

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
MAIN POST OFFICE

2:05 P.M. CDT

Thank you very, very much, Congressman Trent Lott, Congressman Thad Cochran, Mayor Lang, Mayor Maxwell, Mayor Sucier -- that's not bad, is it? (Laughter)

It is wonderful to be here in the great State of Mississippi. It is just so encouraging and wonderful to be here in the City of Gulfport. But I want to remind you of one thing. At the Convention in Kansas City, I said we would not concede a single State. I said we would not concede a single vote. I said we would campaign from the snowy banks of Minnesota to the sunny plains of Georgia.

We had a wonderful day in Louisiana. It has been tremendous in Mississippi, it will be good in Alabama, and it will be good in Florida. We want to win.

Let me express my deep appreciation to Trent Lott and Thad Cochran. They are outstanding Members of the Congress. Send them back. We need them, and you need them.

Let me say to Mayor Lang, I will tell you this is a tremendous welcome and I appreciate your help and the help of the other local officials.

Let me take just a minute to speak about the things that concern all of us. If you will refresh your memory, two years ago, this country was in trouble. We were divided. There had been a great loss of trust in the American people and their Government, and in the White House. There had been a tremendous adverse impact because inflation was over 12 percent. We were on the brink of the worst recession in 40 years. We had still an involvement in Southeast Asia. It was not a very good time for America.

But I found that the character of the American people, the kind of Government we have, has given us a chance to turn the ship of State around and in the last two years, we have made incredible progress, and we should be proud of it.

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But the progress we have made is not enough. What we have to do is move from where we are to a better opportunity, more progress, and as I travel around the country, I find that America is on the upbeat. We have restored trust in the White House. We have turned our economy around. Instead of 12 percent inflation, we are down to under 6 percent, and we are going to do better and better.

But the way to whip inflation is not to add more Federal spending. The way to whip inflation is to keep the cost of Government down and you will keep the rate of inflation down.

One way I have found that we can hold the lid on Federal spending is to veto some of that bad legislation that the Congress sends up to the White House -- as a matter of fact, they have sent 58 bills to the Oval office. We have vetoed them. Forty-two have been sustained, but in the process, we have saved the taxpayers of this country \$10 billion. That is progress.

What we want to do is to keep the rate of spending down so that we can give more tax relief to the taxpayers of this country. The best way for America to move ahead is for you, the individual citizens who have worked hard in your factories, or in your port, or in your schools, or in the farms around here -- the best way for you to make headway is to have that money that you have earned in your pocket and not for some bureaucrat to spend in Washington, D.C.

But as we move ahead, what we want, among many other things, is to have all of you to have a greater opportunity for recreation. As I have traveled from New Orleans to here this morning, I have seen some of the wonderful places where you are the beneficiaries of fishing and hunting. Speaking of hunting, let me just make a comment. The law-abiding citizens of this country should not be deprived of the right to have firearms for their own protection, and if you want to go hunting, you should not have to go down and register your firearms with some Federal official.

As I drove in, I saw this wonderful Seabee unit out there giving me a warm welcome. I want to congratulate them for the superb job that they have done, not only in their Navy capacity, but in doing everything they possibly could following Hurricane Camille.

But speaking of national defense, this is where an area of decided difference exists between me and my opponent. In the two years that I have been President, I have submitted to the Congress the two largest defense budgets in the history of the United States. We had to do it because Congress had slashed our defense budgets. In the last 10 years, by an accumulated total of \$50 billion, we have turned it around. My opponent wants to cut the Defense Department budget by 5 to \$7 billion. That would be disastrous. We need to keep America number one and under a Ford Administration, we will.

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You don't stand up to the pressures around the world by having less power, you need more power, and we are going to keep it that way.

One final comment. I know all of you here in Gulfport celebrated, like other people did all over the United States on the 4th of July, our 200th birthday. I was privileged to travel to a few States and to see literally thousands and thousands and thousands of people. It was the most inspiring day that I have ever spent in my life because I found that the divisiveness that we had had in America over the last 10 years had been healed. The people from all walks of life were getting together celebrating America's 200th birthday -- a great, great occasion, but we are going to keep that upbeat moving.

We have to work together in the future to make America a better place for our children and our grandchildren. It is an opportunity for all of us in Mississippi and Michigan, Alaska and Florida, New York and California, to give to us, and mainly to our children and grandchildren, the kind of America that we inherited, but a better America. We will, and we will do it in the next four years and during the next 100 years.

I thank all of you for coming out here today. It is just wonderful.

Can I ask something else of you? On November 2nd, are you going to support Jerry Ford?

Thank you, and we won't let you down. It is wonderful to be here. Thank you very much.

END (AT 2:13 P.M. CDT)