

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “1976/02/18 - Parent - Teacher Association Legislative Conference, White House” of the Frances K. Pullen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS OF
MRS. GERALD R. FORD
BEFORE THE
PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

February 18, 1976

I'M DELIGHTED YOU COULD COME TO THE WHITE HOUSE,
AND I HOPE YOU'LL ENJOY BROWSING AROUND
THESE BEAUTIFUL ROOMS
AS MUCH AS I DO.

NOT LONG AGO, I WAS VISITING WITH SOME CHILDREN.
THEY WANTED TO KNOW
IF I HAD SEEN ANY WHITE HOUSE GHOST.

School



WELL, I HAVEN'T,

BUT I DO FEEL THE PRESENCE OF THE HISTORY

THAT HAS BEEN MADE HERE.

HISTORY REALLY

IS JUST THE STORY OF PEOPLE,

AND SO MANY OF THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE

OF OUR PAST

HAVE LIVED OR VISITED HERE.

I HOPE YOU HAVE THAT FEELING TOO,

BECAUSE THIS HOUSE BELONGS

TO YOU AND ALL OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.



I DON'T KNOW MANY OF YOU PERSONALLY,

BUT I FEEL LIKE I DO.

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE

WE SHARE A LOVE OF CHILDREN

AND A CONCERN ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION.

I'VE MET SO MANY PARENTS

IN MY MANY YEARS IN THE PTA.

AT ONE POINT,

I BELONGED TO THREE SEPARATE PTAs,

AND I KNEW MANY DEDICATED PARENTS AND TEACHERS

WORKING TO MAKE THEIR SCHOOLS

GOOD AND HAPPY LEARNING PLACES FOR CHILDREN.



I'VE KNOWN MANY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS
WHO BELIEVED THAT PARENT INVOLVEMENT
WAS THE SECRET TO A GOOD SCHOOL.

THE PTA GIVES PARENTS A WAY
TO VOICE THEIR INTEREST
IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL.

I FEEL ~~VERY~~ STRONGLY
THE PTA IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE CHILDREN
AS WELL AS THE SCHOOL.

I BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE PTA IN 1958
WHEN MIKE WAS IN THE FIRST GRADE
AND CONTINUED UNTIL SUSAN GRADUATED LAST YEAR.



DURING THOSE YEARS,

I FOUND THE PTA INVALUABLE TO ME AS A MOTHER,

BECAUSE IT GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY

TO MEET AND WORK WITH

THE MOTHERS OF THE CHILDREN *with whom*
were attending
MY CHILDREN WERE ~~GOING TO~~ SCHOOL ~~WITH~~.

MY HUSBAND OFTEN SPOKE AT THE PTA *meetings*

ON LEGISLATIVE PROBLEMS THAT DEALT WITH SCHOOLS, *And Education*

through the school
AND HEARRANGED ~~EDUCATIONAL~~ TRIPS *for the students*

TO THE CAPITOL ANNUALLY.



WE BOTH BENEFITED FROM THE PTA,
BECAUSE WE BELIEVE
YOU DON'T JUST SEND CHILDREN OFF TO SCHOOL,
YOU HAVE TO GO WITH THEM
AND SHARE THEIR WORLD.

WE ARE A FAMILY THAT GETS INVOLVED
IN EACH OTHER'S ACTIVITIES,
AND WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE IN SCHOOL,
THE PTA HELPED US SHARE
THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCES.



MY CHILDREN'S FRIENDS

CAME FROM EVERY RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND,

AND BY BEING ACTIVE IN BOOK FAIRS, *bake sales,*

AND AS ROOM MOTHER,

I GOT TO KNOW THEIR FRIENDS.

THIS WAS SO IMPORTANT TO ME.

WITH MY CHILDREN AND IN TEACHING DANCE,

I FOUND LEARNING

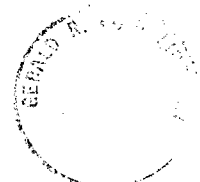
CAN BE ~~BE~~ EXCITING,

BUT THE ATMOSPHERE

HAS TO BE ~~BE~~ RIGHT.

