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Office of the White House Press Secretary  
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THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AT A REPUBLICAN RALLY  
KNOLLCREST FIELDHOUSE, CALVIN COLLEGE  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

I am delighted to be back home. Coming back to my home state of Michigan as President of all these United States creates a bit of a problem. For one thing, it is hard to remain non-partisan -- particularly when it comes down to such basic matters as football.

Take the Michigan-Ohio State game coming up in just a few more weeks. People keep asking me who I'll be rooting for. Well, I think the late President Kennedy handled this problem very well. He was in Iowa just before their big game with Notre Dame -- and someone asked him that same question: "Who will you be rooting for?" And John Kennedy said "I'll be rooting for Iowa!"

And a tremendous cheer went up. Then he added, "But I'll be praying for Notre Dame!" So come the Michigan-Ohio game, I'll let you figure out who I'll be rooting and praying for.

Every two years for more than a quarter-century, I have campaigned in this Congressional District, seeking your support and receiving it. For that I am most grateful. I guess it is a habit I am unable to kick.

I am pleased to be here today, for three reasons:

First, having served twelve full terms in the U. S. House of Representatives, I am convinced that one of the most important activities of a public official is to defend his programs and policies and actions before his constituents and, in turn, to obtain firsthand their views on vital issues. I believe this yardstick should apply to Presidents as well as to Congressmen.

That is why I have traveled some 16,900 miles so far as President and met with thousands of citizens from every part of the country and from all walks of life.

Second, as on other occasions, I am here to seek your support -- this time for the election of a Congressman from this district who will truly represent you and who will join with me in making the tough decisions necessary to set our economic house in order.

That is why I have visited 16 states so far in this campaign -- to elect a Congress that will help me make sure your paycheck buys as much on the day you cash it as on the days you earned it.

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There is a special kind of spirit that always inspires me when I visit Grand Rapids. This is another reason why I am here today.

That special Grand Rapids spirit is the conviction that problems can be solved. And there is no time more appropriate for problem-solving than right now.

As President, I am addressing myself to the serious problems facing America -- particularly our No. 1 domestic public enemy. With your help, and with the election of a cooperative Congress, I am confident that we can whip inflation in the foreseeable future. We have already made a good start.

But we need help.

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. And the big spenders in the Congress are major contributors to inflation.

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. If we have a problem with inflation in America -- and we certainly do -- the Democratic Congresses over the years have either contributed to the problem or done nothing to solve it. Or both. If there ever was time for a change in Congress, it is this year!

Nevertheless, some elements in the Democratic Party now want more than majority control. 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 -- something which could upset the proven system of checks and balances which has served us so well for so long.

If that happens, ladies and gentlemen, buckle your seat belts -- for the Democrats' idea of checks and balances is different from ours: They write the checks even though there is no balance!

And from your personal experience, you know where that can lead.

A recent Gallup Poll shows that big government spending is viewed by the American people as the chief cause of the rampant inflation we are now experiencing.

If that true, if you believe it, I am challenging you here tonight to follow through on that belief -- to make your votes consistent with your views, to send to Congress a representative like Paul Goebel who is committed to fighting both spending and inflation.

To quote the great British parliamentarian, Edmund Burke: "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. The word we received back in Washington is that Republicans here in Grand Rapids and in Michigan may sit this election out -- that they are turned off by politics.

Frankly, I do not believe it. And this turnout here today doesn't indicate it.

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Without question, apathy has been the chief villain in the American political scene. Some people seem to think it just happened in the last year or two. 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. And in the special election here in the Fifth District last March, about 35%.

On the basis of those figures, one computer projection holds that only 42 percent of eligible voters will cast ballots for Congressional candidates next Tuesday.

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

I urge you to make sure that doesn't happen here in the Fifth District. With one week to go until the election, get involved if you aren't now.

Work as you never have before for Paul Goebel's victory. Work on those thoughtful Independents and wise Democrats who believe as you do or are sufficiently open-minded to be convinced.

Send a message to the Congress in Washington by electing Paul Goebel -- a message that says that you, the American consumer, the working man and woman, the housewife, the solid citizens are sick and tired of rising prices and want something done about it. Let the Congress know that you want action on the 31-point program which I requested to help us whip inflation and conserve energy.

The first thing required in coping with a tough problem like inflation is a good plan. That is the way we started. A month ago the Conference on Inflation was concluded. We called together the best economic brains in the country and spokesmen for all the varied views of American economic groups. People spoke their minds. We selected the very best ideas and molded them into a package of actions that could work, if everyone cooperated.

I am confident that the economic package sent to the Congress will work. We can win against inflation; we can get out of this spiral of ever-rising prices; we can restore a healthy economy in which everyone has a decent job and a decent paycheck. It can be done.

I think the plan I proposed will work, but Congress must act. However, Congress can change the plan, modify it, refine it if better alternatives develop. If while Congress deliberates, economic circumstances change, I will be open-minded. But let us give this basic plan a chance. It comes from the best economic thinking that America has to offer.

As I stated earlier, I am here seeking your support -- support in this battle against inflation, in keeping the Grand Rapids spirit alive in Washington, in making sure we have a viable two-party system in Washington that can keep the balance in our checks and balance system. And the best way to do this is to elect Paul Goebel, Jr., to Congress next Tuesday.

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I know Paul. I know that we can work together for a better Fifth District and a better Grand Rapids. Paul's experience in public service on the County Commission has been valuable training. He wrestled with the problem of "increasing tax revenues without raising taxes." Paul has been in the pressure cooker of public life. He knows there are no magic answers or instant solutions. Paul Goebel knows how to face difficult problems honestly and realistically -- because he is an honest and realistic person.

Paul has not made any campaign promises he cannot keep. He has not been afraid to tell the tough, unvarnished truth.

You here in Grand Rapids have had enough confidence in the past to elect him to public office. Now, I ask you to do it again. Paul Goebel will vote in Washington the same way he talks in Grand Rapids.

So I ask you, for America's sake, for Grand Rapids' sake, for your sake, when you go into the voting booths next Tuesday, mark your ballot for Paul Goebel, Jr., for Congress -- and then watch the action.

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