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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

THE SHERATON INN

8:09 A.M. CDT

Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairman, all of the wonderful workers here in this Eastern part of Texas:

It is nice to be in the rose capital of the world, and I guess there are a few people here from Marshall, so I ought to recognize them. It is wonderful to be here, and when we arrived rather late last night, there was a tremendous crowd. You could feel the hospitality and it is delightful to see such a big turnout here this morning, just about 96 hours before countdown begins. (Laughter)

In the meantime, we have the outstanding leadership of John Tower here in the State of Texas to give all of the volunteer workers like yourselves an opportunity to go out and do what all of us can to make sure that when the polls close on Saturday, that we will do very well. I get a feeling that although we may be the underdog, we can win on Saturday if we all do the job.

As I met all of you, I ran into several county chairmen. I know a little bit about working in the precincts and working in an organization, and I thank all of the people who have over the years undertaken those responsibilities because that is the hard, almost unrecognized area for people who believe in a philosophy, who believe in a person, so I thank those who have done this in the past and who are doing it at the present time.

What I would like to do this morning is just give you some selling points as you talk to your friends, as you talk to those people who you call from the phone banks or from your own residence, as you do the other things that are awfully necessary and essential between now and Saturday. First, if you go back just 20 or 21 months and find where we were at the time I became President, we were in a period of inflation of 12 to 14 percent. We have cut that so that for the first three months of this year it is under 3 percent, and that is progress by any standard.

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Shortly after I became President, we fell down into the worst economic recession this country has had for 40 years. There were many quick fixes in the Congress. Not John Tower. (Laughter) He had a lot more sense than that, but anyhow, there were those that told us we should load up the Federal payroll, that we should just spend money like the machines couldn't run fast enough.

We decided there was a faster course that said the best way to solve our economic problem was to get the private sector of America to provide the jobs. That is where five out of six jobs in this country are anyhow.

So, we didn't panic. We had a steady, we had a constructive course, and the net result is from the depths of the depression -- or recession, I should say -- about 12 months ago, we have added 2,600,000 jobs in America, and we now have more people employed in the United States today than in the history of the country. That is a good program.

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Now I have heard from some of my Democratic friends that they are claiming credit for all this progress. (Laughter) Well, I think this Administration, with my leadership and with the help of people like John Tower, we have had the right course and we can claim credit for the significant success in reducing inflation and adding to employment. Let me say that those policies that we are undertaking will continue in the future.

Some allegations have been made by people who don't know the record that President Ford can't be decisive. Let me give you a few illustrations.

Number one, in dealing with the Congress where there is a Democratic majority two to one, I vetoed 48 bills. Thirty-nine have been sustained by the House or the Senate and the net result is we have saved \$13 billion as far as the Federal Treasury is concerned, and that is progress. I think that is courageous, that is correct action.

But let's take some other areas where controversy swirled at the time we were faced in the Oval Office with the question whether to sign a bill or to veto a bill. One of the most controversial bills that came on my desk in this 20-, 21-month period was the so-called common situs picketing bill. The people who were for it were arguing very persuasively; the people who were against it were arguing very persuasively. But I decided in the national interest it should be vetoed and it was vetoed.

And then sometimes people say that President Ford won't face up to an issue, that he won't be decisive. Well, let me just let your memory go back to some time in May, 1975. We were faced with the decision as to whether or not we should take decisive action when an American cargo ship was seized by the Cambodians. What did we do? We took decisive action and the MAYAGUEZ was gotten back. I think that is indicative of the strength and courage and the right action I can take in this office.

What I am saying is we have done a good job in getting the economy of this country on the right track. We are doing a good job in trying to restore confidence in the White House and I think we have done that. We are making a major effort in all the 30-some States where there are primaries and we have done reasonably well. We won five out of six and yesterday we got virtually all of the delegates in Pennsylvania, something over 100, so that is an indication that we will go into every primary and we will take on our opponent in all cases.

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We don't pick and choose. We say it ought to be up to all of the people to make a decision. And we went into Pennsylvania -- our opponent didn't -- we came out with 100-plus delegates.

Now let me just say this: I am down here for the second time. We are going to spend about 16 or 18 hours a day trying to make sure that the policies we believe in are sound, both at home and abroad.

Betty was down last week and she had a great time. She enjoyed herself. I am sure she made a few converts. She would have liked to have been here with me today, but we sort of have to spread the family around.

Jack was down here a week or two ago and was down, I think, Monday and Tuesday of this week.

What I am saying is that our closely knit family are doing all that we can to make sure that the policies that we stand for will be the policies of this country for the next four years. I think they can, and we are out to campaign between now and the convention day after day because we think it is important that the philosophy that the Republican Party represents holds the White House for the next four years.

I know I can be elected. With your help, with your assistance, we can do a job and we can do the kind of a job between now and Saturday that will surprise some of our opponents. Wouldn't that be a great day? (Laughter)

I thank the people who are running for delegate. I will do all I can to make sure that they individually are elected on Saturday.

Let me thank all of you who are doing the hard work, whether it is at a phone bank or in the headquarters or raising money or selling our platform and our program to your neighbors, to your friends and to any others.

Betty and the Ford children and I are deeply grateful. You are doing a great, great job and I can't thank you adequately for your sacrifice and your efforts. We are just very appreciative.

It is nice to see you and we look forward to seeing you in Washington some time in the next four years.

Bye.

END (AT 8:19 A.M. CDT)