

The following is a speech given by Henry S. Levine, MD, DFAPA, at a fundraiser among mental health professionals in Bellingham, Washington on Thursday, September 9, 2004. We have posted it here because it has a great deal to say that needs to be said, and it says it very well.

“Thank you so much for coming. I’m Hank Levine and I’m your host tonight. I hope you’re having a good time, and I’ll only interrupt it for a few minutes. I’m going to take that time to review the ups and downs of the past four years. Let’s start with the high points.

"I am mindful not only of preserving executive powers for myself, but for my predecessors as well."—

"Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?"-

"I understand small business growth. I was one."-

"Natural gas is hemispheric. I like to call it hemispheric in nature because it is a product that we can find in our neighborhoods.”

"They want the federal government controlling Social Security like it's some kind of federal program.”

“You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test.”

“It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it.”

We all have our favorite Dubya quotes, and they are funny. But we’re *all* here now because what’s been happening to our country for the last four years *isn’t funny at all*. As George W. Bush himself said, “Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.”

Three years ago this coming Sunday, on Sept 12, 2001, George W. Bush had one heck of an opportunity. Up ‘til then, he’d only been squeaking by. He’d been elected by a minority of the people plus Antonin Scalia. He had already given away our budget surplus to his rich friends. He had just endured the demise of his good ol’ Enron buddy “Kenny Boy” Lay, who took down along with him the life savings of thousands of hard working Americans.

Despite his role in all these failures, on Sept. 12, 2001, America was united behind George W. Bush. Not only were *we* united behind him, but the US had the full sympathy, support, and assistance of *virtually every* civilized government and citizen in the world. America was ready to be led... to work and to sacrifice to be sure the events of 9/11 never happened again. It was like the scenario FDR faced the day after Pearl Harbor. George W. Bush took our trust and our hopes....and led us...not to victory like FDR, but right down to the monstrous mess we have now.

On that Sept. 12, we were ready to curtail our use of oil to make us less dependent on the Middle East. We were ready to spend billions to secure airport scanners, factories, ports, nuclear plants, and the like, and to pay for it with taxes to prevent a massive deficit. We were even ready to send our boys and girls to Afghanistan to make that country safe for all its citizens and unsafe for terrorists. We were ready to support the immediate unification of Federal agencies devoted

to national security. We were ready to back a serious investigation into how the debacle of 9/11 happened, and into what to do so that it could never happen again.

So what did George W. Bush do to lead us? What sacrifices did he ask of us to cement our national unity? He asked us to *go shopping*. He asked us to go to *Disneyland*. He squelched all efforts at energy conservation and the development of clean alternative fuels. He opposed the formation of the TSA and a Department of Homeland Security for more than a year. Tom Ridge had advised Bush to veto the formation of a Dept. of Homeland Security, so naturally, George W. Bush appointed Tom Ridge as its head. He funded the Department at \$31.2 billion in fiscal 2003, very little more than the agencies coming together had in their combined budgets the previous year. We now spend that much – the whole of the fiscal '03 DHS budget - in Iraq alone about every 3 months. Now think about how much security \$100 billion a year going to Iraq could buy here at home. And, by the way, George W. Bush refused to ask his rich friends help finance any of this.

George W. Bush opposed the formation of a 9/11 commission. When political pressure forced him to appoint it, he refused to testify before it under oath, he withheld documents that the commission requested, and he refused to appear before it without one of his thinking appendages, and came with Dick Cheney. Now he resists carrying out the 9/11 Commission's key recommendations.

In the wake of 9/11, George W. Bush sent a small military force to Afghanistan. He deposed the Taliban and set up a government that ruled Kabul, and left the rest of the country to the warlords and the Taliban leftovers. George W. Bush bragged that he would take care of Osama Bin Laden. He would smoke him out of his cave, hunt him down, bring him to justice. Then he pulled our troops out and he *let Bin Laden get away*. Then, George W. Bush, President Pinnocchio, told us capturing Bin Laden *wasn't important*.

George W. Bush unleashed John Ashcroft after 9/11. The rights of American citizens to basic due process of law, to remain free of torture, to know the charges against them, and to have a day in court, were suddenly.....*gone*.

All the while, George W. Bush was plotting to attack Iraq. When his best advisors, like Richard Clark, told him Iraq was not behind 9/11, he got angry and dismissed them. When our strong, traditional allies tried to help us be cautious, he had Donald Rumsfeld tell them, and the UN, how much we didn't need them. George W. Bush pushed his obsession with Iraq so hard that he perverted the judgment of our investigative agencies, our generals, our diplomatic corps, our press, the US Congress and the American public itself. George W. Bush told us Iraq was behind 9/11, that it threatened us with WMD, and that after we sent our troops into Baghdad, our mission was accomplished. When nearly every fact proved him wrong, George W. Bush refused to admit *even one error*.

