

Week Ending Friday, November 8, 2002

Remarks in Louisville, Kentucky

November 1, 2002

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much for coming tonight. I'm here to talk about the American spirit, and I'm here to remind the good folks of this part of the State of Kentucky that if you're interested in good Government, if you're interested in sending somebody to Congress who will represent all the people of the district, if you want somebody who can do the job, send Anne Northup back to the United States Congress.

I love traveling America because it gives me a chance to see firsthand and to feel the fact that the American spirit is alive and well. That's the spirit that says, no matter what the cost, we'll defend our freedom. It's the spirit—the American spirit says to me that we'll serve something greater than ourselves here in this country. The American spirit means that we love freedom. And if you love freedom, you have a duty to participate in the democratic process.

I'm here to urge all the people of the great State of Kentucky to vote, Republican, Democrat, people who don't care about any kind of political party. You need to do your duty. But when you get in that poll, I've got a suggestion for you: Anne Northup is the right choice.

I wasn't Anne's first choice tonight. [Laughter] She wanted Laura. I saw on TV that Laura was campaigning with Elizabeth Dole. She got the long straw; you got the short straw. But she sends her love. She sends her best. She's as strong for Anne as I am.

I want to tell you how proud I am of Laura. When I married her, she was a public school librarian. [Applause] I didn't realize there were so many public school librarians here in Louisville.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. That's good. When I said, "Would you marry me," her state of mind was this: She didn't like politics, and she didn't care for politicians. [Laughter] And now she's doing a fabulous job as our First Lady.

I appreciate Anne's family. I appreciate Woody and all of their kids. Heck, if they just get the kids to vote, it would be a landslide. [Laughter]

I'm proud to be up here as well with a fine Kentucky couple, starting with a United States Senator who has done a fabulous job for the people of Kentucky, and that's Mitch McConnell. Like me, he married well—so well I put Elaine in the Cabinet. [Laughter] She's doing a really good job on behalf of the American people. I'm proud of Elaine.

I'm also honored to be up here with another great Senator from Kentucky, Jim Bunning. We need to make sure Mitch goes back to the Senate. We need him there for a lot of reasons. Some of the reasons I'll talk about later, but one of the key reasons why Senators McConnell and Bunning are important to our future is because they know what I know: We've got a problem on our Federal judiciary. There's too many vacancies. And there's too many vacancies because the current leadership in the Senate has done a lousy job on letting my people have a fair hearing when I nominate them. They don't like the kind of judges I nominate. I put good, honest, honorable people who understand their job is to interpret the Constitution, not use the bench from which to legislate. We don't need any more legislators. We need good, honorable judges on the bench.

I appreciate so very much Ernie Fletcher. Congressman Ernie Fletcher is with us today—he's one of the fine Members of the United States Congress—and Ron Lewis of the United States Congress, from Kentucky as well. These are two solid Members, Members with whom I can work for the good of everybody.

Also on the stage today we've got Geoff Davis, who's a candidate for the United States Congress. And if you're living in Geoff's district, give him your vote and give him your word. And Mike Sodrel is here. [Applause] Sounds like old Mike's got something going. We want both these good men in the Congress. We've got a lot to do to work together.

I'm here to thank the grassroots activists as well. I want to thank you for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're fixing to do over the next couple of days. You need to go to your coffee shops and your houses of worship and your community centers and tell the people they need to go and vote, and tell the people that we've got some fine candidates. Tell the people that Anne Northup is as good as it gets in the United States Congress. Urge them to vote, and don't be afraid to talk about good, discerning Democrats—to talk to good, discerning Democrats and wise independents. These people want good Government as well, just like we do. And the best person to represent good Government is Anne Northup.

I know Anne well. I know her well. I respect her a lot. I value her advice. I appreciate the way she works hard in Washington to change the tone of politics. People who know Anne well know what I'm about to say. She's got a big heart. She cares for those who suffer. She doesn't need a poll or a focus group to tell her what to think. She bases her decisions on a deep-seated philosophy. She's decency; she's great. She needs to be back in the Congress. She's an effective person. She can get things done.

She secured funding for the Ohio River bridges project. She worked hard to make sure transportation was effective in this part of the world. She worked closely with me on making sure that we could get a Faith-Based Initiative out of the United States Congress. Anne feels passionately about that because, as a Congresswoman, she has reached across the community divides to bring people together. She knows what I know, that there are people who hurt and people who suffer. And one of the ways to heal the broken heart is to unleash the great faith and compassion of the American people.

