

The original documents are located in Box D21, folder “Scout Leaders, October 1966” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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GRV Remarks to Scout Leaders--

Good evening, friends. I certainly wish I could have been with you tonight but too many things are popping here in Washington as we begin winding up this session of Congress.

I'm proud to have been asked to talk to you Scouters of the Grand Valley Council. I have always felt there is really no young people's movement in the world that quite approaches the Boy Scouts. To have a vital role in a movement of that kind does give one a deep feeling of satisfaction, a sense of genuine accomplishment.

You are in on the ground floor of that character-building group -- providing the leadership that takes immature youths and makes real men of them. I can conceive of no finer service that you could render to God or to country.

You know, I myself was a Boy Scout. I reached Eagle rank, and I'm mighty proud of that. I also -- just last June -- was named an honorary member of the National Council. I did not accept this honor lightly, I have been thinking a lot about the Boy Scout movement, the increasing rate of crime in America and the upsurge of violence in this country.



It seems to me the steady rise in the crime rate, including juvenile delinquency, is a clear challenge to Scouting.

It's not enough to build men from nice boys. Let's send those nice boys out to round up boys from less fortunate homes, boys who don't really want to become Scouts or think it's sissy, but who might be prevailed upon to come to a Scout meeting. Every time you manage to save a potentially tough kid you reduce the juvenile delinquency statistics, make less work for the sergeant who handles the police blotter, and improve our community.

You already deserve the thanks of your friends and neighbors. You are doing and can do a great job. I perhaps should not suggest that you do more. But we need to teach boys a way of life that is truly American. You know what it means to dedicate your lives to a life of service -- service to your country and to your fellowman. That's the stuff of which great Americans are made.

Many of the finest men this nation has ever produced grew up in the Scout movement. True to the principles of Scouting, they never



shirked responsibility. They were never found wanting when their country needed them. That's the kind of folks we find in the Grand Valley Council. Keep up the good work.

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