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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

they want a safer America and a stronger America and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

Perhaps the most important reason why people ought to put me back in is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. You know, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. [*Laughter*] You'll be pleased to hear I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he can get the job done. I picked him because of his experience. I picked him because of his judgment.

I'm proud to be traveling today with Curt Schilling. Everybody knows him as a great pitcher. I know him as a great husband, a great dad, and a man of great character. He's a champion on the field, and he's a champion off the field. And like me, he married well, and I'm proud that Shonda is with us today too. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you being here.

I'm proud to be here with Michael DeWine and his wife, Fran, the Senator from the great State of Ohio. I'm asking you to make sure you vote for George Voinovich for United States Senator. I want to thank Congressman Mike Turner for being here and his wife, Lori.

I want to thank your Governor, Bob Taft, and your Lieutenant Governor, Jennette Bradley, for coming today. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank all the State and local officials.

I want to thank the entertainment, the Wil Gravatt Band and the Wilmington, East Clinton, Blanchester, and Clinton-Massie High School marching bands. I will try to keep my remarks short so you can make sure you study before class starts. [*Laughter*]

I'm here with a message for the people of Ohio. I know the economy of this State has been through a lot, but we are moving in the right direction. And to do so, we've got to keep your taxes low. And I want you to remind your friends and neighbors that my opponent will raise the taxes on Ohio's families and Ohio's small businesses.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In a new term, I will put pro-growth—keep pro-growth, pro-small-business, pro-farmer policies in place. I will defend your deepest values, and I will work every day to make sure your families are safe. And you can count on me. I'm asking for your help, and there is no doubt in my mind, with your help, we will win Ohio again and win a great victory tomorrow.

The 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 job ahead.

The American President must 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 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 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, the people will notice them. Sometimes I am a little too blunt. I get that from my mother. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I mangle the English language. I get that from my father. [*Laughter*] But all the time, whether you agree with me or not, you know where I stand, what I believe, and what I intend to do.

This election comes down to five clear choices for America's families. The first clear choice concerns your family's budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for America's families. I have kept my word. We've doubled the child credit. We reduced the marriage penalty. We believe the Tax Code ought to encourage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest tax bracket to 10 percent. We reduced taxes on everybody who pays taxes. And as a result of these good policies, our economy is growing at faster rates than any in nearly 20 years. Real after-tax income is up by 10 percent, and that's good for America's families. Homeownership rate in America is at an all-time high. More minority families own a home today than ever before in our Nation's history.

Ohio's farmers are making a living. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America. Small businesses are flourishing all across your State. We've added 1.9 million jobs—new jobs in the last 13 months. The unemployment rate across this country is 5.4 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s.

There have been some tough times in Ohio, but last month alone, we added 5,500 jobs. The unemployment rate has dropped from 6.3 percent to 6 percent in this State. This economy is strong, and it is getting stronger.

My opponent has got an economic plan. He's been in the United States Senate for 20 years, and he's voted to raise taxes 98 times. That's five times every year in the Senate. That's what I would call a leading indicator, a predictable pattern. Plus, he's promised about $2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That is trillion with a "T." That is a lot. That's a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts.

So they said, "How are you going to pay for it?" He said, "Well, we'll just tax the rich." But that leaves a tax gap. See, you can only raise between 600 and 800 billion. That's far short of the 2.2 trillion he promised. Given his record, guess who's going to have to fill the tax gap? You are. But the good news is he's not going to tax you because we're going to carry Ohio and win tomorrow.

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, good, solid education reforms to bring high standards to our classrooms. Math and reading scores are now up in America. We're closing an achievement gap by helping our minority children. My vision for a new term is to build on these reforms, extend them to our high schools so 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 so they can buy insurance at the same discount that big companies are able to do.

We'll help our families in need. And we'll help our families and patients and doctors by getting rid of the frivolous and junk lawsuits that run up the cost of health care. This is an issue in this campaign. My opponent voted against medical liability reform not once, not twice, but 10 times. He put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I'm standing with the families of Ohio. I'm standing with the docs of Ohio. I am for medical liability reform—now. In all we do to improve health care, 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 education reform, and now he wants to weaken the accountability standards. He's proposing a big-Government health care plan. I remember that debate when he looked square in the camera when they asked him about his health care plan. He said, "The Government didn'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 a Government program. The wrong prescription for American families is to federalize your health care.

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 drugs for our seniors. I have kept my word. Seniors are getting discounts on medicine with their drug discount cards, and beginning in 2006, all seniors will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people my opponent has got a record on this issue. He voted against the Medicare bill that included prescription drug coverage. He's trying to scare our seniors in this campaign. That's an old, tired practice. But as he does so, I want you to tell your friends and neighbors, he's the one that voted to tax

Social Security benefits eight times. We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors. We 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 the Social Security system. Baby boomers like me are in fine shape when it comes to the Social Security trust. I see a couple of others out there too. [*Laughter*] But the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future generations. And that's why I'll bring people together to make sure we strengthen the Social Security system for generations to come.

Fourth clear choice in this election is on the values that are crucial for our families. 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 the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

We have a difference of opinion on these issues. My opponent voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. There is a mainstream in American politics, and Senator John Kerry sits on the far left bank. [*Laughter*] He can run from that liberal 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 this country of ours shows any uncertainty or weakness during these troubling times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch.

