

Week Ending Friday, June 23, 2006

**Remarks at a Reception for
Congressional Candidate Heather
Wilson in Albuquerque, New Mexico**
June 16, 2006

Thank you very much. Thanks for coming. It's great to be back in New Mexico again. It just seemed like I was here the other day. [Laughter] This time I've come because I cannot tell you how important it is to reelect Heather Wilson to the United States Congress.

I have spent enough time in Washington, DC, to be able to distinguish between the real, genuine person and those who are just up there to mark time. Heather Wilson is honest; she is capable. She has gone to Washington, DC, to do a job on behalf of the citizens of New Mexico, and she deserves to be reelected to the United States Congress.

And I thank you for helping her. This has been a successful event. So I want to thank the organizers and the phone callers and the people that encouraged you to come, and then I want to thank you for being here. When you find somebody who is a decent soul willing to sacrifice time with her family, willing to travel the long distances between New Mexico and Washington, DC, willing to do the hard work on behalf of the citizens of Albuquerque and the surrounding area, you need to support her. And I want to thank you for supporting her.

When Heather tells you something, she means it. And you don't have to worry about her disgracing the office of the United States Congress. You know, I like strong women. [Laughter] I was raised by one; I married one; and I hope we're raising two. [Laughter] And sometimes a strong woman—sometimes they—they all listen, and sometimes they do what you ask them to do, and sometimes they don't. [Laughter] See, Heather Wilson is an independent soul. That's what you want from a person from this district. You want somebody who is strong in her beliefs, strong in

her convictions, but strong, first and foremost, to the people of this district. The way I like to describe her is: She's compassionate; she's smart; she's independent-minded; and she can get the job done. And that's why she needs to go back to the United States Congress.

Laura sends her best. In the photo line, the guy said, "Where's Laura?" It didn't hurt my feelings, you know. [Laughter] Kind of like, you know, "How come you're here and she's not?" [Laughter] But Laura knows talent and strength of character when she sees it—Heather Wilson is one of her favorite people in Washington, DC. And she sends her love to Heather and sends her thanks to you all for helping this fine lady get reelected to the United States Congress.

By the way, I lucked out when she said yes. [Laughter] We were raised, as you know, right across the border, so I have a pretty good feeling about the values and the thinking of the people of New Mexico. And so does Laura. And there's no doubt in her mind and my mind that Heather Wilson is the right person to represent you in the United States Congress. And again, I want to thank you. I forgot to ask you to do one thing, though, and that is thanks for giving of your hard-earned money; make sure that you turn out the vote coming down the stretch.

She's going to win. No doubt in my mind, she's going to win. I want to thank her family, Jay, Joshua, and Caitlin. I was telling Joshua and Caitlin coming over—I spent some quality time with Heather on Air Force One; it's amazing what people do to get on Air Force One, by the way. [Laughter] I said to Joshua and Caitlin, "I know a lot about you." They kind of looked at me like, you know, "Huh?" [Laughter] I said, "That's all your mother talked about for half the leg." [Laughter] I love a person who values her family, who places her family at the center of her life.

We need people in the United States Congress who understand the importance of family in our society. Heather Wilson not only talks about family, she acts on her love of her family. And I want to thank Jay and Josh and Caitlin for being here today. And thank you for supporting your mom and your wife for her hard work doing the job.

I want to thank Allen Weh—[*applause*—yes, he's a good fellow. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank those of you who, a lot of time, don't get credit for making phone calls—there's one right there—[*laughter*—and people who put up the signs and go to the rallies and stuff the envelopes, the people who really turn out to be the wind at the candidate's back. And you're going to make the difference coming down the stretch for Heather. So thank you in advance for what you're fixing to do.

We're dealing with some big issues. We really are. These are historic times. And one of the reasons I feel so strongly that Heather needs to be reelected is, she understands the stakes of the world in which we live. See, we need people who see the world the way it is, not the way we would hope it would be. And the world we live in is a dangerous world because there's still enemies that would like to strike the United States of America.

