



News Release

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U.S. President George W. Bush addresses 77th Pennsylvania State FFA Convention

INDIANAPOLIS – Pennsylvania state FFA members “Valued the Vision” on Tuesday, June 14, when President George W. Bush addressed attendees at the Pennsylvania state convention at Penn State University. Bush’s afternoon remarks addressed social security, homeland security and home ownership.

Michael Hess, Pennsylvania state FFA president, presided over the convention session and introduced the commander in chief. Appearing with Bush were Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell, Penn State President Graham B. Spanier and Pennsylvania Commissioner of Agriculture Dennis Wolff. Also in attendance – in fact riding with Bush in his motorcade – was legendary Penn State football coach Joe Paterno.

In his remarks to the Pennsylvania FFA members, President Bush said, “Thanks for the example you have set. Thanks for understanding the importance of values. One thing that’s really important about our farming communities all across the country is that in our farming communities you find the values of hard work, faith, love of family and love of our country. And I want to thank you all for carrying on that tradition of carrying those values.”

While paying tribute to the great tradition of American agriculture, Bush challenged the students present to make the most of their educational opportunities: “Now, farming is still the first industry in America,” he said. “It is a luxury that we live in a country and can feed ourselves, and we need to keep it that way. American agriculture is diverse and it’s a complex industry, where family farmers are CEOs, where the occupations in agriculture run from engineering and food science to business

management to biotechnology—which says to me, you better take advantage of the education you’ve got; which says, you got to learn, you got to set high standards and work hard, read more than you watch TV, take your teachers seriously—because you're going to need a good education in order to be able to compete in this world.”

Bush went on to champion his plan to reform Social Security, saying, “I'm going to continue working this issue, state after state after state. I'm going to continue to call upon the United States Congress, members of both political parties, to stand up, to do what's right for a young generation of Americans coming up, to fix this Social Security system once and for all so a young generation of Americans will have that same sense of security that previous generations had when it came time for them to retire.

“There's no doubt in my mind we're going to get this job done. And if you're interested in the subject, pay attention; call your elected representatives. The voice of the people can determine what takes place in Washington, D.C.”

Concluding his remarks, the President thanked the crowd of FFA members, telling them, “I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you. I want to thank the members of the FFA for being leaders, for making right choices, for setting high standards, for setting the example and for serving the communities in which you live. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.”

A complete transcript of President Bush’s remarks is available on the News and Media page at ffa.org.

FFA is a national youth organization of 476,732 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,223 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth and career success** through agricultural education. Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

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