

Our dream is for America to fulfill its promise for every single person who lives here. There's no doubt in my mind, over the next 4 years this world will be a safer place, that we'll achieve the peace that we long for, for our children and grandchildren, and that the great promise of America, the great hope of our great country will be extended to every corner of this great land.

I can't thank you all enough for being here.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:26 p.m. at the Greensfelder Recreation Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt, candidate for Missouri Governor; and Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a Breakfast for Gubernatorial Candidate Matt Blunt in St. Louis, Missouri

October 9, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. I appreciate that kind introduction, Governor. [Laughter] He said, "Are you doing anything for breakfast?" [Laughter] I said, "Waking up." [Laughter] He said, "Why don't you come by and have some eggs with some friends." [Laughter] I said, "More than happy to." I want to thank you all for coming. With your help, Matt Blunt will be the next Governor for the great State of Missouri.

It's good to be back in St. Louis, home of the mighty Cardinals. You might remember opening day. [Laughter] The Cardinals had a great season after that. I can't claim any credit—[laughter]—although I've always wanted to lead a baseball team into the playoffs. [Laughter]

I'm proud to be traveling with Laura. She is a—so when I asked her to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." [Laughter] Fortunately, she

didn't hold me to that promise. The American people have seen her speak and have come to know her as a strong, compassionate, great First Lady. We're off to Iowa and then Minnesota. And I'm going to remind the people of those States, like I'm reminding everybody, there's some reasons to put me back into office, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura will have 4 more years.

We got a great family. I'm proud to be with my Uncle Bucky Bush and my Aunt Patty Bush. Thank you for your love and compassion.

I want to thank Melanie Blunt for her willingness to serve the State of Missouri as the next first lady of Missouri. Besides Matt, you've got another fine Missourian on the ticket, running for Federal office, and that's Kit Bond. You need to put him back into office. He's a great Senator. I know Brenda Talent is here. I appreciate you being here, Brenda. Thank you for coming. You know, that fine husband of yours, I didn't hold it against him that he missed another one of my speeches, but he's heard a lot of them before. [Laughter] He's doing a great job, and I know you're proud of him. I know the people of Missouri are proud of him as well. Congressman Todd Akin—I don't know if Todd made it this morning or not, but I'm proud of the job he's doing for the people of this area of Missouri.

I saw Peter Kinder last night. I don't know if Pete is here, but he's going to make a great Lieutenant Governor for the State of Missouri. Yes, Peter, thank you for coming. You've come a long way for a country boy. [Laughter] I want to thank Catherine Hanaway, who's going to be the next secretary of state for the great State of Missouri.

I want to thank Ann Wagner, who has done such a fine job as the cochairman of the RNC and as the chairman of the Missouri Republican Party. Thank you for being here, Annie, it's good to see you. I want to thank my friend Sam Fox and Marilyn Fox for helping to organize this breakfast today. And I want to thank you all for joining the Foxes in supporting this good man, Matt Blunt for Governor.

I know Sarah Steelman is here, running for State treasurer, and Chris Byrd, running

for attorney general. Thank you both for running. Good luck. I'm all for you.

But most of all, thank you all for coming. Thank you for being here. Thank you for what you're going to do, which is turn out the vote. And thanks for supporting Matt. It takes a lot of work to get 750 people to show up for breakfast. [Laughter] It's a great organizational effort. And I want to thank Matt's friends for putting this breakfast on. It's an important election here in Missouri. Matt has everything it takes to lead this State.

In 2001, he became the first statewide elected official in Missouri history to be called up to active duty. Think about that. He served his Nation with honor in the United States Navy. He's still a member of the Navy Reserves, and I'm proud to be his Commander in Chief. He knows people in the "Show Me" State want Government that gets results, not Government that just spends money.

For the last 4 years, Matt has been getting results as the secretary of the state. He's a results-oriented person. That's what you need in your statehouse. I know something about being a Governor. I was one once. [Laughter] A Governor's job is to get things done for the people of their State, and that's what he's going to do as your Governor.

