

Guinn of Nevada and his wife, Dema; Representative Trent Franks of Arizona and his wife, Josephine; and Darlene Ensign, wife of Senator John Ensign of Nevada. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Las Vegas

November 25, 2003

Thanks for coming. Go ahead and please be seated. I appreciate you coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to be in one of America's greatest cities, Las Vegas. The Governor was saying, "Don't you want to spend a little time here, a little quality time?" And I said, "Well, I'm on Government pay"—[laughter]—if you know what I mean. But this is a dynamic part of our country. The growth is amazing. The spirit is great. It's such an honor to be here. We did really well in the year 2000 here in Nevada. We're going to do great in 2004 too.

I appreciate you coming. As the Governor said, this is a successful fundraiser. I'll tell you what we're doing: We're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great national victory in November 2004. I'm loosening up. I'm getting ready. But politics will come in its own time. See, I've got a job to do. I want you to tell your fellow citizens, this President is going to work on behalf of everybody to keep this country safe and secure, prosperous and free.

I appreciate Kenny, who's a good friend, and Dema. They've been friends of Laura and mine for a while. We both married above ourselves. [Laughter] Dema is doing a great job as the first lady of this State. Laura is doing a great job as the First Lady of our country. She sends her best. I left her this morning in Crawford. We went for about a 3½ mile walk together across the countryside, had a little time to visit outside the bubble in Washington, DC, and we're going to spend Thanksgiving together. She's a great wife, a wonderful mother, and I'm really proud of the tone she has set and the job she's doing as our Nation's First Lady.

Darlene Ensign is here. I'm proud to call John Ensign, Senator John Ensign, a friend and an ally. I appreciate so very much mem-

bers from the congressional delegation who are here. You've sent some fine people from Nevada to Washington, DC, starting with Congressman Jim Gibbons. Jim, I thank you, appreciate you. Dawn is with him. Congressman Jon Porter, appreciate you coming, Jon. Laurie is with Jon.

Nevada is such a powerful attraction for people around the country that you've been able to attract some people from the United States House of Representatives who aren't from your great State. [Laughter] Trent Franks and Josie Franks came over from the State of Arizona. I want to thank Congressman Franks for joining us today. Frank LoBiondo from New Jersey is with us. I'm honored that Frank is with us. Thank you for coming, Frank. I told old Frank, I said, "Gosh, it's great to see you. Thanks for coming to see me." He said, "I didn't come to see you." [Laughter] "I came to be with my fiancée, Tina." [Laughter] Happens to live here in Las Vegas.

I'm honored that the Lieutenant Governor is here, Lorrie Hunt—Lorraine Hunt. I appreciate you coming, Lorraine. The chairman of the campaign, chairman of the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign, is your great attorney general, Brian Sandoval. Thanks for coming, Brian. I'm honored that Secretary of State Dean Heller is with us today. Dean, thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here. State Comptroller Kathy Augustine is with us. Thank you for coming, Kathy. Got a lot of other State and local officials. I'm grateful you're here. I appreciate your service to your State and to your county and to your city.

I'm honored that my friend Mercer Reynolds, who's the national finance chairman, is with us. He's from Cincinnati, Ohio. He's a business person taking time out of his life to help make sure this campaign is adequately funded. He's doing a really good job, thanks to you all. Larry and Camille Ruvo have done—a lot to do with this event. I'm honored you all are here. Thank you. Appreciate you, Larry.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here with us today. See, it's important to make sure that we're well funded. It's also important to make sure people get on the phones and put up the signs and go to the coffee shops and put out the word that

this is an optimistic and hopeful administration who's getting the job done for the American people.

In the last 3 years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems instead of passing them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. This administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Declare—terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and now they live in freedom.

Three years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. So we increased the defense budgets to prepare for the threats of a new era, and today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Three years ago, this economy of ours was in trouble, and a recession was beginning. And then our country was attacked, and we had scandals in corporate America as well as the war to make America more secure and the world more peaceful. All of that affected the people's confidence, but we acted. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get this economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

I believe that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. And so we're returning more money to the people, returning money to help them raise their families. We've reduced taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We've given small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America, so that every

single person has a chance to realize the American Dream.

This economy of ours is reacting to our policy. The American economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. The third quarter figures were just revised upward to 8.2 percent, the fastest pace in nearly 20 years. Productivity is high. Business investment is rising. Housing construction is strong. The job base is expanding. The tax relief we passed is working.

Three years ago there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I acted. I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. We're now bringing high standards and strong accountability measures to every public school in America. We've increased the education budgets at the Federal level. But for the first time in our Nation's history, we now expect results in return for the increased funding. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising the bar. We're raising the standards, because we believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach, so not one single child is left behind in America.

We reorganized this Government of ours to create the Department of Homeland Security, safeguard the borders and ports of America, and to better protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for our country's entrepreneurs and farmers and ranchers. We passed budget agreements to bring much-needed spending discipline to Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, has kept its word, and has made progress for the American people.

The United States Congress deserves a lot of the credit. I appreciate working with Speaker Denny Hastert, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, the good folks from Nevada who are working with this administration. You see, what we're doing in Washington, DC, is we're trying to change the tone of the Nation's Capital. There's too much needless backbiting and endless politics. Instead

of focusing on political process, we're focusing on the people's business by focusing on results.

