I am ready for the work ahead.

My 4 years as your President has confirmed some lessons, and they've taught me some new ones. I've learned to expect the unexpected because horror can arrive suddenly on a quiet morning. I've learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even if the cause is right. I'm grateful to the lessons I've learned from our parents: Respect for every person; do your best; live every day to its fullest. I've been strengthened by my faith and humbled

by its reminder—and I've been humbled by its reminder that every life is part of a larger story.

The President must lead with clarity and purpose. As Presidents from Lincoln to Roosevelt to Reagan so clearly demonstrated, a President must not shift in the wind. A President has to make the tough decisions and stand by them. The role of the President is not to follow the latest polls. The role of the President is to lead based upon principle and conviction and conscience, and that is how I will continue to lead this Nation.

During the last 4 years, I've learned that whatever your strengths are, you're going to need them. And whatever your shortcomings, the people will notice them. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I am a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I mangle the English language. [*Laughter*] I get that from my dad. [*Laughter*] But all the time, whether you agree with me or not, you know where I stand, what I believe.

And you can't say that about my opponent.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It is fair to say that consistency is not his long suit. [*Laughter*] My opponent looks—I look at an issue, and I take a principled stand. My opponent looks at an issue and tries to take every side. [*Laughter*] The people of Florida know the difference, and Tuesday, Florida will vote for strong leadership based upon conviction and consistency and support the Bush-Cheney ticket.

This election comes down to some clear choices on vital issues facing every American family. The first clear choice concerns your budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for America's families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent so our working families would have more money in their pocket. The plan is working. Real after-tax income—that's the money you've got to spend—is up about 10 percent since I took office.

Our economy has been through a lot. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people what the economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. Then we had a recession and corporate scandals, and the attacks on our country cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after the attack, after September the 11th.

But we acted. I led. The tax relief is now leading our economy forward. It's working. America's economy is strong, and it's getting stronger. We added 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high. More minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. Our farmers are making a living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. And the unemployment rate in the great State of Florida is 4.5 percent. Our economic plans are working.

My opponent has got a plan.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. It involves the promises he makes and the money he intends to take. For the Senator from Massachusetts, he's voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's five times every year he's been in the Senate. I would call that a predictable pattern, a leading indicator. [*Laughter*] In this campaign he's also pledged to spend 2.2 trillion new dollars. That's a lot. That's trillion with a "T." [*Laughter*] That is even—that's a lot for a Senator from Massachusetts. I mean, it's—[*laughter*].

They asked him how he's going to pay for it, and he said he's just going to tax the rich. You've heard that before. By raising the top two brackets, you raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion. That's what we call a tax gap. And guess who gets to fill the tax gap?

Audience members. We do!

The President. Yes, you do. We're not going to let him tax you; we're going to carry Florida and win a victory.

The second clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. I ran for President to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our schools. I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to the

classrooms, and reading and math scores are now on the rise. We're closing an achievement gap for minority students all across America. And we're not going to go back to the old days of low expectations and mediocrity.

We'll continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and available. We'll expand health savings accounts so small businesses can cover their workers and more families are able to save tax-free with health care accounts they manage and call their own. We'll create association health plans so small businesses can join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies can do. We'll help our families by expanding community health centers and making sure every eligible child is enrolled in our low-income health insurance programs.

And we will make sure health care is available and affordable by getting rid of these junk lawsuits that are running the docs out of practice. For the sake of quality health care, we need medical liability reform—now. My vision is for better and more affordable health care where decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

My opponent has a different approach to these issues. He voted for education reform, but now he wants to weaken the accountability standards.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And he's proposing a big-Government health care plan.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I heard him in the debates—you probably did too—when he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." That's what he said about his plan. I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got everything to do with it. And the wrong prescription for American families is to federalize health care in America.

And when it comes to these lawsuits, my opponent has voted against medical liability reform not once but 10 times. And he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run, but he cannot hide.

The third clear choice in this election involves your retirement. We made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word. Seniors are already getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting direct help to pay for prescriptions. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

My opponent has got a record on this issue. He voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage. In this campaign, he's promised to repeal the bill, and then he promised to keep it. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. It sounds familiar, doesn't it? He doesn't change positions only on national security issues. [*Laughter*] He also tries to scare seniors about their Social Security. But he forgets to mention that he is the one who voted eight times to raise taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run from that record——

Audience members. But he cannot hide!

The President. I've kept the promise of Social Security for our seniors. I will always keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about whether the system will be there when they need it. That's why I believe younger workers ought to take some of their personal payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, an account they call their own.

The fourth clear choice——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The fourth choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping our families strong. I stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. I stand for appointing

judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

On these issues, my opponent and I are miles apart. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said there would be a litmus test when it came to appointing judges. There is a mainstream in American politics, and John Kerry sits on the far left bank. [*Laughter*] He can——

[*At this point, there was an interruption in the audience.*]

The President. Yes, he can run from being the most liberal Senator——

Audience members. *Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!*

The President. The final choice in this election is most important of all because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every other issue depends on the safety of our citizens. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness during these troubled times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for the homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We're transforming the army. We will have no draft; the army will remain an all-volunteer army. We are staying on the offensive. We're chasing the terrorists around the globe. We will find them and bring them to justice so we do not have to face them here at home.