I've worked closely with Anne on issues like adoption. She and Woody are adoptive parents, which in my view is one of the greatest expressions of love. No, Anne Northup can get things done. She cares deeply about the citizens of this district. And she knows that we've got some hurdles to cross here in America, and I look forward to having her in Congress to work on—working to cross those hurdles.

One of the biggest problems we've got is our economy. It's just bumping along. It's not going like it should. There are too many people in America who want to work and cannot find a job. And so long as somebody is looking for work, that means we've got a problem. And I need people in the United States Congress who will join me in job creation.

But we understand the role of Government. It is not to create wealth; it's to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish. It is to create an environment in which the small business can grow to be a big business. Anne and I understand that 70 percent of new jobs are created by small-business owners.

If you're worried about job creation like we are, then you must put forth policy that encourages small-business growth. Most small businesses pay taxes at the individual income tax level. Most small businesses are sole proprietorships or limited partnerships. So when you open up your tax forms and see the individual rates, you've got to think of the fact that most small businesses pay those rates. And therefore, the tax relief plan that we passed was the best antidote to a slowing economy.

If you're interested in creating jobs, you let small businesses as well as consumers keep more of their own money. You see, when people have more money in their pocket, they're more likely to demand a good or a service. And in the marketplace, when they demand a good or a service, somebody is likely to produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces the good or a service, somebody is more likely to find work. The tax relief we plan came at—passed came at the right time, and we need people in the United States Congress to make the tax cuts permanent.

I look forward to working with Anne and other Members of the Congress and working with Mitch to see if we can't get us a terrorism insurance bill, to get construction programs started, projects started, and get the hardhats working. We want our good hardhats in America building those buildings and building those projects which are stalled because people can't find insurance because of the terrorist attacks. But we'd better get us a bill that rewards the hardhats, not the trial lawyers here in America.

And we're going to work together to increase jobs so people can find work. I'm optimistic about our future when it comes to the economy. We've got—interest rates are low; inflation is low; productivity is high. We're the best workers, best farmers, best ranchers, best entrepreneurs in the world. There's a lot going right, but we are not going to rest until people can find a job.

And we're not going to rest until every child gets educated in this country, either. I worked closely with Anne. Anne Northup was a solid backer, strong advocate of the no child should be left behind legislation. To give you a sense of her perspective, let me tell you what that bill says. It says every child can learn in America. Everybody can learn. And therefore, we must set high standards.

If you have low expectations and low standards, you're going to get lousy results. Anne understands that we must challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations, must raise the bar.

But at the same time, we've got to trust the people of Kentucky to chart the path for excellence for every child in Kentucky. We believe in local control of schools. Thanks to Anne's hard work and Mitch's and Jim's hard work and other Members of Congress' hard work, the great State of Kentucky is going to receive \$650 million in Federal monies for schools this year. Those monies will be used to help disadvantaged children. Those monies will be applied to make sure every child can learn.

But for the first time in our history, we've asked the question, is the money being well spent? Show us whether or not the children can read and write and add and subtract. If you believe every child can learn, then it makes sense to ask that question. Are we

teaching our children? And if we are, we'll praise the teachers. But if we find children trapped in schools which will not teach and will not change, we will demand something different, because no child should be left behind in the State of Kentucky.

I look forward to working with Anne to make sure our medical system works, to make sure that health care is available and affordable. We've got too many lawsuits here in America today, too many frivolous and junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and making it harder for our docs to practice medicine. We need medical liability reform, once and for all, so that medicine is affordable for the American consumers.

I look forward to working with Anne and the other Members of Congress up here to fulfill our promises to our seniors. We're going to make sure Social Security system works. And we're also going to make sure Medicare fulfills its promise. Medicine has changed. Medicare hasn't. Medicine is modern because of technologies and innovation. Medicare is stuck in the past. I'm going to work with Anne to make sure Medicare is modern, and that means prescription drug benefits for our seniors.

No, there's a lot we can do to work together on behalf of all of the citizens of Kentucky and all of the citizens of America. But the biggest challenge we have, our most important responsibility, is to protect the homeland from further attack. That's our biggest job, because there's still an enemy out there that lurks, an enemy out there which hates America because of what we love. We love freedom. We love the fact that people can worship freely in America. We worship the fact that we have free elections. We love the fact we have a free press. We love everything about freedom, and we're not going to change.

And it's our fervent love of freedom, and the fact that we're not going to change, which really irritates the enemy. See, they don't like us. And there's something else that differentiates us between them, and that is, we value life. Everybody counts. Everybody is precious. Every life matters. And these people

are nothing but a bunch of coldblooded killers who have hijacked a great religion and could care less about taking innocent life.