His top priority is education, and that's the way it should be. Anybody running for Governor must make sure the education of the State is the top priority. I used to say in Texas, education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. Matt understands that, and he believes that. He's got good plans and good visions for the schools of this State. He'll make sure school funding gets to the teachers and the classrooms, so not any child, not one child is left behind in this State. He'll make sure this great State continues to create jobs. He understands that a good economy is one in which the farmers and ranchers do well.

And he'll do something else, what's needed. The high cost of medicine is making it hard for small businesses to expand, for people to keep their health care. He understands like I understand, these frivolous lawsuits are driving good doctors out of business and driving up your cost of medicine.

We both share a commitment to keep our economy growing and to keep the people safe. We have some things in common. We're both in the same line of work as our dads. [Laughter] But all the good advice comes from our mothers. [Laughter] I want to thank Matt's mom for being here. Roseanne, great to see you. God bless you.

We share the same values. We stand for a culture of life, which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We believe in the power of faith, and we stand with the armies of compassion. We stand for judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. These values are shared by Republicans and Democrats and independents all over the State of Missouri. When the people of Missouri elect Matt Blunt, you'll get a Governor who stands up for those values every single day. Let's get him in office.

We're getting close to voting time here in this country. But who's counting the days? [Laughter] There was voting time elsewhere in this world today. A marvelous thing is happening in Afghanistan. Freedom is powerful. Think about a society in which young girls couldn't go to school and their mothers were whipped in the public square. And today they're holding a Presidential election.

The first person to vote in the Presidential election, 3 years after the Taliban ruled that country with such barbarism, was a 19-year-old woman, an Afghan refugee who fled her homeland during the civil war. Here's what she said: "I cannot explain my feelings, just how happy I am. I would never have thought I would be able to vote in this election." She's voting in this election because the United States of America believes that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. And today is an appropriate day for Americans to remember and thank the men and women of our Armed Forces who liberated Afghanistan.

The people of Australia voted today as well. And I want to congratulate my good friend Prime Minister John Howard, who won a great victory.

Laura and I are here to ask for people's vote. We believe you've got to get out

amongst the people and say, “I want your vote. I want your support.” I’m looking forward to coming down the stretch, traveling this great country, talking about a strong and positive message for our country. I’ve worked hard to make this country more hopeful and secure. I’ve led our country with principle and resolve, and that’s how I’ll lead this country for the next 4 years.

It was good to be back at Washington University. If I spend any more time there, they might give me an honorary degree. [*Laughter*] But I enjoyed that debate last night, and I really appreciated the questions from the people of Missouri. They were good questions. And they helped highlight some fundamental differences on issues from jobs to taxes to health care to national security.

Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent showed why he’s earned the ranking, the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. And several of the statements just don’t pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said, “I’ve only had one position on Iraq.” He must think we’ve been on another planet. [*Laughter*] In the spring of 2003, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, “It was the right decision.” Now he says, “It’s the wrong war.” And he tries to tell us he’s had only one position. Who is he trying to kid? He can run, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, quote, “The Government has nothing to do with it.” [*Laughter*] Eight out of ten people who would get health insurance under Senator Kerry’s plan will be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera—[*laughter*—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets will raise 600 billion by our count, 800 billion by his. But his health care plan alone costs more than \$1.2 trillion. He can’t have it both ways. To pay for the big spending program he’s outlined during his cam-

paign, he will have to raise your taxes. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Much of what my opponent said last night is contradicted by his own record, 20 years of votes that earned him the “most liberal” label. He voted 98 times to raise taxes, more than 200 times to break spending caps. He voted against tort reform, although last night he tried to claim he now supports it. On national security, he has a voting record—a record of voting against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America’s intelligence budget by \$7.5 billion.

And now he says he wants a “global test” before taking action to defend America’s security. The problem is, Senator Kerry’s own record shows we can never pass that test. In 1991, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition. Yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council resolution, Senator Kerry voted “no.” I have a different view. I’ll work with our allies. I’ll continue to build a strong coalition, but I will never allow other nations to veto America’s national security decisions.

After listening to the litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, I did all I could not to make a bad face. [*Laughter*] We got a better way to make sure this country is more hopeful and more safe.

