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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE AFL-CIO FIELD DAY
AUGUSTA, MAINE

First, on behalf of the children at the Pineland Hospital and Training Center, may I thank all of you here today for your participation and your contributions to provide them with this much needed therapeutic swimming pool. If there is anyone who recognizes and values the therapeutic benefits of a swimming pool, it's me -- I salute the Maine AFL-CIO -- its members, friends and supporters -- for bringing this pool, this means of therapy and a little bit of happiness as well, into the lives of these troubled children. Thank you all very much.

Let me also thank Governor Jim Longley for his very kind introduction. Governor Longley and I have at least one thing in common -- in college we both won our letter in football. But frankly, I'm always a little apprehensive when a former football player introduces me.

It all goes back to the time I was introduced by a former teammate from my old Michigan football team. He got up and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it might interest you to know that I played football with Jerry Ford for two years -- and it made a lasting impression on me. I was quarterback. Jerry Ford was the center. And you might say, it gave me a completely different view of the President!"

As a Nation, we pause this weekend to pay tribute to our country's working people. Let us this year give this weekend special meaning by considering, not only the working people, but the millions of our fellow citizens who are out of work through no fault of their own.

So, today, I want to address myself both to the working people -- and to those who are temporarily unemployed -- in Maine, elsewhere in New England, and all over America. Here in Maine, and throughout New England, you have a work ethic of individual enterprise, Yankee ingenuity, skilled craftsmanship, and an independent spirit devoted to freedom. Your determination is as enduring as your legendary rock-ribbed coasts.

But you, like many other Americans, have endured more than your share. You are among the citizens who suffered the heaviest impact of recession, inflation, unemployment, and the energy crisis. I am aware of the special burden of the energy crunch on Maine and neighboring States. I am also aware of the frustration of individuals on fixed income.

Labor Day is no holiday for those who are out of work. The level of unemployment in the United States is too high by any standard.

I have heard references to so-called "acceptable" rates of unemployment. I do not recognize the acceptability of any level of unemployment as long as there are people who want to work and can't find jobs. My Administration is determined to help create enough new jobs, on a sound economic base, to make every day a real "Labor Day."

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When statistics are published on the loss of jobs, there are some losses which are not published. I refer to the loss of hope among the high school and college graduates seeking their first job, the loss of self-esteem among the heads of household who are laid off, the loss of security and standards of living that people worked for years to achieve, and most important of all, the loss of faith in America's future. These are tragic losses. They are losses that the United States of America cannot endure.

Today, I reaffirm my pledge to do everything in my power to generate new jobs. But to achieve the job stability we want, I will continue to oppose stop gap programs that we cannot afford--programs conceived in panic and partisanship, that will lead to nothing but new rounds of inflation and even worse unemployment.

Our system now provides 85 million jobs. This represents 26 million more jobs than existed in America a quarter-century ago. It represents about 1.2 million more jobs than last March, indicating movement in the right direction.

I agree with George Meany that jobs are what Labor Day is all about. I join with all working people on this occasion when America honors its workers--organized and unorganized--in a determined resolve to put America back to work.

The door of the White House is open, as it has been since I became President, to those who champion the cause of America's working people. As long as I remain in office, my door will remain open. Nor will I close my heart to the plight of the millions who are unable to find work.

There have been favorable indicators of an easing of recession. The rate of inflation this year is much less than it was in 1974. But the creation of new jobs is going to be a tough job for all of us. Making sure that the jobs our economy provides are good jobs with a good future--real jobs and not make work jobs--is going to be even tougher.

We have been making progress. Since March, more than one million persons have found work. But to get back to where we were just a year ago, we are going to have to produce 3.2 million more jobs: And each year from now until 1980, as our labor force expands, our economy must provide work for another 1.6 million people. By 1980, we must create over 11 million new jobs.

That is a big order. It cannot be filled by government alone, or by industry alone, or by unions or politicians acting on their own.

But the problem can and will be solved if we all work together, just as you in this hall are today united to help less fortunate human beings. It can be solved with the spirit of joint cooperation demonstrated by my Labor-Management Committee.

We have developed a strong, flexible collective bargaining system which stands as a tribute to the men and women of both labor and management who have devoted themselves to building a better America.

While the government cannot do everything, it can do some things.

