The original documents are located in Box D33, folder “GOP National Convention, Miami Beach, FL, August 23, 1972” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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The record shows that over 70 percent of the delegates here today and 85 percent of the alternate delegates with us are participating for the first time in a national convention. Only a very few of you were here when I banged down the gavel to adjourn our 1968 convention four years ago. No wonder I got elected today so easily.

I want to express my deep appreciation and to thank the old timers and also the first termers. We need both and we want both in this great campaign in 1972. (Applause)

Furthermore, I am very proud to be the choice of delegates freely selected through the open door policy of our Republican Party. (Applause)

Republicans have done this without the heavy hand of arbitrary quota, without discrimination or drumming anybody out of our ranks, and I might add without highest pretentions. We have gathered here a greater and more representative convention than ever before in the history of the Republican Party. (Applause)

Thirteen percent young, five percent black, thirty-four percent of the sweeter and the stronger sex. More
(Applause and standing ovation)

CHAIRMAN FORD: Once more I am deeply honored to have been chosen the Permanent Chairman of the National Convention of the Republican Party. The record shows that over 70 percent of the delegates here today and 85 percent of the alternate delegates with us are participating for the first time in a national convention. Only a very few of you were here when I banged down the gavel to adjourn our 1968 convention four years ago. No wonder I got elected today so easily.

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importantly, we are all 100 percent dedicated to a better future for all Americans. (Applause)

Yes, there is a very big difference here in Miami in 1972. If I might, let me say something quite personal. There is also a very big difference in my own feeling as I assume this responsibility this afternoon. Four years ago I presented our candidate to the cheers that shook this convention hall. I felt then that his election in 1968 was essential for the survival of the Republican Party. This year, my fellow Americans, I feel with all my heart that the re-election of Richard Nixon is absolutely essential to the survival of the United States of America. (Applause)

There is a big difference in 1972 to our party but an even bigger difference to our country and millions and millions and millions of Americans know this -- Democrats, Independents and Republicans.

Four years ago we campaigned on promises as Republicans. This year we campaigned on performance, on promises President Nixon has kept to the American people. (Applause)

Four years ago we had a fine candidate with long experience in government and world affairs. This year we have a proven candidate, a proven President, the seasoned statements of the world as a whole. (Applause)

Recently I returned from a 19,000 mile journey to the Great Wall of China following the peace making path set
by President Nixon and our wonderful First Lady. There was, however, one part of China, that part which we used to call Manchuria, where we, our party, were the very first official Americans as visitors for 24 years.

In the seal making center in far northeast China one afternoon I took a casual stroll after lunch. I came upon a row of bulletin boards along the sidewalk displaying photographs of current events. The Chinese call this display the people's newspaper. The crowd was clustered tightly around just one of the many boards and I as a stranger pressed closer to see what caused their curiosity, to see what they were looking at. Can you imagine what they were looking at? They were looking at the pictures of President Nixon's historic visit to Peking. They turned to me, a lone American, with smiles that shattered the language barrier and defied a full generation of suspicion.

At that very moment, it was a very funny thing for me to think of but I did. Surrounded by Chinese of all ages in a far away city I thought back to January 3, 1949, when I had just lowered my right hand after being sworn in as a freshman member of the House of Representatives. One of the first hands that grasped mine was that of a very, very, very senior Congressman from California -- he had been in the House one full term. He said to me, "Jerry, I'm Dick Nixon; we are glad to have you here."
And there was Richard Nixon, President of the United States, on a Chinese bulletin board 23 years later, making friends for me in the middle of Manchuria.

My fellow Americans, I have had the privilege of seeing first-hand what tremendous things Richard Nixon has done for all of us at home or abroad. Let me speak now for just a minute quite freely. From my vantage point in the Congress and specifically in the House of Representatives, I have also seen what he has tried to do for America but unfortunately could not do. President Nixon could not do it because, for the last four years, he has had to work with a majority of the other party in control of the House of Representatives and the same problem in the Senate with a whole fistful of would-be Presidents and self-appointed Secretaries of State. (Applause)

Let me ask all of you Delegates and Alternates and guests a question. Doesn't President Nixon deserve a Republican Congress for the next four years? (Applause)

Really, truly, that could be the biggest difference of all between 1968 and 1972. This year a Republican Congress is not an impossible dream. Let's do it, starting right tonight. (Applause)

As Republicans, we seek not power but responsibility to finish the work we are in to bind up the Nation's wounds, to return problem-solving to the people themselves,
to serve the common causes of order as well as justice, to
te increase the opportunity and the prosperity of all, and to
make certain a full generation of peace worldwide, and we so
pray. In this task, we welcome the help of all Americans, and
we pray for the blessing of Almighty God.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Musical interlude)

(Showing of film of President Nixon arriving at
Miami International Airport)

CHAIRMAN FORD: Delegates, Alternates, and guests,
wasn't that a fabulous welcome for a great President to the
State of Florida? (Applause)

Delegates and Alternates, at this point Mrs. Ranny
Riecker, National Committeewoman for the State of Michigan,
has requested permission for a special presentation to the
Republican Party.

MRS. RIECKER: Thank you, all of you.

Mr. Chairman, a special gavel has been carved this
year from a limb of an oak tree growing at the site and time
of the first Republican Convention, on July 6, 1854, at
Jackson, Michigan. A month ago, Michigan Republicans dedi-
cated ground, "Under the Oaks," in Jackson for a political
museum.

We would like this gavel, deep with historical sig-
nificance, to become the permanent gavel for all future