

The original documents are located in Box 27, “4/2/76 - Presidential Remarks at Public Forum in West Bend, Wisconsin” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT PUBLIC FORUM

IN WEST BEND, WISCONSIN

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 1976

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PUBLIC FORUM

- THANK YOU, WARREN. (Governor Knowles introduces you.)
- CONGRESSMAN BILL STEIGER
- MY OLD FRIEND AND FORMER COLLEAGUE, MEL LAIRD
- MAYORS SCHOENHAAR (WEST BEND) AND LIEVEN (HARTFORD)
- DR. STEINERT (Superintendent of Schools)
- STUDENTS, FACULTY AND GUESTS OF THE WEST BEND EAST "SUNS"
AND THE WEST BEND WEST "SPARTANS"

IT'S A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE BACK IN WISCONSIN,

AND TO VISIT A SCHOOL WHERE EAST MEETS WEST RIGHT HERE IN THE

GYM.

LET ME FIRST OF ALL PAY MY RESPECTS TO THE SUNS

AND THE SPARTANS OF WEST BEND.

AND ESPECIALLY LET ME THANK THE GIRLS' TRACK TEAM FOR LETTING

US BORROW THE GYM TODAY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT

YOUR PRACTICE, / BUT I'M TRYING TO GET IN SHAPE FOR A BIG RACE

IN NOVEMBER, AND I APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION.

THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT CAN BE SUMMED UP IN

JUST A FEW WORDS.

AS MUCH AS I BELIEVE IN A STRONG AND

PROSPEROUS AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

-- I'M HERE TO SAY

THAT THIS YEAR

-- THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO TRADE

IN YOUR FORD

ON ANOTHER MODEL.

specially that hasn't

been road tested

AFTER A FEW BRIEF INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, I LOOK

FORWARD TO ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS. AT THE OUTSET,

LET ME CONGRATULATE ALL OF YOU TONIGHT FOR YOUR REMARKABLE

RECOVERY FROM THE RECENT ICE-STORMS.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THINGS ARE GETTING BACK TO
NORMAL NOW, AND I COMMEND YOU FOR THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT
THAT WAS SO IMPORTANT UNDER THESE VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

AFTER SOME PRETTY STORMY WEATHER IN RECENT YEARS,

IT'S GOOD TO SEE THAT AMERICA IS GETTING BACK TO NORMAL TOO.

ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, WE ARE STEADILY WORKING

OUR WAY OUT OF THE WORST RECESSION IN 40 YEARS●

I WON'T BURDEN YOU WITH A LOT OF STATISTICS

TONIGHT, BUT I CAN REPORT THAT ALL THE ECONOMIC TRENDS

ARE GOOD●

EVERYTHING THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE GOING UP --

LIKE THE NUMBER OF JOBS IN AMERICA, REAL EARNINGS FOR THE

AMERICAN WORKER, SALES, INVESTMENTS, INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION --

ALL OF THESE ARE ON THE INCREASE.●

AND EVERYTHING THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE GOING DOWN --

LIKE THE RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT, THE RATE OF INFLATION, THE RATE
OF GROWTH IN FEDERAL SPENDING, EVEN SOME PRICES -- ARE

GOING DOWN.

JUST TWO DAYS AGO, IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE

WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX HAS SHOWN VIRTUALLY NO UPWARD

MOVEMENT OVERALL IN THE LAST FIVE MONTHS. ~~THIS IS ONLY~~

~~ONE OF THE MANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD ECONOMIC NEWS FOR~~

~~AMERICA.~~

TONIGHT I CAN SAY TO YOU WITH CONFIDENCE AND

WITHOUT HESITATION: WE ARE ON THE ROAD TO A NEW PROSPERITY

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO BE

SIDE-TRACKED NOW.

THE BEST THING ABOUT THIS NEW PROSPERITY IS THAT

IT IS BASED NOT ON THE SHIFTING SANDS OF POLITICAL MANEUVERING

AND GOVERNMENT GIMMICKS, BUT ON THE SOLID, PERMANENT

FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAN FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM.●

THERE WAS A LOT OF PRESSURE ON ME AT THE

BEGINNING OF THE RECESSION TO TAKE SOME PANIC ACTIONS THAT

SOUNDED GOOD BUT HAVE NEVER WORKED IN THE PAST.

SOME VERY DISTINGUISHED ECONOMISTS, AND SOME

VERY CONCERNED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, | URGED ME TO IMPOSE

WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS ON THE AMERICAN ECONOMY.

OTHERS URGED ME TO PROPOSE MASSIVE NEW FEDERAL
SPENDING AS A STIMULUS TO THE ECONOMY, / REGARDLESS OF
WHETHER WE COULD REALLY AFFORD THAT SPENDING OR NOT.

I REJECTED BOTH OF THOSE SUGGESTIONS, AND ALL
THE OTHER SUGGESTIONS THAT WERE THE WRONG MEDICINE FOR THE
AMERICAN ECONOMY.