We need clear-eyed realists in Washington, DC. Heather Wilson is a clear-eyed realist. She brings a lot of experience to the job. By the way, she's on the Intelligence Committee—I'm probably not supposed to talk about it. [*Laughter*] The reason she's on it is because she's a clear-eyed realist. It's a very, very important job. She helps make sure this country has the best intelligence possible. And the reason that's important is because our most important job, the most important priority of the President and the Congress, is to protect the American people. And the best way to protect the American people is to stay on the offense and bring the killers to justice so they don't hurt the American people again.

And in order to stay on the offense, we've got to have good intelligence, and we've got to have smart, capable people helping this Government find these terrorists. In order

to protect the American people, I need people in the United States Congress who understand the importance of supporting the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America, and Heather Wilson understands that.

We're fighting a global war on terror. Now, I know most of the attention is focused on Iraq, but I want to remind you, that is just a battlefield in the global war on terror. It's a part of the war on terror. I need people in the United States Congress like Heather, who understands that the war on terror is not just Iraq but it's Afghanistan, and it's places where people plan and plot their attacks on the United States of America.

I just came back from Baghdad. It's a remarkable experience to, first and foremost, meet the leaders of a new Government, people that are in office because 12 million people are able to vote because we threw out a tyrant that was so brutal and so ruthless that—not only to kill his own people by the thousands, that he invaded his neighbors, that he threatened the United States of America, that he harbored terrorists. And now they have a chance to vote, and they did, and now there's a Government formed under one of the most modern constitutions ever written in the Middle East. And it was refreshing to see these people that are anxious to fulfill the will of the people of Iraq.

And it's hard work. But I went to take the measure of the person. I went to say this to him: "It's up to you; here's your chance; here's your chance to succeed; here's your chance to liberate people; here's your chance to make history; here's your chance to spread the peace; here's your chance to help us fight those who want to destroy your hopes and aspirations." And I also told him this, that "When the United States of America gives a commitment, we will keep our word. We will not cut and run." It's important to have people in the United States Congress who understand the stakes of the fight in Iraq and complete the mission. And Heather Wilson is such a person.

We're going to succeed in Iraq. We will succeed. And when we do, they will be an ally in the war on terror, and they'll be an example for others to see. You see, I base a lot of my decisions upon this belief: There

is an Almighty, and one of the great gifts of the Almighty to men and women from all faiths and all walks of life is freedom. Freedom is universal. Freedom is not owned just by people in the United States of America; it's universal—all people desire to be free. And free societies turn out to be peaceful societies. Free societies figure out ways to keep the peace. And so, in our fight against the terrorists, not only will we bring them to justice and stay on the hunt to protect the American people, but at the same time, we will act on the universal principle of freedom and help others become free.

People say, "What do you mean by that, Mr. President?" Well, I'll give you an example. Two weeks from today, I'll be meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi. He's coming. We'll have a visit in Washington, DC. It turns out he's an Elvis fan, so he and I are then going to go to Graceland. *[Laughter]* Think about that, though. Think about the American President traveling to Graceland—*[laughter]*—with the Prime Minister of Japan. Let me ask you something—60 years ago, would you have thought that would be possible? *[Laughter]* Think about it.

See, my dad and, I bet, your relatives too—some of you had relatives who fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America in a bloody, bloody conflict. And 60 years later, I'll be sitting down at the table with the Prime Minister talking about North Korea, how to keep the peace there. I'll be talking about the fact that their country has contributed 1,000 troops to help this young democracy in the heart of the Middle East. He understands that freedom can help change a neighborhood that's been full of hatred.

What happened? What happened was Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. They had a different form of government. They became—they adopted a different style of governing themselves. Democracies have the capacity to convert enemies into allies. And what's happening today is we're after the terrorists not only by staying on the hunt, but we're after them with an ideology of hope, an ideology of light, an ideology that recognizes human rights and human dignity. And one of these days, somebody is going

to be sitting down—a duly-elected leader from Iraq sitting down at the table with a future U.S. President talking about how to keep the peace. We're laying the foundation of peace for generations to come, and Heather Wilson understands the stakes.

