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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.

If you believe that this Nation should honor marriage and family and make a place for the weak and the 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 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.

My friend Congressman Rob Portman is with us tonight. Thank you for being here, Rob.

The Lieutenant Governor from Ohio, Jennette Bradley, is with us. State Treasurer Joe "Write in My Name" Deters is with us. I want to thank Betty Montgomery. I want to thank all the State and local officials. I want to thank Mike Sodrel, who is from the Indiana Ninth Congressional District. I strongly support Mike's bid for the United States Congress. And I strongly support the bid of Geoff Davis from Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District.

I want to thank my friend Anthony Munoz for being here today. I'm proud to call him friend. Marty Brennaman. I want to thank my friend Larry Gatlin and brother Rudy for joining us today. Yes. I want to thank the Wil Gravatt Band.

But most of all, I want to thank you all. I want to thank the people who have been putting up the signs and making the phone calls and doing all the hard work. You're turning out this vote 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 to get the job done for 4 more years.

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

The President. My 4 years as your President confirmed some lessons and taught some new ones. I've learned to expect the unexpected. I've learned firsthand how hard it is to send young men and women into battle. I am grateful for the lessons I have learned from my parents: Respect every person; do your best; live every day to its fullest. I've been strengthened by my faith and humbled by its reminder that every life is part of a larger story. I understand 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 has to make tough decisions and stand by them.

The role of the 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 are going to need them, and whatever your shortcomings are, people will notice them. Sometimes I'm a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I mangle the English language. 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 where I'm going to lead.

You cannot say that about my opponent.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I think it's fair to say that consistency is not his strong suit. [*Laughter*] I look at an issue and take a principled stand. My opponent looks at an issue and tries to take every side. And the people of Ohio know the difference. And that's one of the reasons why on Tuesday we're going to carry your great State.

This election comes down to clear choices on five vital issues facing every American family. The first clear choice concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage, not penalize marriage. We reduced taxes on everybody who pays taxes. As a result of these good policies, real after-tax income—the money in your pocket to spend on groceries or house payments or rent—is up 10 percent since I took office.

When you're out there convincing your friends and neighbors to vote, remind them what our economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. And then we faced the recession and corporate scandals and an attack on our country that cost us a million jobs in just 3 months after the attack.

But we acted. Our economy is creating jobs and growing faster than any major economy in the world. We've added—homeownership rate is at an alltime high in America. More minorities own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Small businesses are flourishing all across the State of Ohio. Ohio farmers are making a living. We

added more than 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

I've traveled your State a lot. I know that in certain areas of this State, people are struggling. But we're making progress. Ohio added 5,500 new jobs last month. Your unemployment rate has gone from 6.3 to 6 percent in one month. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has an economic plan too. He voted to increase taxes 98 times in the 20 years he's been in the United States Senate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's five times every year he's been in the Senate. I would call that a leading indicator—[*laughter*]—a predictable pattern. Couple that with the fact that he's promised $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending—that's trillion with a "T." That's a lot—[*laughter*]—even for a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

They asked him how he's going to pay for it. He said, "Oh, we'll just tax the rich." The problem is, is that by raising the top two brackets, one, you penalize the small-business sector of this country, and secondly, you only raise between 600 and 800 billion dollars. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion. That's what I would call a tax gap. Given his record, it's not hard to figure out who's going to fill that tax gap. You are. But the good news is, we're not going to let him tax you; we're going to win Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

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

The President. 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 public schools. I kept my word. We passed education reforms to bring high standards to the classroom. Math and reading scores are now on the rise. We're closing the achievement gap for minority children all 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'll continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and available. We'll expand health savings accounts. We'll allow small businesses to join together and buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to buy insurance for. We'll help our families in need by expanding community health centers.

And we will help Ohio families and patients and doctors by getting rid of the frivolous and junk lawsuits that make health care too expensive. In all we do to improve health care, we will make sure the medical decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

As you can imagine, 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. I don't know if you remember the debate when they said, "Tell us about your health care plan." And one of the things he said was, "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 would end up on the Government plan with his vision. And that is the wrong prescription for American families.

Now, we got a different point of view when it comes to our docs and patients. He voted against medical liability reform 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. 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 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 that. He voted against the Medicare bill that included

prescription drugs. In the campaign, he's promised to repeal the bill, and then shortly thereafter, he promised to keep it. Sounds familiar. He 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. I have kept the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And I'll always keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. And the Social Security trust is in pretty good shape for baby boomers like me and a couple of other folks I see out there.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren when it comes to Social Security. We need to worry about whether or not the Social Security system will be there when they retire. And that is why I believe younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their payroll taxes and put it in a personal savings account, an account that earns a better interest, an account they call their own.

