

Remarks by the President in Texas Welcome

Southern Methodist University
Moody Coliseum
Dallas, Texas

6:08 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, all. It's nice to be home. I want to thank you all for coming. Laura and I are working our way across the country to get back to Texas so we can vote, and I want to tell you, we're not undecided. (Laughter and applause.) For the sake of Texas and for the sake of America, vote John Cornyn for the United States Senate. (Applause.)

And for the sake of the taxpayers of Texas and for the sake of the school children of Texas, elect Rick Perry as the governor of Texas. (Applause.)

No, we're looking forward to getting -- we're looking forward to getting into that voting booth tomorrow morning. And I hope you are, as well. I hope all of Texas takes their responsibility serious. You see, we live in a land of freedom and, therefore, we have an obligation to participate as free citizens. If you're eligible to vote, you should vote. I don't care whether you're Democrat or Republican, independent or could care less about a political party -- you have an obligation in a free society. (Applause.)

You know, Laura went to SMU. (Applause.) They didn't have a course on how to be a First Lady when she went here. (Laughter.) But if they had, she'd have gotten an A-plus. (Applause.) I'm really proud of the job she's done.

THE AUDIENCE: USA! USA! USA!

THE PRESIDENT: I'm proud to be up here with some fine public servants; really proud of the job that Senator Kay Hutchison is doing on behalf of all of Texas. (Applause.) She's a strong leader in the United States Senate. She's a strong leader. She's doing a fabulous job. I'm proud to call her friend and I'm also --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I'm also -- I'm also here to honor Senator Phil Gramm, who has done a great job on behalf of Texas. (Applause.)

I appreciate so very much Congressman Henry Bonilla's hard work in the Texas Victory Committee. That's the committee that's going to -- (applause.) That's the committee that is going to turn out the vote. See, that's what we're here to talk about. We're here to talk about how to turn out the vote, how to get people to the polls.

I want to thank you all for what you have done. I want to thank you for what you're going to do, which is to find good Texans and get them to vote, turn them out to vote and get them to vote for this ticket. (Applause.)

These are candidates we can be proud of. These are people that you can have confidence in. So work hard. And, by the way, I'm pretty familiar with Texas politics. You know, there's a lot of discerning Democrats who are going to support this ticket. Don't be afraid to talk to those good Democrats. (Applause.) Don't be afraid to talk to independents. Our candidates can reach across party line, because they've got a positive vision for the future of this state and for the future of our country. (Applause.)

I'm proud to be up here with a great statewide ticket. I know them all well. I can vouch for their integrity and their talents. The next Lieutenant Governor, David Dewhurst. (Applause.) The next Attorney General, Greg Abbott. (Applause.) A lady who has two sons working in my administration, that would be Carole Keeton Rylander. (Applause.) Jerry Patterson and Susan Combs and Michael Williams, all great candidates, all people you can trust. (Applause.)

I want to appreciate the members of the United States Congress who are here today. We've got a great congressional delegation from the state of Texas -- Sam Johnson and Pete Sessions -- (applause) -- Joe Barton and Kay Granger. (Laughter.) I'm proud to call them friends. I appreciate working with them. Any time there's any doubt about my stance on some of these Texas congressmen, if they're voting with me, I'm for them. (Laughter.) And they're voting with me. They're solid friends. And we need Jeb Hensarling and the rest of the people running for the United States Congress in Washington, D.C., too. (Applause.)

I want to thank the bands who are here tonight, the Waxahachie High School Band. (Applause.) Is the courthouse still standing? (Applause.) That's good. Lake Highlands High School band, I appreciate you all coming. (Applause.) If you're 18, you've got to vote now; if you're 18, you've got to vote.

The SMU band is here. I appreciate them coming. (Applause.) I know you're 18. (Laughter.) Eric Orson Band (phonetic), I appreciate them coming as well. I'm sorry we weren't here in time to hear the music. We had to stop in Arkansas on the way down. (Applause.) They're fixing to reelect a governor and you're fixing to elect a good man to governor of Texas. That man is Rick Perry. (Applause.)