Our economy is strong. And one of the reasons it's strong is because we put policies in place that recognize that if you have more money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, this economy is going to grow. See, there's a philosophical debate in Washington, DC—who best can spend your money. *[Laughter]* We like—Heather and I like for you to spend your own money. We believe if you have more money in your pocket, the economy—*[applause]*. We believe if you're a small-business owner and you got more money in your treasury, your more likely to hire somebody. That's what we believe.

The other crowd believes they need to run up your taxes, because they think they can spend your money better than you can. You might remember, we've had some tough economic times in this country. We had a recession, a stock market correction, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America, two wars to defend ourselves, major natural disasters, and high energy prices—and yet this economy is going strong. And we intend to keep it strong. *[Applause]*

And the reason it's strong is because we cut the taxes. We let you keep more of your own money. Now, you'll hear them in Washington say, "Well, what we need to do is balance the budget by raising the taxes." That's not the way Washington works; it's just not the way. It may sound attractive to some here in Albuquerque, "Oh, we'll just tax a certain number of people, and we'll balance the budget that way." No, the way Washington works is, they will raise your taxes, and they will figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance the budget is to set priorities when it comes to spending the people's money, to be strong on those priorities, and to keep progrowth economic policies in place so we get more tax revenues coming into the Treasury because this economy is growing. That's how you balance the budget.

Make no mistake about it, if the other bunch gets in control of the Congress, you'll

be paying higher taxes. And that's why we're going to win this November. People understand they're taxed enough. What they want is fiscal sanity in Washington, DC. That's what they want.

You know something? One of the things that we're going to run on as a party and Heather can really run on is, she's delivered. Take Medicare, for example. That's a program—it's an important program. It was signed by Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965. It's really an important deal. The Federal Government has made a commitment to help our elderly when it comes to health care. And our attitude is, if you make a commitment, you want to make sure you have a modern health care system. There's no need to make a commitment and have a lousy health care system. And Medicare had done a lot of good work, but it was getting old, and it needed to be reformed. Medicine was changing, but Medicare wasn't.

And so we got together and decided we're going to do something on behalf of the seniors. We're going to fulfill our promise to the seniors of the United States of America. The other bunch had been talking about it, year after year. We did—we got something done. What we did is, we provided prescription drugs as an integral part of Medicare.

People say, why was that important? Well, I'll give you one reason. Medicare would pay for heart surgery but would not pay one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. Medicine had been modernizing; Medicare had not. And thanks to the leadership of Heather Wilson, I was able to sign a modern Medicare bill. And if you're a poor senior in Albuquerque, New Mexico, this Government is going to help you with your prescription drugs. And the days of you having to choose between medicine and food are over, thanks to Heather Wilson.

I could keep talking all day long about her—[laughter]—but I might miss my dinner with Laura. [Laughter] But I do want to talk about her love of the young people. You might remember, she served in the cabinet here as the Secretary of Children, Youth, and Family. She was—she said, “Look, I want to serve my State by helping young people,

helping the disadvantaged.” In other words, she's got a good heart.

And she took that heart to Washington and helped us pass the No Child Left Behind Act. Let me tell you something about the No Child Left Behind Act. It said, we're going to increase money, particularly for poor students. I think that's a good use of money. I really do. But instead of just accepting mediocrity in our schools, we said, “We're going to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations.” Here's the truth. In some schools, it's just as easy to pass somebody who looks hard to educate along. “If you're at such-and-such an age, you're supposed to be here; we'll just move you there.”

See, Heather and I believe every child can learn, no matter if you're—how you were raised, no matter your heritage. We believe you can learn to read. You know, if your mom and dad don't speak English as their primary language, we still believe you can learn. And not only we believe you can learn, we expect the school to teach you to learn. That's what we want. We expect the schools to teach you how to read and write and add and subtract.