Pakistan was—we're making progress. Every day, we're making progress. Afghanistan is now an ally in the war on terror. Pakistan and Saudi are making raids and arrests. Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. An army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom. And Al Qaida no longer controls Afghanistan. We shut down its camps. We are systematically destroying the Al Qaida network around the world. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

My opponent has taken a different approach—except when he hadn't. [*Laughter*] Here again, consistency has not been his long suit. The Commander in Chief must be consistent in this dangerous world. Senator Kerry says that we're better off with Saddam Hussein out of power—except when he says that removing Saddam made us less safe.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said in our second debate that he always believed Saddam was a threat—except, a few questions later, when he insisted Saddam Hussein was not a threat.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He says he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problem with Senator Kerry's record on national security are deeper than election-year flip-flops. For 20 years, on the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. During the cold war, Senator Kerry voted against crucial weapons systems and opposed President Ronald Reagan's policy of peace through strength. History——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush assembled an international coalition to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

Only a year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, the Senator proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, cuts so extreme that even his fellow Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, voted against the cuts.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. History has shown Senator Kerry was wrong—and let's be generous about this—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

Just one year ago, I went to the Congress and proposed $87 billion in funding to support our troops in combat. The Commander in Chief must support our troops in harm's way.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Prior to the vote, on national TV, Senator Kerry said it would be irresponsible to vote against the troops.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*] [*Laughter*]

The President. And then he did the irresponsible thing: He voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then he entered the flip-flop hall of fame—[*laughter*]—by saying, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." [*Laughter*] He's given several explanation since then, but the most revealing—perhaps the most revealing is when he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. The differences on how we'll defend our families are significant. My opponent said in one of the debates that America must pass a "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. I heard him. So did you. We'll work with our friends and allies, but I will never, ever turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Recently, my opponent said September the 11th "didn't change him much at all," end quote. Well, September the 11th changed me. My eyes are wide open to the realities of this world. I fully understand my duty to protect the American people. A few days after the attacks of September the 11th, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. I will never forget the sights and sounds of that day, workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the man grabbed me by the arm. He looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day—from that day forward, I've gotten up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We will use all the assets at our disposal to protect America. We will wage a relentless, comprehensive campaign to protect you. And one of the most powerful, powerful assets we have is freedom. We believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. Free nations do not breed resentments and export terror. Free nations become allies in the war on terror.

Think about what has happened in Afghanistan in a relatively brief period of time. It wasn't all that long ago that young girls couldn't go to school and their mothers were taken into the public square and whipped because the ideologues of hate, the Taliban, had such a dim view of the world. Because we acted in our self-interest, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you are equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people went to the polls in Afghanistan to vote for their President. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq is dangerous, but it's moving toward elections. There will be elections in January. Think about how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march, and America and the world are better for it.

And over the next 4 years, we will continue to press hard and ensure that the gift of freedom finally reaches the men and women of Cuba.

Audience members. *Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!*

The President. We will not rest—we will not rest. We will keep the pressure on until the Cuban people enjoy the same freedoms in Havana they receive here in America. I strongly believe the people of Cuba should be free from the tyrant. I believe that everybody yearns to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

My fellow citizens, these are historic times, and a lot is at stake in this election. The future safety and prosperity of America are on the ballot. Ultimately, this election comes down to who can you trust.

Audience members. You!

The President. I offer a record of leadership and results in a time of challenge, and I ask for your vote.

If you believe that taxes should stay low so families can pay the bills and small businesses can expand and our economy can continue to create new jobs, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe in high standards for our public schools and parents and doctors—patients and doctors should be in charge of health care, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe that this Nation must honor the commitments of Medicare and strengthen Social Security for the next generation, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe that this Nation should honor family and marriage and make a place for the weak and vulnerable, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe America should fight the war on terror with all our might and lead with unwavering confidence in our ideals, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you are a Democrat who believes your great party has turned too far left in this year, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you are a minority citizen and you believe in free enterprise and good schools and the enduring values of family and faith, if you're tired of your vote being taken for granted, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you are a voter who believes that the President of the United States should say what he means and do what he says and keep his word, I ask you, come stand with me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. When I traveled your State 4 years ago, I made this pledge, that if I got elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help—*con su apoyo,* I will do so for 4 more years.

Gracias. Vamos a ganar. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:07 p.m. at the Coconut Grove Expo Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush and First Lady Columba Bush of Florida; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida, and his wife, Kitty; Tom Gallagher, chief financial officer, Florida Department of Financial Services; Florida State Representative Marco Rubio; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Remarks in Tampa, Florida

October 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. We really appreciate you coming out on a Sunday afternoon. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. Find your friends and neighbors and tell them we have a duty to vote, and get them going to the polls. Turn the Republicans out. Turn the independents out. Find discerning Democrats like my friend the former mayor of Tampa, who is a Bush supporter, Dick Greco, like Senator Zell Miller from Georgia. When you get them going to the polls, tell them, if they want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Perhaps the most important reason why you should put me back in is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I readily concede he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be happy to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment. He's getting the job done for the American people.

I am proud of your Governor, my brother Jeb Bush. He is doing a fabulous job. We both share the same campaign consultant: Mother. [*Laughter*] My brother Marvin is with us too, and I want to thank Marv for coming. He's the good-looking one. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud to be introduced by General Norman Schwarzkopf, a great American and a great general. I want to thank his daughter, Jessica, for joining us today. I want to thank my friend Congressman Mike Bilirakis for being here today. I want to thank Congressman Adam Putnam for being here today. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor and the attorney general for being with us today. I want to urge you, when you go to the polls, make sure you vote for Mel Martinez as the United States Senator. And I appreciate his