He knows what he's doing. He knows how to manage the budget. He understands public schools. He understands jobs. He is the absolute right man for the job of Governor of Texas. (Applause.) And, like me, he married well. (Laughter.) Anita is a great first lady for Texas. (Applause.)

I can't be any stronger for John Cornyn than this: it is the right thing to do for America, to put John Cornyn in the United States Senate. (Applause.) I know him. I trust him. And we can work together on some big issues on behalf of all of Texas and all of America. And there are some big hurdles facing this country.

First of all, this economy isn't doing as good as it should be doing. It's bumping along. And, therefore, there's some people looking for work who can't find work. And any time somebody is looking for work who can't find work, it says to me that we've got to figure out how to continue to increase the job base of America.

But there's a fundamental difference of opinion in Washington, D.C., as to how to do that. The page of the economic textbook that we've read from says that if you let a person keep more of their own money, they're more than likely to demand an additional good or a service. (Applause.) They're likely to demand a good or a service, and when they do that, somebody is likely to produce the good or a service. And when somebody produces the good or a service, it's more likely somebody is going to be able to find a job. (Applause.)

And, therefore, the tax cuts we pass in Washington came at the exact right time in economic history. (Applause.) And I need a senator who will stand strong on this issue. I need a senator with whom we can work to make the tax cuts permanent. And that senator is John Cornyn. (Applause.)

I look forward to working with John on a lot of issues. On education, and on Medicare. Listen, medicine has changed and Medicare hasn't. Medicine has become modern; technologies have changed, there's new discoveries. But Medicare is stuck in the past. I need to work with Kay Hutchison and John Cornyn and members of the Congress to modernize Medicare, which means prescription drug benefits for our seniors. (Applause.)

And we've got another problem with health care. There's too many lawsuits. There's too many junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine. (Applause.) They're filing suits all over this country, which means good, honest people who have got a claim can't get to the judges, can't get into the courthouse. It means that people aren't going to have accessible and affordable health care. Excessive lawsuits run up the cost of medicine, and they're driving docs out of the practice of medicine. We need a Senate who will join me in passing federal medical liability reform. (Applause.)

And I need a senator from Texas with whom I can work, to help fulfil one of my most serious responsibilities, and that is to put good people on the federal bench. (Applause.) There is a vacancy on our benches. There is vacancies all around the country, because the bunch that's running the Senate right now won't give my nominees a fair hearing. And when they do give them a hearing, some of them have their records distorted. I need a United States senator who will stand strong for what most Texans want, and that is a judiciary full of honest and honorable people who will not use their bench from which to legislate, but to interpret the Constitution of the United States. (Applause.)

You may remember what happened to one of our finest Texans, Priscilla Owen. I picked Priscilla to serve on one of our top benches. I did so because she's a brilliant lady, she's an honest person, she finished tops in her law school, she was ranked by the ABA as one of the top picks. She is backed by Republicans and Democrats from the state of Texas. She ran statewide and was overwhelmingly elected. I put her up there. Because these people are playing politics, petty politics, with the nominees I've picked, her record was distorted and she was denied a seat. She was grossly treated. I can assure you that with John Cornyn in the Senate he would be a strong supporter of Priscilla Owen and my judges. (Applause.)

There's a big difference in this race between the two running for the United States Senate. And that Priscilla Owen case is a clear example of what I'm talking about. There's going to be a lot of issues we'll work on together. The biggest issue we've got is to protect America, to protect you from further attack, to do everything we can to prevent an enemy from hitting this country again. (Applause.)

It's still a problem for us, because there's an enemy lurking out there which hates us. And they hate us because of what we love -- we love our freedom. We love the fact that people can worship freely in America. We love the fact that people can speak their mind in this country. We love a free press. We love every aspect of our freedom, and we're not going to change. (Applause.)

