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Office of the Vice President
Portland, Oregon

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
WESTERN STATES REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE DINNER
MAIN BALLROOM, HILTON HOTEL
PORTLAND, OREGON

October 3, 1975

Vice President Rockefeller today told Western Republicans that "President Ford's leadership is drawing upon the basic American qualities of character which won the West and achieved America's greatness."

In a speech before the Western States Republican Conference in Portland, Oregon the Vice President said: "Nowhere do we sense the American spirit more surely than here in the West. Here the pioneer spirit still lives. Here the qualities which built this Country -- optimism, hard work, self-reliance and faith in free enterprise -- are still most alive, in the rugged beauty of our Western states and in the rugged individuality of their people.

"President Ford is giving this Nation leadership that draws upon these basic American strengths and summons them to meet the challenges of today's rapidly changing world.

"Today, I would like to discuss with you the current realities shaping the Administration's approach to meeting the people's needs in the domestic area.

"The American people rightfully want job opportunities during their working years and financial security in time of illness, unemployment or old age.

"This legitimate desire for work and security requires positive action in three interrelated areas: solving the energy problem which holds the key to economic growth, revitalizing the economy to achieve full employment, and restructuring the domestic social programs to assure individual security in times of need on a sound fiscal basis.

"At present, energy goals still have not been met, unemployment is intolerably high, and government expenditures are growing rapidly at all levels. If the rate of expenditure for domestic programs keeps growing the way it has over the past 20 years, then government spending at all levels will consume 55 per cent of the Gross National Product in the next 25 years. Clearly, this Country cannot survive as a free society with over half of its Gross National Product being absorbed by government.

"Capital needed for productive investment and economic growth to create more jobs for Americans would be absorbed by the government. Free enterprise, which created the highest living standard on earth for the greatest number of people, would lose its vitality and ability to meet the needs of our people. The American traditions of individual initiative, self-reliance and responsibility would be undermined. Furthermore, whatever government hopes to achieve depends upon the health and growth of the economy since, directly or indirectly, 85 per cent of government revenues come from the private sector.

"President Ford has had the courage to hold down government spending to cut back the rate of inflation, and he recognizes the urgent need to reshape government programs so that they meet human need without undermining the Nation's economic strength. He has met the energy problem with bold yet realistic proposals that capitalize on the inherent dynamism of our free enterprise system. Most recent is his proposal to win American energy independence by 1985 through creation of an Energy Independence Authority.

"I am optimistic that we as a Nation have the will, the capacity, the resources and the leadership to accomplish our objectives -- to rebuild the strength of America to meet the needs of our people and our responsibilities around the world.

"The President is a strong and courageous leader and the Members of Congress are dedicated Americans. I am confident that, together, they will demonstrate once again that there is nothing wrong with America that Americans cannot right.

"The President is taking specific action based on that belief. The President has asked me, as Vice Chairman of the Domestic Council, to arrange for a series of public forums on domestic policy. These hearings are designed to obtain the views of people from around the Country in rethinking and updating our Nation's innumerable and overlapping programs in four basic areas; economic recovery, resource development, social policy and community building.

"The President is determined to get the thinking of the American people into the decision-making process as he prepares his program to be presented to the Congress next year."

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