George W. Bush had his Secretary of State tell us that terrorism deaths were down in 2003 when in fact they had skyrocketed. He had his own White House legal counsel, Alberto Gonzales, prepare a memo on how we could ignore International Law and torture people guilt-free. What followed was Abu Ghraib. And George W. Bush refused to plan for the peace. He created a terrorist magnet in Iraq and now uses this as proof that Iraq *really* was a front in the War on Terrorism from the start. In truth, Iraq was and is George W. Bush's unjust, unneeded, and counterproductive drain on our young peoples' lives, our national resources, our international standing, and our own sense of ourselves as an ethical nation.

I've focused on 9/11, but there's more to George W. Bush's presidency. He thumbed his nose at the Kyoto Treaty, the international community's effort to improve our environment for coming generations. George W. Bush said he would come up with something better than the Kyoto Treaty, but he has done *nothing*. George W. Bush emasculated the EPA, giving big polluters the green light to rape the environment without legal or financial responsibility. He reversed the Roadless Rule, rendering our national wildernesses wilderness no more.

George W. Bush opposed public support for progress toward a potential medical miracle, stem cell research. He told us there were 60-odd cell lines when in fact there was less than half that number. When a member of the President's Council on Bioethics, Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn, dared to publicly state the truth about stem cell research, George W. Bush had Dr. Blackburn fired. When an advisory council of the FDA recommended marketing of the morning after pill without a prescription, George W. Bush's political appointees at the FDA turned the whole recommendation around 180 degrees and made sure that America's women wouldn't have that protection. George W. Bush helped spread the AIDS epidemic around the world, and made the US the laughing stock of the international community by blocking any UN health programs promoting condom use, and saying it was good science. It took a report of the Union of Concerned Scientists to point out that no US administration had ever attempted anything like George W. Bush's revolutionary attempt to pervert scientific knowledge for political purposes. Your health and mine will suffer as a result.

George W. Bush's administration will be the first since Herbert Hoover's in which there is a net loss of jobs. Yet he has refused to help the unemployed with medical insurance and has opposed Congress' efforts to extend unemployment insurance coverage.

George W. Bush has spent our money incredibly irresponsibly. He took President Clinton's surplus and turned it into the largest deficit in US history – now estimated at \$422 billion for this year. That's \$1400. for every US resident. However, because of his equally irresponsible welfare program for billionaires known as the Bush tax cut, that deficit in 2015 will be \$220 TRILLION, or \$667,000. debt per US resident. George W. Bush is bankrupting our nation.

George W. Bush has done nothing about the 40-odd million Americans without health insurance. George W. Bush's administration brazenly lied to Congress about the cost of his Medicare drug benefit. His program covers seniors for about *half* the cost of their drugs. But George W. Bush gave his big contributors in the drug industry *a whole treasure trove*. George W. Bush said "Yes" to government financing for about half the cost of Medicare drugs. But he said "No" to any negotiation with the drug companies to let the American public purchase those drugs at a discount, or to buy them in Canada. We're paying for that one every day, folks, and unless we turn it around, our kids and grandkids will be lining the pockets of the drug companies for generations to come.

Thanks to George W. Bush 's blowing his 9/12 opportunity, we've lost lives, we've lost our budget surplus, we've lost rights, we've lost jobs, we've lost the respect of our allies, and we've lost our position as a beacon of hope in the world. Our traditional supporters around the world now think we deserve everything we get. We've been subjected to the Big Lie about things our government has done here and abroad. George W. Bush has led us.... *right here*.

I don't know if George W. Bush is just the world's biggest liar or just its biggest incompetent. But I do know that George W. Bush calls John Kerry a "Flip flopper". Yet George W. Bush has told us he is a peace president *and* a war president. He has told us we can win the war on terrorism *and* that we can't. He took our surplus and has burdened us with his gigantic deficit. He promised a modest, humble foreign policy without military adventures and nation building. He has given us arrogance toward our allies, over 1000 war dead, over 10,000 innocent Iraqi civilians slaughtered, half hearted, failed efforts at nation building in Iraq, and the abandonment of Afghanistan. He called himself a uniter, yet America is as angry and divided as it has been since the Civil War. George W. Bush told us he was a compassionate conservative, but *he* in fact has flip flopped and has stealthily led a radical rightist revolution.