TO ME, THIS IS WHAT THE PTA IS ALL ABOUT----

PROVIDING THAT ATMOSPHERE.



- 14 -

EVEN THOUGH MY HUSBAND AND I
HAVE OFFICIALLY RETIRED FROM THE PTA,
WE ARE STILL VERY CONCERNED
ABOUT GOOD SCHOOLS.

OUR NATION'S FUTURE
DEPENDS UPON A SOUND EDUCATION
FOR OUR CHILDREN.

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WE COMMEND YOUR WORK
IN STRENGTHENING OUR SCHOOLS
AND THROUGH THEM OUR CHILDREN.

AND WE SHARE YOUR CONCERN
ABOUT SEEING THAT OUR SCHOOLS
ARE GOOD, SAFE PLACES
FOR OUR CHILDREN TO LEARN AND GROW.

Thank you very ^{END} much —

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 17, 1976

MRS. FORD:

Event: Reception for the Participants of the National Congress of PTA National Legislative Conference

Date/Time: February 18, 1976 3:30 p. m.

Place: State Floor

Number of Attendees: Approximately 180 guests

Principals: Mrs. Carol Kimmel, President, National PTA
Mrs. Grace Baisinger, First Vice President, National PTA
Mrs. Madelyn Wills, National Secretary, National PTA
Mrs. Jean Dye, Legislative Coordinator for the National PTA
Mrs. Ann Kahn, Chairman of Legislative Service Committee, National PTA

Schedule of Events:

3:30 p. m. Your guests will arrive by bus through the Southeast Gate and will enter the White House through the Diplomatic Reception Room. They will be escorted to the East Room.

3:40 p. m. After your guests have arrived, Maria Downs will escort you to the Grand Hall via elevator where you will meet the principals, Carol Kimmel, Grace Baisinger, Madelyn Wills, Jean Dye and Ann Kahn. You will pause for a photograph with them.

You will then proceed with the principals into the East Room to the small platform which will be located along the center of the east wall. You will make brief welcoming remarks. At the conclusion of your remarks, Mrs. Kimmel will present on behalf of the National

Reception for the Participants of
the National Congress of PTA
National Legislative Conference

Congress of PTA an Honorary National Life
Membership in the PTA to you.

NOTE: The presentation will include a
framed certificate and the National PTA
Life Membership Pin.

You will express appreciation for the Honorary
National Life Membership in the PTA and then
invite your guests to have refreshments in the
State Dining Room.

NOTE: Coffee, tea, tea sandwiches and
pastries will be served.

You will receive your guests from a position
just outside the main entrance to the State
Dining Room.

4:00 p. m.

You will bid farewell to your guests and
return to the Family Quarters.

NOTES:

A Military String Ensemble will be positioned
in the Grand Hall.

Social Aides will be present.

There will be full press coverage.

A White House photographer will be present.

Background information is attached.

Guest list is attached.

Pat Howard



N103

RW

MRS. FORD-PTA

WASHINGTON (AP) -- BETTY FORD, WHO ONCE BELONGED TO ~~OUR~~³ PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AT THE SAME TIME, ACCEPTED A LIFE-TIME MEMBERSHIP TODAY IN THE NATIONWIDE CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS. I ADDRESSING ABOUT 180 MEN AND WOMEN ATTENDING A PTA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE HERE, SHE SAID OF PRESIDENT FORD AND HERSELF:

"WE BOTH BENEFITED FROM THE PTA, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE YOU DON'T JUST SEND CHILDREN OFF TO SCHOOL, YOU HAVE TO GO WITH THEM AND SHARE THEIR WORLD.

