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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE
BREAKFAST RECEPTION

THE PEORIA HILTON

9:10 A.M. CST

Bob, my best and very dearest friends, and also my very good friends in the Congress, Tom Railsback, Ed Madigan, Dick Carver, your wonderful Governor, Dick Ogilvie, Mary Alice, all of you:

I thank you very, very much for coming here this morning. Saturday morning. Getting up at this hour for a political gathering is far and above the call of duty, and I thank you very, very much. As I was reading the paper this morning (Laughter) I could not help but notice a change from the papers that I had read a year ago.

About a year ago all the doomsayers were predicting 10 percent unemployment or more, a recession, moving into a depression. They were talking about inflation getting worse. They were saying that our foreign policy was in disarray, that the United States was doomed to despair, not only at home but abroad, and they were indicating that I had only won an election in Michigan and could not win any election elsewhere.

You know, to get up this morning and read a paper with somewhat changed headlines and a little different factual information made me feel good, and I hope it did you, too.

The economic news is good, and it is going to get better. I think the facts speak for themselves. We have cut the inflation rate by better than 50 percent. We have the unemployment figures going down nationally. We have the employment figures going up, and it is not noticed very often, but we have regained -- according to the statistics released Friday -- we are back at the highest historical employment figure of 86.3 million people, and we are going to get better.

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The momentum is going in the right direction. Maybe I shouldn't say this, but you know they said -- as I indicated a moment ago -- I have never won an election outside of a Congressional district in Michigan. Well, we won New Hampshire, we won Vermont, we won Massachusetts, I think we are going to win Florida, and from what you all tell me, we are going to win Illinois.

So, all those pundits are 100 percent wrong so far, and it is, I think, encouraging because it reflects the faith that the American people have in a sound course of action. We were, you know, tempted -- some people were saying, "Gee, you have to do this, and you have to take this radical course."

We did not panic. We decided what was right, we did it, and I think the results are proven. We got the help of people like Bob, Ed, Tom and the other staunch people in the Congress. They stood with us, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart because without their help what we tried to do never could have been accomplished, and let me just take one example.

We had some people up at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue in the majority party that wanted to undertake all kinds of radical programs to meet our problems at home, and in the process of 19 months, I vetoed 46 bills. They tell me that is a record, but I am proud of it, and I am very grateful for the people in the Congress who stood with me.

They sustained 39 of them. We saved \$13 billion and that is not hay. I can just hear old Bob up there on the floor of the House telling those wild-eyed spenders, "You ought to have more sense."

We could hear you way at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Bob. But, he rallied the truth, and he did a great job, and the people that stood with him likewise deserve your applause and your support.

What are the prospects for the future? Every indication we have is that the economy is going to get better and better. I believe that we have a strong deterrent military force that reinforces our alliance with our allies.

They have faith in us. It convinces our adversaries that they should treat us with respect and they are not going to undertake any ill-advised adventures, let me assure you of that, because America is strong, it is alert, it is ready, and we are going to keep it that way.

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I have had the privilege of meeting a good many of the people here this morning who are going to be our Ford delegates, and I am sure I am going to see you out in Kansas City, unless I drag you down and you don't win.

But, I think Kansas City is going to be a tremendous success. It will be the stepping stone, the springboard for a great victory in November of 1976. But, as Bob said, good policies are not enough. It is good people that make the difference. I went through a number of political campaigns where those that worked hard calling on the phone, helping to get people with their absentee ballots, doing all kinds of hard chores with little recognition recorded, I always felt they did more than their share and the net result was we won.

So, I thank all of you who are doing that hard, nonglamorous labor because you believe in a policy, you believe in a cause, and I won't let you down.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 9:21 A.M. CST)