When you’re out counting—rounding up the votes, remind people what we’ve been through. We’ve been through a recession. And by the way, the stock market started to decline 6 months before I became President. And then we had a recession. Then we had some corporate scandals. We passed tough laws to make it clear that we’re not going to tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and that attack cost us 1 million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But I put the right policies in at the right time at the right place, right here at home. We cut the taxes on the people. We gave the people more money to stimulate consumption and encourage investment. And because we acted, the recession we faced was

one of the shortest in history. America is on the move.

Yesterday we learned we've created 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. We're on the move. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Farm income is up. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. Homeownership rates are at an alltime high in America.

There is more to do. To make sure jobs stay here in America and this economy grows, we need less regulations on our job creators. We need legal reform in America. We need to make sure we have an energy plan that encourages consumption, that works with renewables, that explores for coal by using technologies to protect our air. To make sure jobs are here in America, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To make sure jobs remain here, we got to reject economic isolationism. You know, we open up our markets for goods from overseas, and that's good for consumers. If you have more goods to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the marketplace works. That's why I'm saying to China, "You treat us the way we treat you. Level the playing field." And I believe strongly that America can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To make sure we continue to grow this economy, we got to make sure our people get educated. I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I knew something about public schools because I was the Governor of a State. I knew that people in leadership positions had to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, a system that just quit on certain kids, a system that thought certain kids couldn't learn so they just shuffled them through, grade after grade, year after year. We let down too many families with that kind of attitude.

Yes, we've increased spending at the Federal level, but excellence in the classrooms requires more than just spending increases. It requires a change of attitude. We've raised the standards. We now measure early, so we

can solve problems before it's too late. We believe every child can learn, and when we find a problem, we provide extra resources. And guess what's happening in America. There was an achievement—there is an achievement gap in America, but it's closing. It's closing because the system now focuses on each child, provides resources for each child, and will not let any child get behind in America.

There's more to do. There's more to do. We got—in a changing world, most new jobs require a college degree, yet one in four of our students gets there. That's why I believe in intermediate help in high schools for at-risk students. That's why I know we got to put math and science in place. That's why I'm for extending Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, so more of our people start their career with a college diploma.

And in a changing world, the skill sets required for jobs in the 21st century change as well. That's why I'm a big believer in the community college systems, to make sure our workers have got the capacity to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

No, there's more to do. We've done a lot. We've had a record of accomplishment. But the only reason to look back is to tell the people I'm going to do what I'm telling you I'm going to do. The only reason to look back at the record is to say, "This man intends to accomplish more for the American people."

We got to make sure our health care system is available and affordable. I remember campaigning here in 2000, going to a community health center right here in St. Louis, Missouri. I saw the compassionate care being delivered to the people there, to those who can't afford insurance, to those who need help. I'm a big believer in community health centers to help the poor and the indigent. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. I believe we ought to extend and expand the low-income health program—the health program for low-income children. I know to make sure health care is more affordable, we must allow small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts big companies can. I strongly believe we need to expand health

savings accounts, tax-free accounts, coupled with catastrophic care, so workers have got more affordable health care, so small businesses can better afford health care.

I know we need to introduce technologies into the medical system to wring out the inefficiencies in the system to reduce the cost of health care. And I agree with Matt Blunt: In order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we need medical liability reform—now. I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time.

No, there's more to do to make sure America is a hopeful place, and there's more to do to make sure America is a safer place as well. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming and strengthening the All-Volunteer Army—and we will keep it an all-volunteer army. We're making sure we got the best intelligence in the world. We will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We'll continue to work for freedom and peace in the broader Middle East and around the world. And we'll prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Think about the world some 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a gathering threat. And Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, because we acted, Afghanistan is fighting terror and holding a Presidential election today; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; a army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's leaders and associates have been brought to justice. We've led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

And we've got more work to do. Over the next 4 years, we'll pursue Al Qaida wherever they hide. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to disrupt the flows of weapons of mass destruction. Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to spread freedom.

And that's what's happening in Iraq. Last night I talked about the Finance Minister who came to see me. Let me recount some of that conversation I had with him. I thought it was really interesting and illustrative. He walks in full of confidence. He says, "Mr. President, thank you for what you and your country have done for us. We're headed toward elections."

Think about that statement. A fellow shows up in the Oval Office of the President of the United States and says, "We're headed for elections." For most of us, that doesn't sound like much. But for a person who used to live under the—in a country that was ruled by a brutal tyrant, where there were torture rooms and mass graves, where people had no freedom at all, to say, "We're headed toward elections," is a powerful statement.

