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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

DRESS REGIONAL AIRPORT

9:03 A.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor.

I am not a stranger to Evansville. I have been here two or three times before and it is great to come back, and I appreciate very, very much this thoughtful mug that epitomizes freedom of speech -- and we have got a lot of that these days -- but it is nice to be here and I thank you, Mr. Mayor, as well as all the people of Evansville.

I would be glad to answer any questions from any of the local news media.

QUESTION: Mr. President, a month ago your State campaign manager said you would not be coming to Indiana because of the lead that you had in this State, but here you are, just before the primary. Has there been a change in strategy or a re-evaluation of the lead?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I decided that because I had such good leadership here in Indiana and so many friends that I wanted to come to Indiana and to make sure that I supported them as they have supported me, and because we think Indiana is a crucial State I am here and I have had a wonderful trip so far.

QUESTION: Mr. President, there have been some charges locally that inequity exists in the funding of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and even some Indiana officials have suggested that the HUD program be dropped. I would like to know your feelings on this.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think the Community Development Program which was approved in late 1974 is a program that is aimed at holding harmless every local community that had been previously the beneficiary of seven categorical grant programs, and so under the program that I approved -- and we are funding every city, regardless of where it is -- it is held harmless. That includes those of Indiana.

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So these programs, in my opinion we have gotten rid of the seven categorical grant programs and have turned to what we call block grant programs that are much more economical, much more effective, and it gives to the Mayor here in Evansville and his associates in local government a lot more authority to make the decision.

So as long as the money is the same or more, I think the programs ought to be continued.

QUESTION: Mr. President, if the Federal revenue sharing funds are cut, as you propose, Evansville will be hurt. How can you justify that?

THE PRESIDENT: Under no circumstances have I advocated the reduction in revenue sharing. I have advocated a 5-3/4-year extension of revenue sharing with more money to go in the general revenue sharing program each year.

We believe that in the State of Indiana, which includes the State as well as the local units of government, have gotten around \$550 million, and under the program that I have recommended, and if the Congress approved it, it would go up to something like \$800 million, \$850 million for the next 5-3/4 years.

So I believe in the general revenue sharing program and I have actually recommended the increase in funding for general revenue sharing. If we can only get the Congress to do something instead of sitting on its hands, we would have general revenue sharing on the statute books for another 5-3/4 years right now.

QUESTION: Mr. President, you said yesterday that with some help you would like to balance the Federal budget within three years. How do you propose to do this?

THE PRESIDENT: We propose to balance the Federal budget by doing two things: Number one, cutting the rate in growth of Federal funding from 11 percent per year, as it has been for the last 10 years, to a 5-1/2 percent rate of increase in growth and, at the same time, we would stimulate the domestic economy by giving additional tax cuts to taxpayers whether they are individuals or businesses. That is the way to get more people in the United States to spend more money of their own, to increase consumer expenditures and to give more money to business so they can expand and modernize and provide more jobs, and in that way we can balance the Federal budget in three years and increase the strength of our economy in America.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. It is good to see you.

Typical Evansville weather.

Nice to be here. Thank you.

END (AT 9:08 A.M. CST)