We've been warned. We've been warned. And now our most important job is to protect you. And there's a lot of good people doing this. We've got people at the Federal level and at the State level and the local level doing everything they can to disrupt and deny the enemy. I'm telling you, anytime we get any whisper, any hint, any idea that somebody is thinking about doing something to America, we're acting. We're going to do everything in our power to prevent the enemy from hitting us again.

And that's why I went to the United States Congress and asked them to join with me in the creation of a Department of Homeland Security. There's over 100 agencies in Washington involved with protecting you. It seemed like, to me, it made sense to put them under one Department so that we could set clear priority, so that if need be, we could change cultures so that our Government was functioning in concert to do everything we could to protect the homeland.

And the House of Representatives passed a good bill, and I'm honored that Anne and the other Members of the Congress supported that good bill. But it's stuck in the Senate. It couldn't get out of the Senate, because the Senate wanted to take powers away from the President of the United States.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And here's what they wanted to do. For 40 years, since John Kennedy was the President, Presidents have had the capacity, the ability to suspend collective bargaining rules in the name of national security. In other words, if there were certain rules which prevented the homeland security council department from doing its job, I couldn't suspend those rules. If the Senate had its way—not Senator McConnell or Senator Bunning but other Senators—if they had their way, I would have the capacity, the right to suspend certain rules at the Department of Agriculture but not at the Department of Homeland Security. I would have the flexibility necessary to do everything I could for the sake of national security at Agriculture, but not to protect you through the Department of Homeland Security.

I need the capacity to be able to move the right people at the right time to the right place to protect the American people. Mitch McConnell understands that, and so does Jim Bunning, and so does Anne Northup. They understand that.

They also understand what I'm about to tell you, that the best way to secure America, the best way to protect you, is to chase the killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice. It's not an easy task. It's not an easy task, because this is a different kind of army that we face, a different kind of enemy. In the old days—I see some guys who were probably involved with World War II or the Korean war. In the old days, if you knocked out a couple of tanks or knocked some airplanes out of the air or sunk a ship, you'd be able to determine whether or not you were making progress against the enemy. Those were the old days. Today, we're facing coldblooded killers who hide in caves and send youngsters to their suicidal deaths, and there is no cave deep enough for America.

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

The President. It's important to see the world the way it is, not to see the way that we hope it is. It's important to be cold-eyed realists about the threats we face.

And we're making progress on this war against terror. We've hauled in over a couple thousand of them, and a couple thousand weren't quite as lucky. Slowly but surely, we're protecting the American people and defending our freedom by dismantling the terrorist network that came and unmercifully murdered American citizens. And so long as I'm the President of the United States, we're going to continue to hunt them down. We owe that to our children. We owe that to our children's children. History has called us into action, and this great Nation is going to stay steady and resolute and determined.

I asked the Congress to pass the largest increase in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was President. And they did, and I want to thank the Members up here who voted with us on that bill. I did so for two reasons, two important reasons. One, anytime we send our troops into harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training,

and the best possible equipment. And secondly, we just sent a signal to the world, to friend and foe alike, we're in this deal for the long haul. It doesn't matter how long it takes. It doesn't matter how long it costs. The United States of America will go after those terrorists and bring them to justice.

No, it's important to be open-eyed about the threats we face. After all, oceans no longer protect us. See, that's what's important for Americans to understand, that after September the 11th, the stakes changed. See, prior to September the 11th, we used to think that, if there was a conflict or a threat somewhere else in the world, we could pick and choose whether or not we wanted to deal with it, because oceans protected us. The homeland was secure by geography.

We learned a tough lesson on September the 11th, which means that, as we see threats, we must be prepared to deal with them. And I see a significant threat to the security of the United States in Iraq.

Saddam Hussein is a man who told the world he would not have weapons of mass destruction, but he does. He not only has them; he's used them. He has used them against his neighbors, and incredibly enough, he's used them against his own people. This is a man who was close to having a nuclear weapon a decade ago. No telling how close he is now.

I viewed him as a threat, not only to the American people, because he could become an arsenal to one of these shadow terrorist networks. He could use them as surrogates and not leave any fingerprints behind.

No, he's a threat. He's not only a threat to us. He's a threat to our close friends in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein is a man who has defied the United Nations not once, not twice, not 3 times, but 16 times they passed resolutions. So I went to that august body, and I said, "The time has come for you to show the world whether or not you've got the capacity to keep the peace, to defend freedom. The time has come for you to show whether or not your resolutions mean anything."