THE STRONG ECONOMIC RECOVERY WE ARE EXPERIENCING

TODAY HAS PROVED ME RIGHT IN REJECTING THEM•

MOST OF YOU REMEMBER THE WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS

THAT WERE IMPOSED BACK IN 1971 AND 1972• SO MUCH

PRESSURE WAS BUILT UP UNDER THAT WAGE AND PRICE LID / THAT

WHEN THE CONTROLS WERE REMOVED, THE ECONOMY SIMPLY GOT OUT

OF CONTROL•

THE RATE OF INFLATION GOT UP TO MORE THAN

12 PERCENT AT ONE POINT, AND THAT ~~+~~ COMBINED WITH THE

ARAB OIL EMBARGO IN 1973 -- HELPED TRIGGER THE RECESSION

WE'RE JUST NOW RECOVERING FROM.

THE OTHER POPULAR PROPOSAL WAS THAT WE SPEND

hard earned taxpayers

ALL KINDS OF MONEY TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY, AND PUT HUNDREDS

OF THOUSANDS MORE PEOPLE ON THE GOVERNMENT PAYROLL.

BUT I KNEW THAT YOU CAN'T SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM
IN THE WORLD JUST BY THROWING MONEY AT IT, / AND I WAS
DETERMINED NOT TO RISK A NEW ROUND OF DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION
AS THE CURE FOR THE RECESSION.

IN FACT, OVER THE LAST 19 MONTHS, I HAVE VETOED
46 BILLS SENT TO ME BY THE CONGRESS, / AND THEY TELL ME
THAT'S SOME KIND OF A RECORD.

BUT THE REALLY IMPORTANT RECORD IS THIS:

WE WERE ABLE TO SUSTAIN 39 OF THOSE VETOES, AND WITHOUT
THREATENING OR WEAKENING OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN ANY WAY,
THOSE VETOES WILL SAVE YOU 13 BILLION DOLLARS•

COMMON SENSE TOLD ME THAT THE RIGHT COURSE

TO PURSUE TOWARD ECONOMIC RECOVERY WAS TO STIMULATE THE
GROWTH AND RESTORE THE STRENGTH OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR•

SO I PROPOSED -- AND THE CONGRESS ACCEPTED --

A MAJOR TAX CUT FOR INDIVIDUALS TO INCREASE THEIR PURCHASING
POWER.

I PROPOSED TAX INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS EXPANSION

AND JOB PRODUCTION IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- WHERE FIVE

OUT OF EVERY SIX JOBS ARE FOUND IN AMERICA.

AND I PROPOSED EXTENDED ASSISTANCE TO THOSE
AMERICANS WHO HAD LOST THEIR JOBS TO THE RECESSION, / TO HELP
BEAR THE BURDEN UNTIL OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY WAS REVIVED AND
ITS STRENGTH RECOVERED.

THESE WERE COMMON SENSE POLICIES.
AND THEY WORKED. LAST MONTH
IT WAS REPORTED THAT ALL OF THE
JOBS AMERICA LOST DURING THE RECESSION
HAD BEEN RECOVERED.

AND JUST THIS MORNING IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN WASHINGTON THAT WE GAINED 375 THOUSAND MORE JOBS IN THE MONTH OF MARCH ALONE.

TODAY 86.7 MILLION AMERICANS ARE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED -- THE MOST EVER EMPLOYED IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY -- AND I'D SAY THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD COME-BACK.

THE EVIDENCE IS UNMISTAKABLE.

THESE ECONOMIC

INDICATORS ARE NOT POLITICAL FICTION.

THEY ARE HARD

ECONOMIC FACTS.

THE PROSPECT OF PROSPERITY APPARENTLY DIDN'T FIT

INTO SOME POLITICIANS' PLANS THIS YEAR, BUT THAT'S JUST

TOO BAD.

As prophets of gloom, ⁻²³⁻ rubbing their hands in glee
THEY CAN DENY THE EVIDENCE ALL THEY WANT TO,

BUT YOU AND I ARE HAPPY TO SEE AMERICA BACK ON THE ROAD TO
PROSPERITY, AND THOSE OTHER FELLOWS HAD BETTER JUST MAKE
SOME OTHER PLANS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

THE SUCCESS OF THESE ECONOMIC POLICIES PROVE
ONCE AGAIN THAT IT DOESN'T TAKE A HUGE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY
TO SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM IN AMERICA.

IN FACT, PILING ONE BUREAUCRACY ON TOP OF ANOTHER
HAS BEEN THE SOURCE OF MANY OF THE PROBLEMS WE'VE BEEN
EXPERIENCING IN AMERICA.

WE MUST NEVER FORGET ONE VERY FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH:

THAT A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE US EVERYTHING WE WANT
IS A GOVERNMENT BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE FROM US EVERYTHING WE HAVE.

