

OCTOBER 22, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Cleveland, Ohio)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO A
GOP FUNDRAISING DINNER

Before I begin, I want to extend my sincere thanks to Virginia Coy for creating this marvelous button for tonight. It says: "President Gerald R. Ford -- Model A-1 Ford!" That's very kind. Because if you remember the Model A Ford, it was brand-new, economical, dependable, uncomplicated, and it got us to where we wanted to go. And that's exactly the kind of Ford I want to be!

Virginia and Frank Coy, let me thank you for this wonderful tribute!

You know, it was such a warm, personal touch for Bud Humphrey to introduce me tonight. Bud was a quarterback on the Yale football team while I was the line coach there. And believe me, Bud was really one of Yale's brightest stars. And as I listened to his words tonight, it's evident he still knows how to carry the ball!

Then again, Ohio Republicans have always had a reputation for carrying the ball and winning. All you have to do is look at Ohio's Republican team in the Congress. You just can't argue with the scoreboard! And come November 5th, we're going to keep it that way!

I understand that the prospects are good for changes in the State House of Representatives and the Governor's Office in Columbus. I know some people in Ohio are trying to count Jim Rhodes out. I count him in. And I know you can count on him as your next governor.

Candidates with proven experience in conducting the affairs of the public are far too scarce. You might say that Jim Rhodes is the Cornelius Green of politics. He also knows how to carry the ball and score.

Ralph Perk is another great team player who deserves to be elected the next United States Senator from this State. As an outstanding mayor, he will be an equally outstanding Senator. I urge you to send him to Washington to help me in the biggest economic battle we have ever waged in this country -- the one against Public Enemy No. 1.

Ohio has consistently done its part in providing the Nation with effective leadership in the Congress, with dedicated, hard-working and honest legislators -- the kind who will vote in Washington like they talk in Ohio.

I know Ralph Perk will follow in this tradition. In fact, I wish there were a chamberful of Senators like him and like Bob Taft in Washington. Bob continues the magnificent tradition of his great Ohio family and we need more like him. I wish we had a houseful of Congressmen like Chuck Mosher of Oberlin and Bill Stanton of Painesville, who are with us here tonight, and like my other outstanding former colleagues in the House of Representatives -- Del Latta, Sam Devine, Don Clancy, John Ashbrook, Bill Harsha, Bud Brown, Chuck Whalen, Chalmers Wylie, Clarence Miller, Ralph Regula and Tenny Guyer.

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I urge you to also elect your four Republican challengers for Congress from this area -- all of whom will be welcome additions to the Nation's Capital. Let's send George Mastics, Bill Franz, Bill Mack and Bob Franz to Washington, along with the other good Republicans running for the U.S. House across the state.

The battle for the Ohio General Assembly is a tight one. I am advised we have a good chance to win the State House of Representatives and to preserve and even increase our majority in the State Senate. We can do it by re-electing such effective Cleveland area Senators as Tom Cortts, Paul Matia and Charlie Bolton, the son and grandson of my dear friends and former colleagues, the late Ollie Bolton and Mrs. Frances Bolton.

These are Ohioans who are responsive to the needs of the public. They are the kind of problem-solvers the Republican Party is proud to support and work to elect. I urge you to do so!

I understand that some people have lately been saying that my speeches are getting partisan -- that I am using the word "Republican." Well, they are right!

I admit to being relatively restrained so far in this campaign.

"There is, however, a limit at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue," as the great English Parliamentarian Edmund Burke once observed. We are now close to that point.

I want the voting public to know precisely what I am saying so there is no danger of misunderstanding. The message is this: Inflation is the chief problem we face in this country and throughout the free world. But rising prices and interest rates in America will not be stopped by a free-spending Congress. This Congress is controlled by the Democratic Party -- and has been for 38 out of the last 42 years and for the past 20 consecutive years. Now some elements in the Democratic Party seem to seek more than majority control. They want downright domination. They want -- and have said so openly -- to elect a "veto-proof Congress" -- one which has the overwhelming numbers to override any Presidential veto. In my view, that would be tantamount to a legislative dictatorship in this country.

If that happens, ladies and gentlemen, buckle your seat belts -- it's going to make the inflation rate look like it's tied to the Moon Shot.

