

I jested with Ted Kennedy when I told him that the folks at the coffee shop in Crawford, Texas, will be amazed when they see me standing up there saying nice things about him. [Laughter] But I meant them. I meant them, because this bill never would have happened had he not made up his mind to help it happen.

And that's exactly the spirit that Jeb has taken to the governorship of Florida. You see, he, too, is a proud Republican, like me, but he also understands, children of Florida are more important than political parties. And he said he stole ideas from me; he didn't steal ideas from me. He had the idea of every child being educated ingrained deeply in his heart.

He is—today I signed an Everglades agreement with the State of Florida. It's legislation that passed prior to my time. My job then was to certify that the Floridians were honoring their obligation to make sure there was enough water to the Everglades park. That was easy to sign because I know that deeply ingrained in Jeb's heart is a desire to protect the natural beauty of the State of Florida. He can also—he's a deeply compassionate man, but he's plenty tough. Just ask the crooks of Florida. [Laughter]

I want to thank you all for making his campaign more viable. But what's going to make it really viable is that he is a man who's done in office what he said he would do. He speaks straight with the Florida voters; he tells them what he believes. He's not one of these kind of fellows that walks around with his finger in the sea breeze trying to figure out which way the political

winds blow. He says what's on his mind, not based upon polls or focus groups, but based upon conviction. And there's no doubt in my mind that he is not only one of the great Governors of Florida's history; he's one of the great Governors of our Nation. And he deserves a second term.

We not only share a last name, but we share the fact we both married above ourselves. [Laughter] It's great to be here with Columba as well. Both Jeb and Columba understand there's a calling when you hold a high office, that there's an awesome responsibility that comes with that office. And that's, first and foremost, to bring honor and dignity to the office. And that's exactly what this couple has done.

They may not agree with Jeb in Florida on every issue, but when they look at that office, when they look at the office of Governor of Florida, they know they've got a man there who will tell them the truth, a man who's there for the right reason, and a man who brings honor to the great State of Florida.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:19 p.m. in a ballroom at the Capitol Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Marvin Bush and Dorothy Koch, the President's brother and sister; Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia, chairman, and Ann Wagner, cochairman, Republican National Committee; David Johnson, executive director, and Al Cardenas, State chairman, Republican Party of Florida; and Columba Bush, wife of Gov. Jeb Bush.