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comes down to who do you trust—who do you trust to lead this Nation? I offer a record of leadership and results at a time of threat and challenge.

If you believe that taxes should stay low so families can pay their bills and small businesses can create new jobs, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe in high standards for our public schools, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe patients and doctors should be in charge of the health care system, 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 generations to come, I ask you, come stand with me.

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

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

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

And if you are a voter who believes that the American President should say what he means and do what he says and keep his word, I ask you to come stand with me.

Four years ago, when I traveled your State, I made this pledge, that if I won the election, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at Legends Field. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings, and State Attorney General Charlie Crist of Florida; Mel R. Martinez, senatorial candidate in Florida, and his wife, Kitty; country music entertainer Mel Tillis; Tino Martinez, first baseman, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, Major League Baseball; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Gainesville, Florida

October 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. So Jeb said, "Why don't we go to Gainesville? Maybe a couple hundred will show up and say hello." I said, "Well, I'm more than willing to go." I can't thank you all enough for coming. Thanks for taking time out of your Sunday afternoon. You're lifting our spirits, and we appreciate it.

I'm here to ask for your vote and your help. I'm here to ask you to take your friends and neighbors to the polls. Remind them we have a duty in our free country to vote. We have an obligation, in my judgment, to participate in our democratic system. Now, when you're lining up votes, of course look for our fellow Republicans and independents, but don't forget to get discerning Democrats to go to the polls, people like Senator Zell Miller from right north of here. And when you get them headed to the polls, remind 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 of all to put me back in is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

Audience members. Laura! Laura! Laura!

The President. I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I don't want to offend anybody here who's follically challenged, but I readily concede my runningmate doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] But I suspect the people of north-central Florida are going to be pleased to know I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment. I picked him because of his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

I'm proud of brother Jeb. What a great Governor, and what a great brother. Jeb and I share the same campaign consultant: Mother. [*Laughter*] And my brother Marvin is with us too. I'm proud Marv is here. Thanks for coming, Marvin. I love my family, and I'm glad that—I'm a fortunate man to have such a great family.

Listen, I want to urge you, when you go to the polls, to vote for Mel Martinez for the next Senator of your State. I know him well. He'll make a great United States Senator for Florida. I want to thank Congressman Cliff Stearns for joining us today. He does a great job for the people of this part of the world. I want to thank all the other candidates, people running for office. I want to thank Carole Jean Jordan and all the grassroots activists who are here.

I want to thank the Bellamy Brothers for being here. I'm proud to call them friend. I'm glad they are here.

I want to thank you for what you have done. It takes a lot of work to turn out a crowd this big. I want to thank you for what you're going to do: Call your friends; call your neighbors; turn them out. We'll carry Florida again and win a great victory on Tuesday.

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, and I am ready for the work ahead.

My 4 years as your President have confirmed some lessons and have taught me some new ones. I've learned to expect the unexpected, because war can arrive quietly on a quiet morning. I have learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle, even when the cause is right. I am grateful for the lessons I've learned from my parents: Respect every person; do your best; live every day to its fullest. I have been strengthened by my faith and humbled by its reminder that every life is part of a larger story.

I've learned how crucial it is for the American President to lead with clarity and purpose. As Presidents from Lincoln to Roosevelt to Reagan so clearly demonstrated, a President must not shift with the wind. A President should make the tough decisions and stand by them. The role of a President is not to follow the path of the latest polls; the role of a President is to lead based on principle and conviction and conscience.

During these 4 years, I've learned that whatever your strengths are, you're going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people will notice them. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. Sometimes I mangle the English language. I get that from my father. [*Laughter*] But all the time, no matter whether you agree with me or not, you know where I stand, what I believe, and where I'm going to lead.

You cannot say that about my opponent.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think it is fair to say that consistency is not his strong suit. I look at an issue and take a principled stand. As we've learned in this campaign, my opponent looks at an issue and tries to take every side. The people of Florida know the difference. And on Tuesday, Florida will vote for strong leadership and send me and Dick Cheney back to Washington.