TO HELP GUARD AGAINST THAT DANGER OF EVER-INCREASING

CONTROL BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, I HAVE PROPOSED A FIVE-YEAR,

NINE-MONTH EXTENSION OF THE GENERAL REVENUE SHARING PROGRAM

THAT HAS WORKED SO WELL FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

IF THERE'S ONE THING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS

GOOD AT, IT'S COLLECTING TAXES -- AS YOU WILL LEARN ONCE

AGAIN IN 13 DAYS.

IF THERE'S ONE THING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS
TERRIBLE AT, IT'S TRYING TO DECIDE THE BEST LOCAL SOLUTION
TO A LOCAL PROBLEM•

THAT RESPONSIBILITY QUITE CLEARLY SHOULD REST --
WITH YOUR OWN LOCAL OFFICIALS•

SO THE CONCEPT OF REVENUE SHARING IS TO LET
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COLLECT THE MONEY, AND THEN GIVE IT BACK
TO LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS TO SPEND AS THEY SEE FIT,

Under your watchful eye.

IT'S KIND OF A HOMETOWN "DO-IT-YOURSELF" PROJECT,

AND IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, WEST BEND AND WASHINGTON COUNTY

AND THE STATE OF WISCONSIN / HAVE PROVEN THAT YOU CAN DO IT

YOURSELF A LOT BETTER THAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN,

AND I CONGRATULATE YOU FOR IT.

- 29 -

UNDER MY PROPOSAL FOR THE EXTENSION
OF REVENUE SHARING:

WEST BEND WOULD GET MORE THAN
2.1 MILLION DOLLARS --

WASHINGTON COUNTY, INCLUDING WEST BEND,
WOULD GET 8 MILLION DOLLARS --

AND THE ENTIRE STATE OF WISCONSIN
WOULD GET MORE THAN ONE BILLION
DOLLARS OVER THE NEXT FIVE AND
THREE-QUARTER YEARS.

YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT THE TOTAL COST
OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE REVENUE
SHARING PROGRAM IS ONLY TWELVE-HUNDREDTHS OF ONE PERCENT
OF ALL THE MONEY IN THE PROGRAM. OR TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY,
THAT'S ONE-EIGHTH OF A PENNY OF EVERY DOLLAR SPENT IN THE
PROGRAM.

THAT'S WHAT I CALL HOLDING BUREAUCRACY TO A
MINIMUM, AND I INTEND TO SEE THAT TREND ENCOURAGED IN OTHER
FEDERAL PROGRAMS IN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

SOME PEOPLE IN THIS ELECTION YEAR HAVE BEEN

SUGGESTING THAT, ~~[TO GET RID OF SOME OF THE WASHINGTON~~

~~BUREAUCRACY,~~] WE OUGHT TO DUMP 90 BILLION DOLLARS WORTH

OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS IN THE LAPS OF STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

TO COPE WITH AS THEY CAN -- EVEN IF IT MEANS RAISING TAXES. ^{local}

or eliminating local problems.

↑

WE HAVEN'T HEARD THAT 90 BILLION DOLLAR FIGURE

LATELY, BUT WE HAVEN'T HEARD OF THAT PROPOSAL BEING

ABANDONED YET, EITHER.

ALL OF US KNOW THAT THERE ARE SOME VERY LEGITIMATE

ACTIVITIES THAT GOVERNMENT MUST BE INVOLVED IN -- NATIONAL

DEFENSE, SOCIAL SECURITY, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, TO NAME ONLY A FEW.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD

DO WHAT IT HAS TO DO BETTER, MORE EFFECTIVELY, AND MORE
EFFICIENTLY THAN IT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST.

BUT AS I TOLD SOME OF YOUR NEIGHBORS OVER IN

LA CROSSE LAST WEEKEND, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT GOVERNMENT
IS ALWAYS THE SERVANT - AND NEVER THE MASTER -- OF THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE.

OUR PEOPLE HAVE MADE TREMENDOUS PROGRESS

IN THE LAST 200 YEARS.

NO OTHER NATION ON EARTH CAN MATCH THE COMBINED

ECONOMIC, AGRICULTURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, MILITARY AND

MORAL STRENGTH OF AMERICA.

WE'RE NUMBER ONE IN THE WORLD, AND WE'RE GOING

TO KEEP IT THAT WAY IN THE YEARS AHEAD -- ~~I CAN PROMISE YOU~~

~~THAT.~~

WE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN A GREAT MANY

FIELDS DURING THE 19 MONTHS I HAVE HAD THE HONOR TO SERVE

AS YOUR PRESIDENT.

THERE IS MORE TO BE DONE, AND THAT IS WHY I AM
ASKING FOR YOUR SUPPORT NEXT TUESDAY, NEXT NOVEMBER, AND
IN THE CHALLENGING YEARS AHEAD.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

NOW I WOULD BE HAPPY TO RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT