

The President. Yes. Very good. He wants to know about education funding. I think that's what it was, right? [Laughter] Or just money in general? Well, the best way to send money to the people is to let them keep their own money in the first place. We've increased Federal spending for elementary and secondary schools by over 40 percent since 2001, which is a hefty increase. In other words, we're doing our duty. What's changed is we've said now, "Show us whether or not the money is actually working." See, before we'd send money and then they wouldn't ask the question. Now we're asking that question, "Can a child read, and if not, why?"

In terms of Pell grants and education grants that help people, deserving people, go to college, we've increased that spending as well. We're doing our job. But I want to remind you when it comes to public education, the primary funder of public schools are the States and local jurisdictions. That's the way it has been in the past, and in my judgment, that's the way it ought to be. And the Federal Government can help with Title I students or IDEA funding, which is for disabled students. But it is the primary responsibility of your State government to make education the number one priority.

When I ran for Governor of Texas, I said education is to a State what national defense is to the Federal Government. The primary responsibility of the State is to make sure that the public school system runs well. And the primary obligation of the State is to fund the schools so they go well. And the Federal Government provides a complementary role. That's the way it is now, and that's the way it is, so long as I'm going to be the President.

One final question, and then I've got to hit the bus.

Public Service

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to welcome you to Wisconsin as well. And as an older mother of many children, we've tried to—we've had a number of kids that were interested in going into politics that were really turned off for a few years, but because of gentlemen like Tommy Thompson and yourself, we now have a son in politics, and we're very proud and also working for your benefit. Also, I heard you say that you'd like to return to

Wisconsin. We have a great city about 40 miles from here, on the shores of Lake Michigan, Sheboygan, and we'd welcome you there with open arms.

The President. Thank you. Let me talk about service. Thanks for bringing it up. There's obviously a proud mom, and that's neat, that one of her children has chosen to go into public service. I encourage people to run and to go into public service. But I recognize not everybody is suited for it, and some people just aren't interested. But there's all kinds of ways to serve. It's just not—you don't have to be a candidate to serve. You can serve by loving your neighbor. You can serve by mentoring a child. You can serve your community by just walking across the street to a shut-in's home and saying, "What can I do to make your day better?" There are all kinds of ways to serve.

I'm proud of your son for running. I think it's great. It's very important for people to step up and put their hat in the ring and get out there and mix it up. It's an exciting life. I mean, it's a—you've got to have a Type A personality, I recognize, but—[laughter]. Let me tell you something. I enjoy it. I enjoy being with people. I love the people of this country, and I love being with you today.

Thanks for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:18 p.m. in the factory at the Mid-States Aluminum Corp. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, who was found dead in his apartment in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2002; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003.

Exchange With Reporters in Oshkosh, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

President's Visit to Wisconsin

Q. Mr. President, your reaction to the crowds and the towns?

The President. Very, very warm and very hospitable reaction. A lot of people coming out, for which I'm grateful.

Q. What did you get?

The President. Vanilla custard. It's highly recommended. I'm recommending vanilla for Hillman [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

Q. You are dripping. You need a napkin.

The President. I'm going to get one in a minute. Would you like some?

Q. No, thanks.

The President. I'm trying to get you a little national publicity.

Q. I think I've got all I need. [Laughter]

The President. I enjoyed talking to you, girls. Enjoyed talking to you. Thank you.

All right, let's go back to work.

Q. First a candy store and now ice cream, sir?

The President. I'm loading up, carbo-loading for the weekend. [Laughter]

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:50 p.m. at Leon's Frozen Custard. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Senate Action To Block a Constitutional Amendment on Marriage

July 14, 2004

I am deeply disappointed that the effort to pass a constitutional amendment affirming the sanctity of marriage as being between a man and a woman was temporarily blocked in the Senate.

Activist judges and local officials in some parts of the country are not letting up in their efforts to redefine marriage for the rest of America—and neither should defenders of traditional marriage flag in their efforts.

It is important for our country to continue the debate on this important issue, and I urge the House of Representatives to pass this amendment.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the "Project BioShield Act of 2004"

July 14, 2004

During this time of threat to the homeland, I commend Congress for passing the "Project BioShield Act of 2004." This legislation will strengthen our ability to protect Americans against biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological threats. It will speed the Government's ability to turn promising scientific discoveries into necessary countermeasures, provide for rapid stockpiling of critical new drugs and vaccines, and allow the Food and Drug Administration to make treatments available quickly to Americans in emergency situations. By bringing researchers, medical experts, and the biomedical industry together in new and innovative ways, we will not only help protect the homeland but also gain insights into other diseases. This will break new ground in the search for treatments and cures, while strengthening our overall biotechnology infrastructure. I look forward to signing this vital piece of legislation.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 15.

Remarks in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin

July 14, 2004

The President. Thank you all very much. Thanks for coming. Thanks for inviting me. It's good to be here in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin. Thank you so much.

We've been having a great bus tour. I've been traveling all across this important State asking for the vote. I'm here to ask for your help. What a fantastic trip we've had. I did stop at Leon's Custard Shop. I also stopped in West Bend at Mick's Candyman Store. It's been a day of great excitement and high caloric intake. [Laughter] But I love being back here. It's good to see the Cheeseheads coming in. I know it's not the time of year, but I probably need to come back next fall, don't I? One thing is for certain: The Green Bay area is Bush-Cheney country.