"WE ARE A FAMILY THAT GETS INVOLVED IN EACH OTHER'S ACTIVITIES, AND WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE IN SCHOOL, THE PTA HELPED US SHARE THEIR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES." THE FORDS HAVE FOUR CHILDREN.

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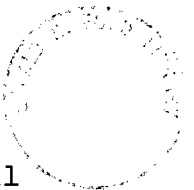
1st draft

Welcoming Remarks---Legislation Conference, National
Parent-Teachers Association

I am delighted to welcome you to the White House,
and I'm sure you'll enjoy ~~the~~ just browsing around
and looking at ^{these} ~~this~~ beautiful ^{rooms} ~~house~~ close up. This place
~~is~~ is just fascinating, because all of the living
that has gone on in these ~~in~~ walls give it ~~us~~ such a special
character. The more I live here, the more I ~~truly~~ understand
how the White House truly belongs to the American people,
because so much of our history is ~~wrapped~~ wrapped
up with this lovely old house.

Although I really don't know very many of you personally,
I feel like I do, because ~~there~~ I meet so many hard-working
dedicated ^{parents} parents just like you when my four children were
growing up. I've always believed the strength of an individual
school depends ~~on~~ upon the cooperation between parents and teachers.
Our ~~organization~~ organization, and I can say that as someone who was ~~once~~ once
a member of three different PTAs at once, is a very effective
instrument for communication and cooperation.

I understand you are here as participants in the National
Legislation Conference, and there are many areas where National
concern is very appropriate and very needed. But so often I think



the real secret of the PTA is what it does on the local level to foster a feeling of caring and involvement on the part of schools. I've known ^{many} ~~many~~ school principals and teachers ~~who believe that the success of schools~~ who felt that parent involvement was the key to producing happy and learning students.

Because the PTA provides a vehicle for this involvement, it is very important to the success of our schools. There are some ~~xxx~~ problems in our schools in many places now that require a great deal of parental concern, and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ your agenda for this conference shows you are aware of these problems.

Although my children have graduated, as a citizen I share your ~~x~~ concern about the quality of education, safety in our schools and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ what children need to know to survive in a changing world.

Few institutions have has much impact on America's future as our schools, and I commend your interest in schools as a very important way to contribute to tomorrow.

As a parent and one who has taught children dance, I am especially glad to have you here today.

AWARD OF HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

(Response)

There are times when because of this very unusual job I



have now I get recognition or an honor that really just falls to the person who happens to be married to the President---but you will understand when I say that I truly think I have earned a lifetime membership in the PTA. ~~Some~~ Somewhere between ~~the~~ ~~the~~ forth room mother Valentine ~~part~~ party and the three sets of ~~carpools~~ carpools is where I would say I can accept this very nice honor with a great deal of confidence. Thank you so much. I hope ~~you'll~~ you'll stay for some refreshments in the State Room---no Kool Aid but some cookies.



2nd draft / same page 2

Welcoming Remarks---National Legislation Conference, Congress
of Parents and Teachers

I'm delighted you could come to the White House, and I hope you'll enjoy browsing around these beautiful rooms as much as I do. Not long ago, I was visiting with some children. They wanted to know if I had seen any White House ghost. Well, I haven't, but I do feel the presence of the history that has been made here. History really is just the story of people, and so many of the important people of our past have lived or visited here. I hope you have that feeling too, because this house belongs to you and all of the American people.

I don't know many of you personally, but I feel like ~~y~~ I do. Maybe it's because we share a ~~common~~ love of children and a concern about their education. I've ~~met~~ met so many mothers and fathers like you in my many years in the PTA. At one point, I belonged to three separate PTAs, and I knew many dedicated parents and teachers working to make their schools good and happy learning places for children.

I've known many school principals and teachers who believed that parent involvement was the secret to a good school. The PTA gives parents a place to voice their interest and concern about their ~~children's~~ child's school.



I feel very strongly that the PTA is a very important organization not only to the school but the children as well. I have learned this with four children in school and belonging to the PTA for years^① and participating by attending meetings and receiving the benefit of the discussions of the problems that come before the school as well as being active in book fairs, helping out as room mother.