So long as we take that stand, they're going to try to hurt us. And therefore, we've got to do everything we can to protect you. And there's a lot of good people doing that. I mean, listen, we're on notice. We remember, we remember, remember what happened. And therefore, there's a lot of good people working overtime to run down every hint, any idea, any suggestion that somebody is fixing to or thinking about doing something to America, we're moving on it. It is our most solemn obligation.

I think we can do a better job of protecting you, and that's why I went to the United States Congress, to join me in the creation of a Department of Homeland Security. It needs to be a department that brings agencies together, to focus their attention, to change culture if need be, so that people who are working hard on your behalf get the message that this is our number one job and number one priority.

And the House of Representatives responded. And I want to thank the House members who are here. But the bill got stuck in the Senate. Here we are with an enemy lurking out there, and the bill got stuck in the Senate because some Senators want to take away power from the Presidency. They want to take away what every President since John F. Kennedy has had, and that is the capacity to suspend certain collective bargaining rules for the sake of national security. In other words, if there's some rules that prevent me from putting the right place -- people at the right place at the right time, to protect you, I ought to be able to suspend those rules. But not according to these people. (Applause.)

No, the special interests have grabbed them up there. They want to micro-manage the process. I need John Cornyn in the Senate to make sure we get us a good homeland security bill. (Applause.)

But the best way to protect the homeland is to hunt these killers down, one at a time, and bring them to justice. (Applause.) That's what we have to do. And that is what we're going to do. And that is why I went to the Congress and asked for a substantial increase in defense spending, as a matter of fact, the largest increase since Ronald Reagan was the President. (Applause.) And I want to thank Senator Hutchinson, and I want to thank the members of Congress for backing me on that request. And there's two messages in that bill that I want to share with you. One, any time this country puts any of our youngsters into harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training and the best possible equipment. (Applause.)

And the second message is equally important. And that is, we're in this deal for the long haul. See, when it comes to the defense of our freedoms, it doesn't matter how long it takes. We're going to do the job. We're going to defend freedom. (Applause.) We're going to do a responsibility so future generations of Americans will know we answered the call. It just doesn't matter how long it takes. There's not a calendar on my desk in that wonderful Oval Office that says on such-and-such a date, haul them home. That's not the way I think.

And we're making progress in this different kind of war. In the old days, if you knocked down an airplane or sunk a ship, you could say you're making progress. This group we fight now hides in caves or kind of slithers around the dark corners of the world and they send their youngsters to their suicidal deaths. We value life in America. We say everybody is precious. These folks have hijacked a great religion and don't care who they kill. And that's the nature of the enemy. They're tough -- we're tougher. (Applause.)

Slowly but surely -- slowly but surely we're dismantling the terrorist network. It's important for us to be realistic here in America about the threats we face. It's essential we see the world the way it is, not the way we hope it would be. Because the stakes changed dramatically after September the 11th, 2001. Prior to that date, we had oceans that we thought protected us; that if there was a gathering threat somewhere around the world we could either deal with that threat or ignore it, because we were safe at home. Geography kept us safe. After September the 11th, 2001, geography doesn't keep us safe. And, therefore, in my judgment, we've got to be cold-eyed realists about threats as they emerge and deal with each one of them according to the level of threat.

There is a threat to the United States and our close friends and allies in Iraq. The leader of Iraq is a man who for 11 years has deceived the world. He said he wouldn't have weapons of mass destruction -- he has weapons of mass destruction. At one time we know for certain he was close to having a nuclear weapon. Imagine Saddam Hussein with a nuclear weapon. Not only has he got chemical weapons, but I want you to remember, he's used chemical weapons.

He's used weapons on people in his neighborhood, he's used weapons on people in his own country. This is a man who cannot stand America, he cannot stand what we stand for, he can't stand some of our closest friends and allies.