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

The President. Our strategy is clear. We have strengthened the protections for our homeland. We are reforming and strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming the great United States military. There will be no draft. We will keep the All-Volunteer Army an all-volunteer army. We are relentless, and we are determined. We are staying on the offensive. We will chase the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

The 9/11 Commission report said America is safer but not yet safe. We're making progress. Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are making raids and capturing terrorist leaders. Lybia is dismantling its weapons programs. The army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom. Al Qaida no longer controls Afghanistan. We've shut down their camps. We are systematically destroying the Al Qaida network across the world. More than three-quarters of its key leaders and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail.

And we are making progress because we have a great United States military. I want to thank those who wear the uniform who are here. I want to thank the military families who are here. And I want to thank the veterans who have set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to assure you, we will keep our commitment that I have made to our troops and to their families.

That's why in September of 2003, I went to the United States Congress and asked for $87 billion of important supplemental funding. That's money that went to our troops in combat in Iraq and in Afghanistan. It was important, really important. My opponent, on national TV, said prior to that vote, "It would be irresponsible to vote against funding for the troops." And then he started to go down in the polls, and he voted against funding for our troops.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And then he entered the flip-flop hall of fame by saying this: "I actually did vote for the 87 billion, right before I voted against it." I haven't spent a lot of time in the coffee shops around here, but I bet you a lot of people don't talk that way. [*Laughter*]

They kept pressing him. He's given a lot of explanations about the 87—voting against the 87 billion, but I think 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.

The problem with Senator Kerry's record on national security are deeper than election-year reversals. Twenty years—for 20 years, on the largest national security issues of the time, he has been consistently wrong. During the cold war, Senator Kerry was critical, was against President Ronald Reagan's policy of peace through strength. Well, 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 out of Kuwait, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait. History has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

One year after the bombing of—the first bombing of the World Trade Center, the Senator proposed massive cuts in our intelligence budgets, so massive that his colleague from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong—and we've got to be fair about it—Senator Kennedy was right. [*Laughter*]

During our debates, it became clear we have a different attitude about how to protect American families. He said America must pass a "global test" before we commit force. I'm not making that up. I heard it, and so did you. As far as I can tell, a "global test" means that America must get permission to defend ourselves. I will build on our alliance. I will strengthen our relationships overseas, but I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We have a different point of view about how to protect our families. My opponent said that September the 11th didn't change him much at all. Well, September the 11th changed me. It changed my outlook. Perhaps the best way to describe to you about how I feel is that experience I had at the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001, in the rubble. And I remember the workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the person coming out of that rubble, and he grabbed me by arm. He looked me square 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 our families and our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

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

The President. We will use every asset at our disposal to protect you. We will wage a comprehensive strategy to defend our country. And perhaps the most powerful asset we have is freedom. I believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. I know that 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 want for our children and our grandchildren.

I want the younger folks here to remember and think about what has taken place in a quick period of time. It wasn't all that long ago in Afghanistan that young girls could not go to school, and if their mothers didn't toe the line of the ideologues of hate that ran that country, they would be taken into the public square and whipped and sometimes shot in a sports stadium. But because we acted in our own self-defense, because we upheld a doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people in Afghanistan voted for a President. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Freedom can change societies for the better.

Iraq is dangerous. It is dangerous because that society is heading toward democracy. Think how far that society has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. There will be Presidential elections in January. I believe every soul desires 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 there is a lot at stake in this election. The future safety and prosperity of this country are on the ballot. Ultimately, though, this election comes down to who do you trust—who do you trust to make the tough decisions? Who do you trust to lead this country to a better tomorrow?

If you believe that taxes should stay low so families can pay your bills and small businesses create jobs, I ask you to 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 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 to 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 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're a voter who believes that the President of the United States should say what he means and does what he says and keeps his word, I ask you to come stand with me.

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

The President. Four years ago when I traveled across Ohio, I made a pledge that if I were to be 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.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:22 a.m. at Airborne Airpark. In his remarks, he referred to Shonda Schilling, wife of Curt Schilling, pitcher, Boston Red Sox, Major League Baseball; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. He also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks to Reporters on Arrival in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

November 1, 2004

We're coming down the stretch, and I feel great. Thank you for asking. [*Laughter*] This is a seven-stop day, because I want to continue telling the people what I intend to do to protect them and how I intend to put policies in place to make sure America is a hopeful place. I'm looking forward to the day. I really am. I'm excited by the size of the crowds. I'm energized by the support that I have received across this country. It's an opportunity to thank people who have worked so hard on behalf of my candidacy and to tell them how grateful I am for all of the sacrifices they have made on behalf of their country. It's also a chance to remind them that when they work hard, that I'm confident we're going to win.

I want to thank you all for working so hard coming down the stretch. I know you're tired, but look at it this way: It's like that marathoner, Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News]; that finish line is in sight. And I just want to assure you, I've got the energy, the optimism, and the enthusiasm to cross the line.

But thank you all. We'll see you during the course of what's going to be a great day. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 a.m. at Pittsburgh International Airport. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania

November 1, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. I am so honored so many came out to say hello. I'm here to ask for your vote and ask for your help. It is close to voting time, and I'm out here to ask you to get our fellow Republicans and wise independents and discerning Democrats here in western Pennsylvania to do our duty and go to the polls tomorrow. And remind your friends and neighbors, if they want a safer America and a stronger