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Good afternoon. It's great being here in Birmingham with my brothers and sisters of GCPA. Thank you for the invitation and for your southern hospitality.

I want to also salute your leadership, especially Dr. Joseph Lowery. Your wisdom and guidance provides the inspiration for the building of a political movement throughout the South and across the country.

This meeting has been convened to focus on political empowerment. Together we can strengthen and flex our electoral muscle.

I feel honored to be here with my brothers and sisters from the southern region. Without a doubt, the South is the powerbase for progressive movements.

At the same time, the South is where the sleeping giant rests. There is huge potential for rewriting the political playbook through mobilizing a large untapped political base.

Not only is the South the heartland for the descendants of Africa, but it is also the birth place for this nation's most successful organized struggle for justice – popularly known as the civil rights movement.

The political potency of the South is not to be underestimated. Save for Ronald Reagan, four of the last five Presidents came from the South. Ten southern states have more black voting potential than the other regions of the country combined.

[Pause]

Our luncheon speakers will offer some valuable insights to help us realize how to use that power at this important time when our voices must be heard like never before.

They include Dr. Ronald Walters, one of our nation's most incisive political analysts; XXX [list others...]

[Pause]

Before we get to our speakers, I wanted to offer my own thoughts on the challenge before us. In keeping with the nonpartisan theme of our event, keep in mind that a fully empowered African American voting force is actually a threat to both major parties.

One party wants to use redistricting and vote-rich African American communities to get in power and then use us as sacrificial lambs.

And the other party denies our communities our voice,
ignoring the fact that we are a force at all.

[Pause.]

That brings me to the recent behavior of the current
occupant of the White House. His first stop during his
Africa trip was to the Goree (Gore-ray) Island in Senegal,
the launching point for African Slaves to be transported to
the Americas. What a grand photo!

He traveled across the Atlantic to dramatize his
concern for the enslavement of our ancestors when he
won't even travel to the Rose Garden to meet with our
leaders like Dr. Lowery!

[Pause]

Smoke and mirrors! I could put that latest contradiction in the collection of factoids that I call Bushisms.

He brought an oil company, but couldn't find any oil in Texas. The company went bankrupt shortly after he sold all his stock.

He brought the Texas Rangers baseball team in a sweetheart deal that took land using tax-payer money. His biggest decision while at the helm of the Rangers was to trade Sammy Sosa to the Chicago Cubs.

What troubles me is not only what we know about him, but also what we don't know.

We know about at least one conviction for drunk driving in Maine, but his Texas driving record has been erased.

He went AWOL from the National Guard and deserted the military during the Viet Nam war. But he refused to talk about that period in his life.

Despite wide speculation about his drug use, he would not take a drug test or answer any questions about drug use.

All records of any Security and Exchange Commission investigations into his insider trading are sealed. So are all minutes of meeting for any public corporations he served on.

With Daddy's help and no experience except running for Congress and losing, he got elected Governor of Texas.

He cut taxes and bankrupted the Texas government to the tune of billions in borrowed money. He also set the record for putting more people to death than any Governor in American history.

[Pause]

Then, he goes on to become President of the United States.

We all know about the disputed Florida election and the question of whether he should even be in the White House.

While that's a subject of debate in some circles, it is an undisputed fact that he lost the popular vote and was installed in office by Supreme Court justices appointed by his Dad.

What does he do in the White House?

He spends the surplus. Bankrupts the treasury. And creates the biggest annual deficit in history.

He sets the record for the biggest ever-plunge in the stock market. And that's only the beginning!

He has scored a number of other noteworthy firsts:

The first year in office he rakes up more vacation days than any president in history.

Surpasses all presidential records for campaign fundraising trips.

Raises more money than any president in history and holds the all-time record for the most corporate campaign donations of any officer holder in history.

Cuts unemployment benefits for more jobless Americans than any president in history.

Presides over the highest gasoline prices in history and the worst energy crisis ever.

Selects cabinet members who are collectively the richest ever to hold those positions.

Signs more laws and executive orders amending the Constitution than any president in history.

Removes more freedoms and civil liberties for Americans than any president in history.

Creates a country that has not been as divided since the civil war.

Dissolves more international treaties than any president in U.S. history

Sparks the United Nations to remove the United States from the human rights commission for the first time in history.

Wins the distinction as the first U.S. President viewed as the biggest threat to world peace and stability, according to the majority of Europeans polled on the subject.

He's the first U.S. president in history to unilaterally attack a sovereign nation against the will of the United Nations and the world community.

And sets the all-time record for sparking protests worldwide, sending 15 million people to the streets to protest his policy on Iraq.

[Pause]

Brothers and sisters, I could go on and on about this incredible record. But instead of focusing any more of my attention on George W. Bush, I have to ask the question: "What are we going to do about it?"

I'll leave you to ponder that question... Now to our first speaker.