

now a major manufacturer. He said the best thing Government can do is to provide incentives for the expansion of plant and equipment, because he understands what I understand: If you expand plant and equipment, you expand jobs.

And he had asked the question, what about jobs? How do we create jobs? And when we ask that question, we've got to understand that the major job growth occurs in the small-business community in America; those are the creators of new jobs.

And that's why, in the beginning of last year, I worked so hard to get the tax cut passed. That's why, because—let me explain. If you think the economy is going to slow down, the best way to recover is to let people have their own money in their pockets to spend, not the Government.

Somebody told me the funniest thing. They said, "There are some in Washington saying that the tax cut caused the recession." I don't know what economic textbook they're reading. [Laughter] The best way to come out of a recession is to say to the small-business person, "We'll let you keep your own money." When we cut taxes on all rates, we said to the sole proprietor or the limited partner, "It's your money. You spend it in order to expand the job base in America."

We have priorities in Washington. Defending our homeland is going to be a priority. A strong defense is a priority. But something that shouldn't be a priority is to raise your taxes. There's going to be people who say, "We can't have the tax cut go through anymore." That's a tax raise. And I challenge their economics, when they say, "Raising taxes will help the country recover." Not over my dead body will they raise your taxes.

I'm confident that a new spirit can prevail in Washington. I hope people come together and do what's right for the American people. It's going to be a task—for some, it's kind of a steep hill. But I believe if that's what the American people want,

it can happen. It's certainly what your President wants.

I also want our country to continue to embrace the values that make our Nation so wonderful. I've always told people that I believe the great strength of our country lies not in our halls of government but in the hearts and souls of the American people.

I got to see—running for President is certainly not a distant memory. [Laughter] It really puts you through the paces. But it's important because if you pay attention to what you see, you will begin to really see the strength of America. I see the strength of our country in our classrooms. I see the strength of our country in faith-based institutions that—of Christian faith, Jewish faith, Muslim faith, all of which exist to help people in need. It's the true strength of America.

After September the 11th, many of our fellow countrymen took a step back and said, "Is my life worth it now? Am I living my life the way that—in a worthwhile way?" People have begun to assess their priorities. I've been pleased to read story after story about how moms and dads are beginning to realize the most important job they will ever have is to love their children with all their heart and all their soul.

I love the story that came out of Michigan about the women of cover, of Muslim faith, who didn't feel comfortable about going to their home. And so Jewish and Christian groups, ladies' groups, went to the neighborhood and said, "We'll walk you to the store," because the America we know is not one that castigates an individual based upon their religion. The America we know is a society that's open and free and a society that says, if you dream the big dream, you can realize it if you work hard. It's a society that says, you can worship the way you want to worship, and a society which says, you've got to love your neighbor just like you love yourself. That's the spirit of America that I know.