

The original documents are located in Box 7, folder “4/8/75 - "Close Up" Groups” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *dy*

"CLOSE UP" GROUPS

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 1975

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TODAY TO WELCOME YOU
TO THE WHITE HOUSE, NOT JUST BECAUSE SO MANY OF YOU
COME FROM MY OWN HOME TOWN -- AS WELL AS FROM ATLANTA,
ONE OF MY FAVORITE CITIES -- BUT BECAUSE YOUR PRESENCE HERE
TELLS ME SOMETHING REASSURING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

YOUR COMMITMENT, YOUR IDEALISM, YOUR INVOLVEMENT
CAN HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.
AND THAT FUTURE WILL BE SHAPED FOR THE BETTER OR WORSE BY YOU
AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO HAVE THE WILL AND THE
WISDOM TO BECOME INVOLVED IN AMERICA.

SOME OF YOU, I UNDERSTAND, WORKED HARD
TO HELP RAISE THE MONEY FOR YOUR TRIP HERE -- AND THAT,
TOO, IS VERY MUCH IN THE TRADITION OF THIS COUNTRY.
I COMMEND YOUR INGENUITY AND YOUR EFFORTS.

FROM WHAT I KNOW OF THE CLOSE UP PROGRAM,
IT IS JUST THAT -- YOU WANT TO GET CLOSE UP TO WHERE THE
ACTION IS IN WASHINGTON AND CLOSE UP TO THE MEN AND WOMEN
WHO BEAR THE DAY-BY-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS GREAT
ONGOING EFFORT IN SELF-GOVERNMENT.

ONE RESPONSIBILITY I AM PRESENTLY CONCERNED WITH
IS UNEMPLOYMENT -- PARTICULARLY JOBS FOR TEENAGERS,
AND ESPECIALLY SUMMER JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

AS YOU MAY KNOW, I HAVE SENT TO THE CONGRESS
A REQUEST FOR ONE POINT SIX BILLION DOLLARS FOR EXPANDED
PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT, AND FOR AN ADDITIONAL
FOUR HUNDRED AND TWELVE MILLION DOLLARS TO HELP STATE AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HIRE YOUNG PEOPLE THIS SUMMER.
I AM HOPEFUL THE CONGRESS WILL COOPERATE IN THIS EFFORT.

WITHOUT QUESTION, YOU HAVE THE LARGEST STAKE
OF ANY AGE GROUP IN THE FUTURE OF THIS NATION. YOU HAVE
THE POWER TO AFFECT ELECTIONS, TO ALTER THE BASIC COURSE
OF OUR GOVERNMENT, AND LITERALLY TO RESHAPE THE AMERICA
OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AND OF THE LAST QUARTER OF THE
PRESENT CENTURY.

I HAVE SAID -- AND I REPEAT IT NOW --

THAT WE NEED MORE, NOT FEWER, YOUNG IDEALISTS AND
ENTHUSIASTS LIKE YOU TO DEVELOP THE BEST POSSIBLE FUTURE
FOR THIS COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

EACH ONE OF YOU -- AND ALL OF YOU TOGETHER --
CONSTITUTE A RINGING DENIAL OF THE TWO WORDS UTTERED HERE
IN 1973 BY A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS ASKED WHAT ADVICE HE
WOULD GIVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY ABOUT GETTING
INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT OR POLITICS. HE SAID: "STAY AWAY."

AS PRESIDENT, AS A CITIZEN, AND AS A FATHER,
I AM DELIGHTED YOU ARE TAKING THE OTHER COURSE, DECIDING
TO GET INVOLVED CLOSE UP IN OUR GOVERNMENT AND IN OUR
POLITICAL SYSTEM.

I WELCOME YOU TO THIS HISTORIC HOUSE WITH
ALL MY HEART. I HOPE EACH OF YOU WILL REMEMBER
YOUR WEEK IN THE CAPITAL AS A REALLY IMPORTANT PART OF
YOUR PREPARATION FOR LIFE BEYOND YOUR SCHOOL YEARS.

AND NOW, IF YOU WOULD LIKE, I WILL TRY
TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT WANT TO RAISE.

END OF TEXT