This is a man who has got connections with al Qaeda. Imagine a terrorist network with Iraq as an arsenal and as a training ground, so that a Saddam Hussein could use his shadowy group of people to attack his enemy and leave no fingerprint behind. He's a threat.

I went to the United Nations to make clear a couple of things. One, he's a threat. And, secondly, that this august body has a chance to keep the peace.

And yet for 16 resolutions -- resolution after resolution after resolution -- Saddam Hussein has defied the United Nations. It is now time for the United Nations to choose whether it's going to be an effective peacekeeping organization, or whether it's going to be like one of its predecessors, the League of Nations, an empty debating society. It is their choice to make. (Applause.)

It is Saddam Hussein's choice to make. He's told the world he would not have weapons of mass destruction, and in the name of peace, we expect him to honor that commitment. Should he choose not to honor the commitment, the U.N. is incapable of acting, the United States in the name of peace, in the name of freedom, will lead a coalition and disarm Saddam Hussein. (Applause.)

I say, "in the name of peace," because that's what's going to happen, in my judgment. See, out of the evil done to America is going to come some good. I don't know what got into the minds of the terrorists when they hit us, I guess they assumed our national religion was materialism, that we were so selfish, self-absorbed that after 9/11/2001 we might take a step back and file a lawsuit or two. (Laughter.)

They don't understand the nature of this great country. They don't understand the depth of our passion for freedom. If we stay tough when we need to be tough; stay strong when we need to be strong; speak clearly about good and evil; if we remember that freedom is not America's gift to the world, but God's gift to the world, we can achieve peace. (Applause.)

We can achieve peace here at home, we can achieve peace here at home. We can achieve peace in parts of the world which have quit on peace. I believe it. I believe out of the evil done to America is going to come good abroad, in the form of peace. And I believe it's going to make America a better place.

I believe I know a lot of our citizens have taken a step back and taken an assessment about that which is important in their lives. A lot of people have asked that question, how can I help. Well, I've got some ideas for you. First, it's important to remember that in the land of plenty there are people who hurt. There's pockets of despair and hopelessness and addiction. People, when you say, the American Dream, they have absolutely no idea what you're talking about. We've got to remember in this country, when some of us hurt, we all hurt. And therefore we've got to try to make a difference to improve the lot of everybody's lives.

And government can help. We'll work on Medicare and we'll work on education. And government can pass out money. But I want you to remember what government cannot do is to put hope in people's hearts, or a sense of purpose in people's lives. People's lives change when somebody puts their arm around them, and says, I love you, can I help you, what can I do to make your life a better life? (Applause.)

And that's happening all across America. I'm sure there's mentors here, people who are saving one child's life at a time. I know there are people here who feed the hungry, provide housing for the homeless, or run a Boy Scouts troop or a Girl Scouts troop, or Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

There's all kinds of ways that you can help change America, one heart, one conscience, one soul at a time. No, the spirit of America is strong; it's alive and well. It's a spirit that says, when it comes to the defense of our freedom, it doesn't matter how long it takes, we'll defend freedom.

It also says that a true American is somebody who serves a cause greater than themselves. I want the high school students and youngsters here to always remember the story of Flight 93. These are people flying across the country, what they thought was going to be just an average trip. They learned that the airplane they were on was going to be used as a weapon. They told their loved ones goodbye. They said a prayer, asking for guidance from the Almighty. One guy said, let's roll. They took the plane into the ground to save lives, and to serve something greater than themselves. (Applause.)

The enemy hit us, the enemy hit us. They had no earthly idea who they were hitting. They didn't have any idea that the spirit of this country is strong and alive and vibrant, which allows me to boldly predict that out of the evil done to America is going to come a more peaceful world, and out of the evil done to America will come a more hopeful America, where the great sunshine of hope of this country shines its light into every corner of this land.

And I can say that with confidence, because this is the greatest country, full of the most decent and honorable people on the face of the earth.

Thanks for coming. May God bless. (Applause.)

END 6:36 P.M. CST

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