A recent Gallup Poll indicates that a majority of the American people blame big-Government spending for the rampant inflation we are now experiencing.

If that is true, I am challenging the American people tonight to follow through on their belief -- to make their votes consistent with their views, to elect to the Congress men and women who are committed to curbing Federal spending and to checking inflation.

To quote Edmund Burke again:

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." That saying applies to the electorate in general and to Republicans in particular.

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The word is out -- it has even reached Washington -- Ohio Republicans are not going to vote this year. They are turned off by politics. They are going to sit this one out. I frankly do not believe it. That kind of an attitude is akin to setting fire to your house to keep warm.

I call on Republicans in Ohio and in the rest of the country to turn out to vote on November 5th like you never have before. Confound the doom sayers. Fool the pessimistic pollsters.

I also urge you to work as you never have before for the candidates you believe in. Work on those thoughtful Independents and wise Democrats who believe as you do or are at least sufficiently open to be convinced. Work at preserving the two party system in this country which has helped provide us with nearly two centuries of freedom and stability unlike anything seen on this earth before.

Without question, apathy is the chief villain in the American political scene. Some people seem to think it just happened this year. I suggest that the statistics have been reflecting it since 1960.

For example, take the national percentages of votes cast in Congressional off-year elections like this one coming up. Based on the total number of eligible voters, only 46.3 percent turned out to cast ballots in 1962; only 45.6 percent took the time to do so in 1966. And the percentage of eligibles who voted in the last off-year election -- 1970 -- was even lower-- 43.8 percent.

On the basis of those figures, one computer program suggests that only 42.7 percent of eligible voters will cast ballots for Congressional candidates two weeks from today.

If that happens, it means that the composition of the 94th Congress will be decided by slightly more than four out of every ten eligible voters. In short, the majority would let the minority decide.

What concerns me greatly -- is the inclination of the American people to consider politics something they would rather not become involved in. I think this is wrong. Let's not make politics a spectator sport.

If we can get 85,000 people to come out on a Saturday to watch Ohio State win, why can't we get five million Buckeyes to come out on November 5 to help America win.

The sad fact is that less than one American in thirty has anything to do with politics -- with the selection of candidates, with working in a campaign, with researching the issues, with raising or contributing funds for the election of candidates, or even with running for office.

What this Nation needs less than two years from the celebration of its 200th birthday is not less but more citizen participation in politics.

To those who say politics is a dirty word which should be eliminated from government, let me remind you that politics is government -- government in action. And there is nothing wrong with this political system of ours that a massive injection of citizen involvement will not cure.

Having spend a quarter century on Capitol Hill as a Member of the House of Representatives, I am convinced of the importance of getting out and away from Washington -- to find out what the people of this vast land beyond the Potomac are thinking and are concerned about. That is why I am here tonight.

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I believe the people of America not only have a right to see and hear their President in person, but I believe it is the duty of the President to discuss his programs and politics with the people.

With only two weeks before the upcoming elections which I consider crucial to America, I urge you to send to Washington Congressmen who are willing to join in this massive fight against inflation. You need Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill who won't go over the hill in the battle against inflation. You need Congressmen who can cut the red tape, cut the budget -- and cut the mustard!

You know, Congressional elections are what America is all about. Every two years in the House and every six in the Senate, members of those two bodies must account to the American people for their stewardship. Some deserve re-election, others do not. I urge you to make that distinction in advance of the election and exercise it at the polls on November 5th.

Let me remind you of this simple fact of life: There is no weapon so mighty, no force so powerful, as the quiet symbolic voice of the American citizen spoken in the privacy of the voting booth on election day. And that voice is not only heard but heeded by your elected officials.

Two weeks from today, I urge you to send a message to the Congress in Washington -- that you, the American consumer, the working man and woman, the housewife, the plain citizens are sick and tired of rising prices and want something done about it. Let the Congress know that you want action on the 3!-point program which I requested two weeks ago to help us whip inflation and conserve energy.

What this nation needs in Washington -- what you need and what I need -- is a responsive and responsible Congress. We need men and women who will, in the words of one television commentator, "praise the Lord and pass the legislation."

Elect this great team of Republicans here tonight and across the Ohio -- and watch the action.

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