This election comes down to clear choices on five vital issues, issues facing every family in our country. The first clear choice concerns your family budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for our families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent. And as a result of these good policies, real after-tax income—the money in your pocket, the money you have available for spending—is up by about 10 percent since I took office.

And this economy of ours has been through a lot. The stock market was in serious decline 6 months prior to my arrival. Then we had a recession and corporate scandals and an attack on our country that cost us a million jobs in 3 months after September the 11th.

But we acted. And our policies are paying off. Our economy is growing at rates as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We've added 1.9 million jobs in the last 13 months. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. More minority families own a home than ever before in our history. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Our small businesses are flourishing. Florida's farmers and ranchers are making a good living. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent across this country. Let me put that in perspective for you: That's

lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in the great State of Florida is 4.5 percent. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has an economic plan too. He voted to increase taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's in 20 years. That's five times a year, nearly. I would call that a predictable pattern, a leading indicator. In this campaign, he's also promised $2.2 trillion of new spending. That is trillion with a "T." That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

They asked him how he's going to pay for it. He threw out that same old, tired line, "We're going to tax the rich." By raising the top two brackets, you raise between 6 and 800 billion dollars. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion. There is a tax gap. And given his record, guess who he's going to ask to fill it? You. The good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we will carry Florida and win on November the 2d.

The second clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our Nation's families. I ran for President to challenge and end 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 of America. Math and reading scores are up. We're closing an achievement gap for minority students across this country. My vision for a new term is to build on these reforms and extend them to our high schools so that no child is left behind in America.

We will continue to improve our lives for our families by making health care more available and affordable. We'll expand health savings accounts. We will allow small businesses to join together so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We'll help our families in need. We'll help patients and doctors by getting rid of the frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running docs out of practice and running up your medicine. I'm standing with the families of Florida. I'm standing with the doctors of Florida. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve the health care for our families, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

My opponent has a different approach. He voted for the education reform but now wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposing a big-Government health care plan. You might remember in the debate, they said, "Talk about your health care plan." He looked straight in the camera, and he said, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*] The Government has got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people on his plan end up on a Government plan. He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times. He's put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

The third clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has 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 getting discounts on medicine with drug discount cards. Low-income seniors are getting help to pay for their prescription. And beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage through Medicare.

My opponent has a record on this issue. He voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage. In this campaign, he said he promised to repeal the bill, and then shortly thereafter, he promised to keep it. That sounds familiar. He also tries to scare our seniors about their Social Security, but he conveniently forgets that he's the one that voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits. He can run, but he cannot hide.

I've kept the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and I will always keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. But I understand we have a problem for the younger generation coming up. Baby boomers, like me and some others I see out there, are in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security, but we need to worry about the younger folks. That's why I believe

younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account they call their own. In a new term, I'll bring people together to strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

The fourth clear choice in this elections are 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 counts and every being matters. I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. I stand for the appointment of Federal 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 said he would only appoint judges who pass his liberal litmus test. He was part of an extreme minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, and he voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and John Kerry sits on the far left bank. He can run from his liberal record, but he cannot hide.

The final choice in this election is the most important one 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 are strengthening protections for the homeland. We are reforming and strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming the United States military. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. There will be no draft. We are determined. We are relentless. We will stay on the offensive. We are fighting the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we're succeeding. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are making raids and arrests. Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. The army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom, and Al Qaida no longer controls territory like Afghanistan. They no longer have training camps there. We are systematically destroying the Al Qaida network across the world. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we are on their trail.

The leader must be consistent. The leader must not send mixed signals to the world. My opponent has taken a different approach. 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. 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. He said he was right when he voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein, but I was wrong to use force to remove Saddam Hussein.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problems of Senator Kerry's record on national security are deeper than election-year reversals. 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 critical weapons systems and opposed Ronald Reagan's policy of peace through strength. 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 to liberate Kuwait.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

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

One year after the bombing—the first bombing of the World Trade Center, the Senator proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence, so massive that even his fellow Massachusetts liberal, Ted Kennedy, would not support them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—let's be fair about it—Senator Kennedy was right.