Will that revolution continue? Not if the American people are allowed to hear the full truth about the past four years; not if we *all* have our say on *this* Nov 2; and not if we fully realize the consequences if we don't turn our country around. Think about it – for the last four years George W. Bush has been running for re-election. Think about what would happen if he were without that constraint if he is elected in November by us or by the Supreme Court. And if you think the Supreme Court is unresponsive to the will of our people now, just wait to see what happens if George W. Bush's appointees get their hands on the health and reproductive freedom of women and other like issues. **BUT**, by getting behind John F. Kerry, we can make this Nov. 2 the moment of truth our country needs.

John F. Kerry has been in the US Senate since 1984. He is a war hero who came home from Viet Nam and courageously spoke out against the carnage there. He has served 20 years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He has been a leader in military, environmental and health care legislation. He has written a book on national security. John F. Kerry has been a public servant three times as long as George W. Bush.

John F. Kerry is running for president as an advocate of competent, fair, and truthful government. He advocates revoking the Bush tax cut on the wealthiest 2% among us. John F. Kerry intends to give seniors a real Medicare drug benefit and to revoke the windfall Bush has given the drug industry. He has a program to allow all Americans to afford health insurance, including coverage for mental health and chemical dependency treatment. John F. Kerry is committed to repairing our relations with our allies and to a foreign policy that recognizes that we have interests in common with others in the world. John F. Kerry advocates developing alternative clean energy sources and raising mileage standards on our vehicles, so that we are less dependent on the oil cartel and will pollute less. He plans to give our schools the resources they need to improve our kids' education. John F. Kerry plans to secure our ports, our skies, and our chemical and nuclear plants from terrorist attack. He will reinvest wasted resources into true Homeland security, and he will carry out the *full* recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. John F. Kerry will reverse tax breaks for companies which export our jobs. *He will not countenance torture in the name of the American people.* John F. Kerry will respect scientists and scientific knowledge that promote the health of our kids and grandkids. And John F. Kerry will do his best to ensure that *every American's vote is counted this Nov 2.*

So you've come, and you've listened. Now what? Well, there's a lot of work to be done to turn the future around. And you can do it, for the country, for your own self interest, and for generations to come. First, you can get out your wallet and do some thinning. Now, there's an old preacher's expression when the collection plate goes around the church: "It ain't God's work unless ya give until you give a little more than makes you comfortable." It's sort of like psychotherapy. It's OK if

it hurts a little, and it probably has to, to be effective. I guarantee that it'll hurt a lot more, in the pocketbook and elsewhere, if you don't help the Kerry campaign now. So if you haven't done so already, get yourself over to that table now, and *donate as much as you possibly can*. And don't forget to fill out a contribution form. We can't take your contribution without one. If you don't have cash or check, you can sign a credit card charge slip right at our table.

And if you've given till it hurts and want to do more? There's a sign up sheet over at that table for those of us who are willing to volunteer to help out. Help at Headquarters, help call voters here in Washington & in swing states, help local folks get to the polls, help register new voters, help deliver campaign signs. Help talk to young women, a constituency that tends to stay home on Election Day, about what's at stake. There's lots to do, and doing it together with like minded people can be a lot of fun.

Last but not least, you can do what I did here. But you don't have to rent a hall to do it. Have a John Kerry Party at your home. Invite a few friends and neighbors into your living room. It can even be a potluck. If every one of you here did that we'd multiply today's wonderful turnout several fold! We couldn't lose! There's lots of support for having house parties at the JohnKerry.com website. Visit it and learn about the candidate and the platform. You can be an expert in no time. And I'd be honored to be your personal party consultant and walk you thru exactly what it takes to have a successful event. So have a John F. Kerry House Party.

It's time for me to finish up. Enjoy the food drink and good company for as long as you'd like. If you have complaints, criticisms or suggestions, there's a box, paper and pencils attached to that buoy just outside the harbor. Actually, tonight's been a team effort and I've had a lot of help. Special thanks to Corinne Gimbel Levine, Jeremiah Levine, Catie Strong, Tom Moore, Janis Ban, Marv Miller, Steve and Debbie Adelstein, Doug Vaupel, Ilona Westwood, Aaron Lukoff, Lois Clement, to the Mighty Prawns for their fantastic music, and to Brown & Cole Caterers. And thanks to all who helped staff the tables around the room. There's the sign-in table, contribution table, the volunteer pledge table, the Kerry Stuff table, and there's the bar. It's very important to me that you drive home as safely as you drove here. So please drink responsibly. Remember to leave plenty for others. And if you haven't, please tell someone at the volunteer pledge table and we'll do our best to find you a designated driver or a cab.

Have fun and remember, GIVE TILL IT HURTS. Together we *can* do better. Together we can turn this country around. Let's win this election and celebrate together again this Nov. 2nd!"