And I sent the same message to Saddam Hussein. "You said you would disarm. Disarm. For the sake of peace, disarm."

I took the debate to the United States Congress and, thanks to the Members on this stage and many others, the United States now speaks with one voice. And here it is: Either the United Nations will do its job, either the United Nations will show it is not the League of Nations, but a body with the capacity to keep the peace, and Saddam Hussein will disarm, or for the sake of peace, for the sake of freedom, the United States will lead a mighty coalition to disarm Saddam Hussein.

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

The President. I can't imagine what was going through the mind of the enemy when they hit us. They must have thought the national religion of the United States was materialism, that we were so selfish, so self-absorbed, so shallow, that after September the 11th, 2001, we'd take a step back and maybe file a lawsuit or two. [Laughter] That's probably what they thought. But they found out they are dealing with a different bunch, that we love our freedom, that we care deeply about our future, that we love peace.

The evil done to America has given this great nation to show the world that out of evil can come great good. I believe this. I believe that if we stay the course, if we're strong, if we fight terror, if we lead a coalition of freedom-loving countries, we can achieve peace.

I believe we can achieve peace if we remember that freedom is not bestowed on the world by the United States, but freedom is God-given for everybody. I believe that if we're strong and resolute, with a clear vision, that we see reality the way it is, that we can achieve peace not only for America, but because we value all life—everybody is precious—that we can achieve peace in parts of the world who have quit on peace. I believe we can achieve peace in the Middle East. I believe we can achieve peace in South Asia.

No, out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good, not only abroad but incredible good here at home. See, I believe that the evildoers renew the American spirit, that sense of serving something greater than yourself in life. Government can help. We'll work—Members of Congress will work with the administration

to pass laws that will help people help themselves and improve lives. But you've got to remember that while Government can pass out money, it can't put hope in people's hearts. It can't put a sense of purpose in people's lives.

And at the same time, we've got to remember, amongst all the plenty here in America, there are people who hurt. There's loneliness and addiction and despair. And so long as any of us hurts, we all hurt. And the best way to solve many of the seemingly intractable problems here in America is for a fellow American to put their arm around somebody who's lonely, and somebody who suffers, and say, "I love you. What can I do to help you?"

No, the true strength of America lies in the hearts and the souls of our fellow citizens. All across this country there are fine and decent people who are helping America change, one heart, one conscience, one soul at a time. And it's happening.

They woke the great compassion of America when they attacked us. Perhaps the spirit is best reflected in small ways and large ways—small ways like Ray Probus, who I met. He was at the airport today. He works with the Jefferson County police department's Volunteers in Police Service program. That's one way people can help. I'm sure there's mentors here. I know there are people who worry about feeding the hungry, who worry about the homeless and do something about it. I know there's people involved in Boy Scouts and Girl Scout troops that are sending values to our children. I know there are people involved in schools here to make sure every child can learn. All of us can help make America a hopeful place.

Perhaps the biggest lesson of all of what I'm talking about, that great spirit of America, took place on Flight 93 that fateful day. We had people flying across the country. They heard the plane they were on was going to be used as a weapon to kill Americans. They said goodbye to their loved ones. They said a prayer. One guy said, "Let's roll." And they took the plane into the ground to serve something greater than themselves. To me, that epitomized the greatest of the American spirit, which is alive and well in America.

No, the enemy hit us—the enemy hit us. They didn't know who they were hitting. Out

of the evil done to America is going to come peace. And out of the evil done to America is going to come a more hopeful tomorrow. I predict this. I know it's going to happen, because America is the greatest nation, full of the finest, most compassionate people on the face of the Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:51 p.m. at the Kentucky International Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Anne Northup and her husband, Robert Wood "Woody" Northup; senatorial candidate Elizabeth Dole of North Carolina; Geoff Davis, candidate for Kentucky's Fourth Congressional District; Mike Sodrel, candidate for Indiana's Ninth Congressional District; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7619—National Adoption Month, 2002

November 1, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Every year, thousands of American families are blessed by adoption. Whether through domestic or international adoption or through the adoption of children from foster care, the love of compassionate families embraces children of all ages and from every background. During National Adoption Month, we recognize the heartfelt commitment of these good citizens, and we renew our pledge to make adoption a more accessible and positive path for American families.

Children thrive in loving families where they are nurtured, comforted, and protected. We are making important progress in placing children in foster care with adoptive families; and the overall number of children being adopted continues to rise. In the past 5 years, adoptions have increased dramatically; and thus far in 2002, tens of thousands of children have already been adopted.

Twenty-three States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico received adoption incentive awards in FY 2001 for increasing the number of children they placed from foster