



## **Speech to Federal Employees Union**

**17 July 2004**

Thank you very much for inviting me here this morning. I also want to thank every one of you for taking time off from your Saturday to come to this rally and for your hard work and commitment every day as federal employees.

Ladies and gentlemen, 2004 is not merely an election. It is a battle for the soul of our nation. It is a battle between George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, who are using the people's government to enrich their ultra-wealthy friends and enact the most rigid, ideologically driven agenda we have seen in our lifetimes, and a Democratic Party standing up for the rights and needs of working families across this nation.

You have borne more than your fair share of these assaults. President Bush has fought tooth and nail to slash your hard-won benefits, gut federal whistle-blower protections and even eliminate your jobs entirely. He has done this even as he has hypocritically wrapped himself in the American flag and praised your bravery and commitment to our nation. Let me tell you something, you have earned more than his praise. After the past four years, you deserve his apology.

This is part of a pattern of damaging deceit and doublespeak by President Bush and the Republican Party. George Bush beloved tax giveaways to the ultra-rich have resulted in record budget deficits and the worst record of job creation since Herbert Hoover as an economic growth program. They call policies that allow companies to pump huge amounts of pollution into our air and water and threaten our last wild forests environmental protections. They declare a program that increases seniors' drug prices and limits their choices prescription drug reform. Thanks to their compassionate conservatism, middle class

Americans – who enjoyed eight years of increased income, better benefits and job security in the 1990s – have found themselves at the wrong end of a growing disparity between the few haves and the many who simply do not have enough.

Sadly, this is not the worst of it. George Bush and Dick Cheney's policies also turned our nation from a beacon of hope and democracy for the world into one that is feared and hated. They have failed to prosecute a war that was absolutely necessary, leaving Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda able to continue to threaten us today, even as they waged a war built on phony intelligence and abhorrent planning. Now, George Bush would have you believe, we are both safer than we were four years ago and threatened by terrorism like never before. Just think about how contradictory that statement is. We are safer and in more danger than four years ago.

Do you feel safer than you were four years ago?

Are our men and women in Iraq, who are shot at and killed daily, safer now than they were four years ago?

We must recapture the soul of our nation: the dedication to establishing the peace and security necessary for individuals to pursue their own dreams. Yet, despite our victories, these goals now seem much farther away than they were even four years ago. Far too many of our neighbors have been forgotten by leaders in Washington and the state Capitol more concerned with enrichment of the few than with the good of the nation.

We will not let that happen.

We can restore the hope to our government and nation that have too long been absent. Whether it is the economy, health care, the environment, or foreign policy, we can have a government that helps us solve our problems, not create new ones. This is our agenda.

With our commitment and hard work, the cynicism and doublespeak of this administration will end in this year. For John Kerry, John Edwards, our Democratic Senate candidates, Congressional candidates Dave Thomas, Stan Matsunaka, Joanna Conti and John Salazar and our state senate and state house candidates are committed to restoring the hope and optimism to our nation that have been so sorely missing over the past four years.

Americans are yearning for leaders who are honest, who speak frankly about the challenges we face and who work together with all of us so that we, as a nation, can move ahead.

This is not, however, a battle that will be won or lost on Election Day. The fight for the White House, for the Congress and for the state Senate and House is already in full swing. Every one of us needs to work every day from now through November 2 like our country

depended on us. We need to volunteer for Democratic campaigns, donate our money, whether it's one dollar or a thousand dollars and bring every one of our friends, relatives and neighbors out to help.

I do not need to remind you what happened in Florida in 2000 and how close the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of Colorado was. Every vote, every dollar, every hour counts. So, today, sign up to walk a precinct or volunteer to call undecided voters, host a fundraiser or block party, attend rallies. This is our election. This is our time to take Colorado back. This is our time to take the White House back. Our jobs, our health care, our nation depend on it.