And our strategy is clear. We're going to help the Iraqis. We're going to train Iraqis so they can do the hard work necessary for a free society to emerge. It's their country. We just want to stand with them as democracy comes to that piece of the world. And so we're training the troops. We'll have 125,000 police, Iraqi * national army trained up by the end of December. It's an essential part of our strategy. We got \$7 billion allocated for reconstruction efforts. We're working with a grand coalition. Some 30 nations are involved there in Iraq.

As an aside, you cannot lead a coalition in Iraq if you tell them, "This is the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time." Imagine my opponent's grand idea of a global summit, and he walks in, and there are the leaders around the world sitting there, waiting for the American President to speak. And he says, "Follow me into a great mistake." Nobody is going to follow. You must have optimism. You must believe in what you're doing if you expect to lead. And I believe in what we're doing in Iraq. And in January, Iraq will have elections, and that's important. You see, I believe in the power of liberty to transform societies.

I tell people all the time about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I was with him at the United Nations a couple of weeks ago, and I said, "I don't know

* White House correction.

if you know this, but I'm traveling the country talking about you and talking about our relationship. Is that okay?" After having done it about 30 times, he had to say yes. [Laughter] He said, "Sure." I didn't tell him I was going to tell you his favorite singer is Elvis. [Laughter]

But think about that for a minute. He and I are friends, and we're talking about different issues confronting the world. And the reason I say "think about it" is because it wasn't all that long ago that we were at war with Japan. If you're 58 years old, like me, it seems like an eternity. But a lot of people in this country still remember that war. My dad does, Buck's brother. I'm sure you've got dads and granddads who fought against the Japanese. They were our sworn enemy.

And after we were victorious in World War II, Harry S. Truman, from the State of Missouri, believed that liberty could transform an enemy into an ally. And so did a lot of other citizens. Oh, there were some skeptics in those days, and you can understand why. We had just finished a war. A lot of people's lives had been hurt as a result of that war. A lot of Americans had lost a loved one. They weren't interested in worrying about Japan. They were interested in their own souls and their own hearts. I'm sure there was a lot of people here that said, "It's just impossible for an enemy to become a friend." But because my predecessor and other Americans believed in the power of liberty to transform societies, I sit at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi, talking about the peace we all want.

We'll get the job done in Iraq. Freedom is powerful. And when we succeed, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, talking about the peace that we all want. And we will have known—this generation of Americans will have known we have done our duty to our children and our grandchildren to leave behind a better world.

The stakes are high. This is an historic opportunity. It's essential that we be resolute and clear in our vision and have faith in the values that make us a great nation. I believe this century will be liberty's century. I know that by spreading freedom abroad, we'll bring the peace. And by spreading freedom at

home, opportunity will go into every single corner of this country.

It's my honor to represent you. I look forward to winning this election. I want to thank you for help. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:34 a.m. at the America's Center. In his remarks, he referred to Melanie Blunt, wife of gubernatorial candidate Matt Blunt; Brenda Talent, wife of Senator James M. Talent; Missouri State Senator Peter Kinder, candidate for Missouri Lieutenant Governor; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

The President's Radio Address

October 9, 2004

Good morning. As your President, I have led this country with principle and resolve. We have confronted historic challenges and built a broad record of accomplishment. I have proposed and delivered four rounds of tax relief, and our economy is creating jobs again. We have added over 1.9 million jobs in the past 13 months, more than Germany, Japan, Great Britain, Canada, and France combined. The unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Thanks to our education reforms, math and reading scores are increasing in public schools. We have strengthened Medicare to help low-income seniors save money on their medicine. And soon every senior will have the option of prescription drug coverage.

We have more to do. We will transform our systems of Government to fit a changing world and to help more people realize the American Dream. We will expand health savings accounts and improve Social Security to allow younger workers to own a piece of their retirement. Because education is vital to our prosperity, we will raise expectations in public schools and invest in community colleges. And to make sure America is the best place in the world to do business and create jobs, we will cut regulations, end junk lawsuits, pass a sound energy policy, and make tax relief permanent.