

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 29, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Tampa, Florida)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION
THE AUSTIN BUILDING COMPLEX

4:50 P.M. EST

Let me, as we wrap up two wonderful days in Florida, thank all of you who made this last meeting one of the finest, if not the best. It was tremendous, but it certainly was the climax to two superb days.

We started out with some of that Washington weather on the other side of the State, but it really turned out in the long run, the whole day yesterday was terrific. The whole day today has been ideal.

I think more than ever -- when we came down, I thought we were going to win -- I am absolutely certain we are going to win. The people in New Hampshire did a superb job. They gave us the kick-off springboard that was needed.

We are going to win in Massachusetts and, of course, our opponent did not enter the Vermont primary, so we are going to have three States when we get down to Florida, and we have done well in some of the convention States, where it was critically important to get the caucuses, such as in Minnesota.

In Minnesota, they did extremely well in the caucuses last week. We have the momentum going, but Florida is really the key. If we can win and win well in Florida, they ought to know they can't win, period, and so what we do between now and March 9 -- nine days away -- is going to be critical and crucial because this State can be very, very important in convincing others -- those where they have conventions, those where they have caucuses and those where they have primaries.

So, we have done well so far. The momentum is great. I am confident, but I always prepare for the worst because the best will take care of itself. So, we are going to get out there and work with you.

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We will do everything we can to make certain that March 9 is a great, great victory. I think for all of us and for the whole program we have worked at, striven for, and it will convince, I think, people in the 46 other States that we are on the right track.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 4:52 P.M. EST)