It can help stimulate the private sector of the economy to create the jobs needed to put people to work and to provide work for those entering the labor force. During the past year, American workers and businesses received a Federal tax cut to increase purchasing power and stimulate growth. It generated jobs and movement toward economic recovery.

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The unemployment insurance system is no permanent solution to joblessness, it temporarily keeps individuals and society functioning.

Some \$20 billion in benefits will be disbursed in 1975, providing a means of temporary income maintenance for unemployed workers. That money, pumped into the economy, serves as another built-in stabilizer by providing purchasing power to the unemployed workers.

This year we increased the number of weeks of unemployment compensation from thirty-nine to sixty-five weeks. We have extended coverage to 12 million people not previously protected.

I have proposed to the Congress other necessary improvements to be made in areas such as adequacy and duration of coverage. Using new insights and experience, we will work with the Congress to improve the system.

I am aware that some workers in Maine and elsewhere have lost their jobs as a result of imports from abroad. Last May, some 300 employees of the Allen Quimby Veneer Company in Bingham, Maine, became the first workers to be certified under the Trade Act of 1974 as eligible for trade adjustments assistance.

For the first time in the nearly forty-year history of unemployment compensation in the State of Maine, your state applied this month for a \$2.4 million Federal loan to pay for unemployment insurance benefits starting in September. I am pleased to say today that we are granting Maine's request.

I cannot stress too much that this Administration recognizes the equal importance to recovery of controlling inflation and of creating good jobs. These joint goals are essential to our program of restoring the strength our economy needs.

All of us -- labor, management and government -- must work together if we are to achieve long-term economic health.

I call on business and industry to do everything possible to bring back laid off workers, to reassess the job assignments of those employed beneath their true qualifications, and to give opportunities to young people eager to join the labor force.

I appeal not only to the patriotism and courage and determination of America's working people but to these same qualities in business people.

I ask managers to take a new look at ways to expand productivity to make possible the rehiring and new hiring of workers. I ask them to be more aggressive in seeking new markets at home and abroad to create new jobs.

Economic progress depends on our ability to foster capital investment and increase the productivity of our workers. The share of our gross national product committed to private investment must increase over the next few years if we are to reach our economic potential. Economists estimate that total investment requirements could be in excess of \$4 trillion.

Our financial ability to increase production is declining. This decline is curtailing needed growth in jobs and income. It undermines our ability to compete internationally.

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I am confident once this becomes clear to the American people they will understand the need for tax policies that will help to channel sufficient resources into the expansion of productive capacity.

We must not condemn our fellow citizens to unemployment because the modern tools needed to compete in world markets are lacking.

This Administration has proposed reforms to the Congress to stimulate what economists call "capital formation" through tax incentives. But I prefer the term "job creation." That is what my proposals are all about.

I ask the Congress to join with me in this commitment to our Nation's future, to more jobs, income and full economic recovery.

To insure a strong economic system, we must maintain an antitrust policy which validates our commitment to competitive markets.

As we reduce Government regulation of business, we must be absolutely certain that our antitrust laws are vigorously enforced.

Competition, when freed of Government regulation and supported by antitrust laws, is the driving force of our economy. It will drive costs down and assure new jobs. That is the story of America's amazing growth.

Let me emphasize this is not an Administration of special interests; not of business interests; not of labor interests. This is an Administration of the public interest.

We will not permit the continuation of monopoly privilege, which is not in the public interest. It is my job and your job to open the American marketplace. It is our job to create new jobs.

As we work together to overcome problems of individuals, let us remember our Founding Fathers' vision of a Nation in which people work together for the common good.

I have often stated my conviction that we must have a national defense second to none. Labor has stood at the forefront of the defense of liberty, in war as in peace. But defense must rest upon more than arms and armies. Defense depends upon the strength of the American individual, the unity of the American family, the food in the American kitchen, and the self-esteem that goes with the American paycheck.

We must maintain the social fabric of America for the national defense to be credible. If we cannot believe in ourselves and in our future as a Nation, what will there be left to defend?

Two hundred years ago, American patriots--working people, business people, and farming people--risked their lives so that this Nation might be born. To win independence, they surmounted great individual differences in background, culture and outlook. They worked, and fought and died together for a common cause none of them could achieve alone.

Although conditions have changed greatly in 200 years, I am fully confident that the spirit that saw us through in 1776 will guide us to a great future. I know that America's working men and women will be in the forefront. We depend upon you and we honor you.

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