The fourth clear 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. And I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion. And 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 a liberal litmus test. He was part of an extreme minority that voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on the far left bank. [*Laughter*] He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

The final choice in this election is the 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, this world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We've strengthened protections for the homeland. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army. We are fighting the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We are determined. We are relentless. And we are succeeding.

Afghanistan is free and is an ally in the war on terror. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are making raids and capturing terrorist leaders. Libya is dismantling its weapons programs. The army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom. And Al Qaida no longer controls Afghanistan. We've shut down its camps. We are systematically destroying the Al Qaida network across the world. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's known leaders and associates have been brought to justice. And the rest of them know we're on their trail.

And one of the reasons we're protecting America better than we have in the past is because we've got a great United States military. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of such a fine group of people. I want to thank the military families who have joined us today for your sacrifices. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. And I assure you, we'll keep our commitment to our troops. We'll make sure they have that which they need to complete their missions.

That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked for $87 billion of supplemental funding. That was vital funding. That was necessary funding. That was important funding. And we received great support. As a matter of fact, only 12 members of the United States Senate voted against that funding, 2 of whom were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. On national TV, Senator Kerry said it would be irresponsible to vote against the troops. And then when the vote came around, he did the irresponsible thing and voted against the troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then he entered the flip-flop hall of fame by saying this—[*laughter*]—"I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it."

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

The President. He's given several explanations for that vote since, but perhaps the most revealing of all was when he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." My fellow Americans, there is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Senator Kerry has a pattern of switching positions in this campaign. In the second debate, he said he always believed Saddam Hussein 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 that I was wrong to use force against Saddam Hussein.

Yet, the problems with 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 weapon systems and opposed President 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 that country.

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, cuts so extreme that his fellow Massachusetts Senator opposed them. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong—and we've got to be fair—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

We have big differences about how to protect you, about how to protect America's families. In one of the debates, Senator Kerry said we must be subject to a "global test" before we commit troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm not making that up. [*Laughter*] He wasn't standing that far away from me when he said it. [*Laughter*] The best I can tell, my opponent's "global test" means that America must get permission from foreign capitals before taking action to defend our country.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'll build on our alliances. I will work with our friends and allies to protect ourselves and to protect freedom. But I will never submit America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

Senator Kerry the other day said that September the 11th didn't change him much. September the 11th changed my outlook. I remember standing in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the first-responder who had just come out of the rubble who grabbed me by the arm, and he looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Don't let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning trying to figure out how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

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

The President. We will continue to use all our Nation's assets to protect the American people. We will wage a comprehensive strategy to protect you. Perhaps the strongest asset we have is freedom. See, I believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. I believe free nations do not breed resentments and export terror. Free nations become allies in the war on terror. Freedom will help us keep the peace we all long for for our children.

Think about what's happened in the recent history of the world. It wasn't all that long

ago that young girls couldn't go to school in Afghanistan because that country was run by the barbarians called the Taliban. And if their mothers didn't toe their line of ideological hatred, they would be whipped in the public square and sometimes executed in the sports stadium. But because we acted to defend ourselves, because we acted to uphold a doctrine which said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people went to the polls to vote for a President in Afghanistan. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq is a dangerous place today because Iraq is moving toward freedom. There will be elections in Iraq in January. And think how far that society has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. Freedom is on the march in this world, and America is more secure because of it. Much of our foreign policy is driven by my deep belief that everybody yearns to be free. See, 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. But ultimately, this election comes down to who can you trust—who can you trust to provide security for your family? Who can you trust to make sure this economy continues to grow?

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

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

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

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

If you believe 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 that 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 in free enterprise and good schools and the 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.

And 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.

In 2000, when I campaigned across the State of Ohio and Indiana and Kentucky, I made this pledge: I said if I got elected, 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.

God bless, and thanks for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 p.m. at the Great American Ball Park. In his remarks, he referred to pro baseball Hall of Famer Johnny Bench; Mary Bunning, wife of Senator Jim Bunning; Ohio State Treasurer Joseph T. Deters, write-in candidate for county prosecutor, Hamilton County, OH; Ohio Auditor of State Betty Montgomery; pro football Hall of Famer Anthony Munoz; Marty Brennaman, broadcaster, Cincinnati Reds, Major League Baseball; country music entertainers the Gatlin Brothers and the Wil Gravatt Band; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks in Wilmington, Ohio

November 1, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming today. There's nothing like an early morning rally in the great State of Ohio. I can't think of a better place to kick off the last day of this campaign than with the good folks here in Ohio. I want to thank you for coming. Thank you for your support. With your help, we will carry this great State and win tomorrow.

I'm here to ask for your help. You get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. Find our fellow Republicans, wise independents, and discerning Democrats, and tell them, if