We will be relentless; we will be strong; we will be consistent in our security, in securing this country. And we've got a great United States military to help. I thank those who wear our Nation's uniform who are with us today. I thank the military families who are here with us today. And I thank the veterans who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I assure you, we'll keep our commitment I made to the troops and their families and to our vets. We will make sure our troops have all the resources they need to complete their missions.

That is why I went to the Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding. It was important funding. It was necessary funding. It was funding to support troops in harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And we received great bipartisan support for that funding, so strong only 12 members of the United States Senate voted against it, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Senator Kerry said on national TV prior to that vote that it would be irresponsible to vote against the troops. Then the polls began to change. And he did the irresponsible thing, and he voted against the troops. Then he entered the flip-flop hall of fame by saying, "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." He's given a lot of answers since then about that vote, but I think the most revealing of all is when he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." [*Laughter*] My fellow Americans, there's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We have differences on how to best protect America's families. During one of the debates, my opponent said that America must pass a "global test" before we commit troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Some of you probably think I'm making that up. I heard him. He was standing right there. You see, to me that means that we've got to get permission before we get troops. I'll work with our allies. I'll continue to build alliances. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

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

The President. A couple of weeks ago, Senator Kerry said that September the 11th didn't change him much at all. September the 11th changed me. It changed my outlook about what we need to do to protect this country. A few days after that attack, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers, on September the 14th, 2001. It was a day I'll never forget. I'll never forget the sights and sounds. I will never forget the workers in hardhats who were yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I'll never forget the person that grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how to better protect this country. I will never relent in the security of America, whatever it takes.

During the next 4 years——

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

The President. During the next 4 years, we will use every asset at our disposal to wage a comprehensive strategy to defend you. And perhaps the strongest asset we have is freedom. I believe in the power of liberty to transform nations. Free nations do not breed resentments. Free nations do not export terror. Free nations become allies in the war on terror. And by spreading freedom, we'll achieve the peace we all want for our children and our grandchildren.

I want the younger folks here to think about what's happened in Afghanistan in just 3 years. Society there was grim under the reign of the Taliban. These people were ideologues of hate. Young girls couldn't go to school. If their mothers didn't toe the line, they'd get whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. But because we acted to defend ourselves, because we upheld a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people in that country went to the polls to vote for President. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq is still dangerous. It's a dangerous place because that country is headed toward a free society. There will be elections in January. Think 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. I believe 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.

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, though, this election comes down to who you can trust—who you can trust to keep your families secure, who you can trust to spread prosperity. I proudly offer a record of leadership and results at a time of threat and challenge.

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

If you believe in high standards for our public schools, I ask you, come stand with me.

If you believe 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 generations to come, I ask, come stand with me.

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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 to come stand with me.

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

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

Four years ago, when I traveled your State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if elected, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:25 p.m. at the University Air Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Carole Jean Jordan, chairman, Republican Party of Florida; country music entertainers the Bellamy Brothers; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Cincinnati, Ohio

October 31, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. I am here to ask for your vote, and I am here to ask for your help. We have come to the great city of Cincinnati, Ohio, asking for you to turn your friends and neighbors out to the polls on Tuesday. With your help, we will carry Ohio again and win a great victory on Tuesday.

Perhaps the most important reason of all to put me back into office is so that Laura will be the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I admit it, he does not have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You all will be happy to know I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He's getting the job done for the American people.

I want to thank one of Cincinnati's great citizens, Johnny Bench, for having introduced me today. We can judge a person by the company he keeps, and I'm keeping good company up here on this stage. I'm proud you're here, Johnny. Thank you very much.

I'm proud to be here with some elected officials from the great State of Ohio. Governor Bob Taft and First Lady Hope Taft are with us. Thank you for coming. Senator Mike DeWine. Senator George Voinovich is out campaigning, but put him back into office for 6 more years.

I'm proud to be here with Senator Jim Bunning from Kentucky, and I hope the citizens of Kentucky put him back into office. And we love Mary as well.

Steve Chabot, the Congressman from this district, is with us. Congressman, thank you.