And so we worked to raise the standards and said to States, “You measure, because we want to know.” We want to know early, before it's too late. The No Child Left Behind Act that Heather was a strong supporter of has helped change America for the better. It says, if we find a child struggling with reading early, we're going to make sure there's extra money to help that child, because we don't want one child left behind in America.

There is an achievement gap in America. There really is. When you look at the fourth grade results, there's a—the Anglo students are here, and Latino students are here, and the African American—that's not right. That's not what this country is all about. This country is about equal opportunity. This country is about making sure every child, no matter what her—his or her background is, gets a great education. And the No Child Left Behind Act is challenging mediocrity, and it's challenging failure, and that achievement gap is closing. And Heather Wilson gets credit for being a strong supporter of good schools in New Mexico.

You know, there's a lot of problems that rise—rise up for a State like New Mexico.

You've got very important labs, and these labs make a difference for the United States of America. But it's not a given the labs will be there. You need people in the Congress that understand how to get things done.

It seems like to me the people of this district would want somebody to be able to pick up the phone and call the President of the United States and have the President of the United States answer the phone. I'm close to Heather, you know. As I told you, she's independent. But that doesn't mean I don't hold her in the highest—highest regard and deep respect, which I do. I love her integrity. And when she calls me on the phone, I answer. And guess what—guess what she's generally talking about? The people of this congressional district. She loves of the people of this district. She's serving the people of this district. And I urge the people of this district, for their own sake, for their own good, and for the good of the United States of America, to send Heather Wilson back to the United States Congress.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque. In his remarks, he referred to Allen Weh, chairman, Republican Party of New Mexico; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 17, 2006

Good morning. Earlier this week, I traveled to Baghdad to visit the capital of a free and democratic Iraq. It was an incredible feeling to stand in the cockpit of Air Force One and watch the pilot steer us in toward Baghdad.

After we landed, I had the pleasure of meeting with our dedicated Embassy staff and intelligence officers serving far from home under dangerous circumstances. And I was honored to meet with some of our troops, including those responsible for bringing justice to the terrorist Zarqawi. It was a privilege to shake their hands, look them in the eye, and tell them how much the

American people appreciate their daily courage and how much we appreciate the sacrifices that they and their families are making.

On my trip, I also met with the new Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki, and I was able to see firsthand his strong character and his determination to succeed. We held a joint meeting of our two Cabinets, with members of my Cabinet participating by video teleconference from Camp David. The Prime Minister briefed us on his plan to take immediate steps in three key areas: improving security; building up Iraq's economy so Iraqis can see real progress in their lives; and reaching out to the international community to secure support for Iraq's new Government. Then we discussed how my administration can help the Prime Minister accomplish these vital objectives.

His top priority is securing Baghdad, so coalition and Iraqi forces have launched Operation Together Forward, a joint effort to restore security and the rule of law to high-risk areas of the city. To help the Prime Minister improve security, we will continue embedding coalition transition teams in Iraqi Army and police units, and we will help the new Iraqi Ministers of Defense and Interior improve their command and control, root out corruption, and investigate and punish human rights violations. We will also support the Prime Minister as he works to rein in illegal militias, build a judicial system that will provide equal justice to all, and promote reconciliation among the Iraqi people.

To aid the Prime Minister in revitalizing Iraq's economy, we will send additional experts to help the Iraqi Government develop an economic framework that will promote job creation and opportunity for all Iraqis. We will also help the Prime Minister increase oil and electricity production by working together on ways to protect key infrastructure from attacks and to quickly restore oil and electricity production when attacks do occur.

Finally, America will help the Prime Minister engage the international community in Iraq's success. We will encourage other nations to fulfill the monetary pledges they have already made to help the new Iraqi Government succeed. We will also support the Prime Minister's efforts to forge a new