And those are the kind of people I've assembled in my administration. I've put together one of the greatest teams ever to serve the American people. We've got people from all walks of life, strong, dedicated, honorable Americans who have come to Washington, DC, to serve the people of this country. Our country has had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a different opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 3 years, we have come far, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of this great Nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every citizen has a chance to work and to succeed and to realize the promise of America.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it. The war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

We are confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw Iraq into chaos by attacking coalition forces and aid workers and innocent Iraqi citizens. You see, they know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat for their cause of terror. A collection of killers is trying to shake the will of the United States. The United States of America will never be intimidated by a bunch of thugs. We're on the offensive. We're aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq. We will defeat them there so we do not have to face them in our own country.

Other nations are helping. They're helping to build a free country, because they understand a free Iraq will make us all more secure. We're standing with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. These are

not easy tasks, but they are essential tasks. The United States of America will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. We believe that freedom is the future of every nation. And we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty's—God's gift to every person who lives in the world.

Also understand that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in this world, and when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children suffering from AIDS. This great, strong, compassionate land is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We've got challenges here at home as well, and we're equal to those challenges. I just mentioned some nice economic numbers, but we're going to stay focused on a pro-growth economic agenda until everyone who wants to work can find a job. And we're keeping our commitment to America's seniors. Today the United States Senate joined the House of Representatives and passed strong reform that will modernize and strengthen Medicare.

For years, seniors have called for a modern Medicare system that provides coverage for prescription drugs and more health care choices. For years, Washington simply listened and did nothing. Finally, the House and the Senate have acted. This historic legislation is the greatest improvement in senior health care coverage since the enactment of Medicare in 1965. And I look forward to signing this important piece of legislation.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court, yet the system

should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, and they therefore affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue that requires a national solution. I have proposed such a solution. I proposed such a solution, and the U.S. House of Representatives, thanks to the Members here, voted for medical liability reform. The bill is stuck in the Senate. It is time for your Senator to understand that no one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members of the Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Our Nation must promote energy efficiency and conservation. We must work to develop cleaner technologies. We must explore for energy in environmentally sensitive ways. For the sake of our economic security and for the sake of national security, this country must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

A strong and prosperous nation must also be a compassionate nation. I'm going to continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, which means we'll apply the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There's still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on Government and become independent through hard work. The Congress must work with the administration to continue to build on the success of welfare reform, to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our citizens.

The Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can

serve their communities and our country. Both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring our children and caring for the homeless and offering hope to the addicted. One of the great strengths of our country, the people of faith from all religions—people have heard a universal call to help somebody in need. This Government of ours must not fear faith, but it must welcome the good works of our faith-based institutions as we reach out as a society to heal broken hearts, to help the lonely, to say to somebody who wonders about the future of this country, "I love you."

A compassionate society must also promote opportunity for all of us, and that means the independence and dignity that come from ownership. You see, this administration is working for and will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. We've got a minority home-ownership gap in America. I presented a plan to Congress to close that gap. We want people owning and managing their own retirement accounts, owning and managing their own health care accounts. We want more people owning their own small business in America, because we understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

A compassionate society is one in which people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make in life. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to one in which each of us understands we're responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

The culture of service and responsibility is strong in this country. It's truly one of the strengths of America. You know, I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to neighbors in need, and the response has been strong. A lot of people are interested in helping, helping our country by helping somebody who hurts. Our charities are strong, and thank you for helping them. Our faith-based organizations are vibrant.

Policemen and firefighters and people who wear this country's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than ourself in life. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day. In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people.

All the tests of the last 3 years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift up whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it, and we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at the Venetian Resort Hotel and Casino. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada and his wife, Dema; Darlene Ensign, wife of Senator John Ensign; Dawn Gibbons, wife of Representative Jim Gibbons; Josie Franks, wife of Representative Trent Franks; Brian Sandoval, Nevada campaign chairman, Mercer Reynolds, national finance chairman, and Larry Ruvo, Nevada finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; and Mr. Ruvo's wife, Camille.

Remarks at the Los Olivos Senior Center in Phoenix, Arizona

November 25, 2003

Thanks for coming. I'm thrilled to be at Los Olivos Center. You're kind to have me. And I'm here to talk about some issues facing our Nation, probably an issue you'd like to hear about, which is Medicare. I think you probably have heard of Medicare. *[Laughter]* I think you probably recognize that Medicare needs to be modernized and reformed so it works better for you.

The United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate recently took historic action to modernize and to strengthen the Medicare system so it works for you. I'm here to tell you, I look forward to signing a good piece of legislation which says that our country will keep our commitment to today's seniors and prepare to receive tomorrow's seniors into Medicare—people like me—*[laughter]*—with a system that's modern and strong.

You know, our job in Washington is to tackle problems when we see them, not to pass them on to future Congresses or future Presidents or future generations. I want to thank the Members of Congress for taking on this very difficult issue. I appreciate them for their hard work. Medicare has worked for many people. It got a little old. It got a little tired. It needed to be changed. We changed it, and the system is better for it.

The Members of Congress who are here, I appreciate them coming. Senator Jon Kyl is one of the fine Members of the United States Senate. Congressman Rick Renzi, he's from the north; Trent Franks is from the north—Congressman Franks, and Josie, his wife, is with him; J.D. Hayworth—I don't know if you've ever heard of J.D., but—*[applause]*. They're fixing to call J.D. "Slim," "Slim" Hayworth. *[Laughter]* Jeff Flake is with us. Jeff, I'm honored you're here. Congressman Jim Kolbe from Tucson, Arizona, is with us. I'm honored. These are all fine Members of the United States Congress. I've enjoyed working with them all. They're good,