

The original documents are located in Box 23, “2/13/76 - Remarks at Meeting with PFC Volunteers in Florida in Preparation for the Florida Primary” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

MEETING WITH PFC VOLUNTEERS IN FLORIDA
FEBRUARY 13 - 14, 1976

Let me thank each of you for your very warm welcome on a warm and lovely Florida day.

From the time I first got off the plane I've been impressed with the friendliness of your people, and with the beauty and vitality of your State. That's been my impression every time I've come to Florida, and I have really been looking forward to this trip.

I've been especially anxious to meet the people who are doing the real work in this Florida primary campaign.

I appreciate the role that each of you is playing in this effort. No campaign can be successful without good, enthusiastic, talented volunteers -- and lots of them.

As I look about this room, and after meeting many of you personally, I'm confident that our campaign in Florida will be very, very successful.

You are the people I'm counting on most. As President, there just isn't the time to come down here every few days to campaign -- much as I'd like to. The burden of that activity has fallen heavily on you. Knocking on doors, talking to people, distributing literature and campaign material -- these are the nuts-and-bolts of politics. They hold everything else together.

It's hard work. I know it because I've done it. That's why I have a special kind of appreciation and affection for you. There's no promise of money or patronage or even recognition in this work. It's just a series of unselfish, untiring acts by some of the finest people I've ever met.

Fortune has smiled on me in a very special way. I came to this office facing a number of very serious and urgent challenges. The credibility of political leadership in America was at its lowest ebb in our history. Our national economy was headed in two very dangerous directions, with prices going up and everything else slowing down.

There was great danger to peace in many areas of the world.

These were challenges as urgent, as complex, as difficult as any President has faced upon taking office.

But with the understanding of the American people, with their prayers and their support and their help, I set about to do what I could to meet those challenges, to put America at peace with itself and with all the world.

The past 18 months have seen many of those efforts succeed. I believe my policy of using common sense and a realistic approach to America's problems has helped restore confidence in government.

The economic policies we adopted and steadfastly pursued have pointed the national economy in the right direction -- in the direction of progress and prosperity and stability.

That battle is far from over but we are on the attack now, instead of on the defensive. We will stay on the attack, and we will win this very important victory over inflation and unemployment and every other economic enemy of the people.

Fortunately, the sound of real battle is something Americans hear only faintly now. This Nation is at peace with all the world and we intend to keep it that way.

All of our problems have not been solved, and all of our challenges have not been met. As Lincoln said, the question is not "Can any of us imagine better?" but "can we all do better?"

I think we can, and that is why I'm running for President.

I am running, not merely to seek a stamp of approval for
past policies, but to seek a mandate for the future.

For 200 years, America has always looked toward the future.

Our own future is as promising and as challenging as that which stretched before our ancestors in earlier days.

We can fill our future with hope and achievement. It is a future that will summon the best in all of us. It is a future that will see America rise to heights even we cannot imagine, or fall back into the complacency and frail comfort that have engulfed great

civilizations of the past -- civilizations that are great no longer.

I choose to go forward. I choose to place my trust in the American people, in their industry, in their ambition, their genius, and their competitive spirit.

I am running for President, not to keep the people under Government's control, but to free them to do the great things I know they can do.

I am not renouncing the important role which government plays in our society. I am working to improve that role, while others may seek only to enlarge it or reduce it, with no thought of the consequences.

The people will choose the best course. If we can get our message through to them, I believe they will choose our course as the best course.

It is a fundamental choice. It is one we will have to live with, for good or ill, for the next four years and perhaps beyond.

The people of Florida will be among the first to make that decision. Let's all do our best to convince them that ours is the best course -- the right course for America -- and let's celebrate a great victory together on March 9.

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