My husband had often spoken at PTA meetings on legislative problems that dealt with the school, so we both have always been active participants in PTA.^②

I found the PTA invaluable to me as a mother in giving me the opportunity to meet and work with the mothers of the children my children were attending school with. This was an opportunity that I perhaps would not have had if it were not for the PTA. My children's friends came from every race, religion, and ethnic background.

① Became involved in PTA in 1958 when Mike was in first grade and continued until Susan graduated in 1975.

② With my husband in Congress we were able to arrange educational trips to the Capitol annually.



WELCOMING REMARKS

NATIONAL LEGISLATION CONFERENCE, CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Yes I'm delighted you could come to the White House, and I hope you'll enjoy browsing around these beautiful rooms as much as I do. Not long ago, I was visiting with some children. They wanted to know if I had seen any White House ghost. Well, I haven't, but I do feel the presence of the history that has been made here. History really is just the story of people, and so many of the important people of our past have lived or visited here. I hope you have that feeling too, because this house belongs to you and all of the American people.

I don't know many of you personally, but I feel like I do.

Yes Maybe it's because we share a love of children and a concern about their education. I've met so many parents in my many years in the PTA. At one point, I belonged to three separate PTAs, and I knew many dedicated parents and teachers working to make their schools good and happy learning places for children.

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PTA--PAGE TWO

Schools are more than places where our children learn to read and write, they are also where they make their friends and form many of their values. Our family believes very strongly in talking to each other and being involved in each other's activities. When our children were growing up, we naturally wanted to know about their teachers and their friends, and I found the PTA was helpful to us as parents and important to our children.

You can't just send children off to school. You have to go with them and share their world. Learning can be so exciting. I've seen this in working with dance students. But unless the atmosphere is right, school can also be unpleasant.

Few institutions are as important to our Nation's future as our schools. I share your concern about some of the problems in our schools, because we all want a good education for our children in a safe place. Even though my children have graduated, I am very interested in schools and children.

I commend your involvement and your continued interest in strengthening our schools and through them our children.

END
OF OPENING REMARKS



PTA--PAGE THREE

AWARD OF HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

RESPONSE

There are times when because of this very unusual job I have now I get recognition or an honor that really just falls to the person who happens to be married to the President--but you will understand when I say that I truly think I have earned a lifetime membership in the PTA. Somewhere between the forth room mother's Valentine party and the three sets of carpools is where I would say I can accept this very nice honor with a great deal of confidence. Thank you so much. I hope you'll stay for some refreshments in the State Room--no Kool Aid but some cookies.

END



Kay

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Page Two

I feel very strongly the PTA is very important to the children as well as the school. I became involved with the PTA in 1958 when Mike was in the first grade and continued until Susan graduated last year. During those years, I found the PTA invaluable to me as a mother, because it gave me the opportunity to meet and work with the mothers of the children my children were going to school with.

My husband often spoke at the PTA on legislative problems that dealt with schools, and he arranged educational trips to the Capitol annually. We both benefited from the PTA, because we believe you don't just send children off to school, you have to go with them and share their world. We are a family that gets involved in each other's activities, and when the children were in school, the PTA helped us share their school experiences.

My children's friends came from every race, religious and ethnic background, and by being active in book fairs and as room mother, I got to know their friends. This was so important to me.

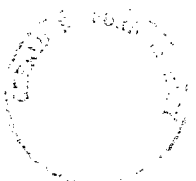
With my children and in teaching dance, I found learning can be so exciting, but the atmosphere has to be just right. To me, this is what the PTA is all about---providing that



atmosphere.

Even though my husband and I have officially retired, we are still very concerned about good schools. Our Nation's future really depends upon a sound education for our children. We commend your work in strengthening our schools and through them our children, and we share your concern about seeing *that* our schools are good, safe places for children to learn and grow.

The End



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