

The original documents are located in Box 30, “5/2/76 - Remarks at Public Forum, Fort Wayne, Indiana” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -- ALLEN COUNTRY WAR MEMORIAL
COLISEUM

THANK YOU ,

LT. GOVERNOR BOB ORR

AMBASSADOR ROSS ADAIR

MAYOR BOB ARMSTRONG

JERRY HELLER

REVEREND CLERGY

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

OPEN FORUM AT MEMORIAL COLISEUM

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 1976

IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN INDIANA - WHERE
THE ONLY THING TALLER THAN THE CORN IS THE
BASKETBALL PLAYERS.

I THINK IT WAS AN OUTSTANDING DISPLAY

OF NEIGHBORLINESS WHEN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

HAD THE MOST DEFEATS, 3 & 0, AND INDIANA

BECAME THE TOP COLLEGE BASKETBALL TEAM IN THE NATION.

WE TRIED HARD.

CONGRATULATIONS.

THIS AREA IS ORIENTED TOWARD THE BUSINESS
OF AGRICULTURE -- IN BOTH THE PRODUCTION OF FARM PRODUCTS
AND THE MANUFACTURE OF FARM EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW WHERE I STAND ON THE
FARM POLICIES THAT AFFECT SO MANY OF YOU.

I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHAT I AM FOR AND WHAT

I AM AGAINST:

I AM AGAINST POLICIES THAT WOULD HAVE FARMERS

PRODUCING AGAIN FOR A GOVERNMENT STORAGE BIN AND

A GOVERNMENT CHECK. I AM OPPOSED TO SUBSIDIZED IMPORTS.

I DON'T WANT OUR AMERICAN FARMERS COMPETING AGAINST

THE TREASURIES OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. AND I DON'T WANT

AMERICAN GRAIN USED AS A PAWN IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

AMERICA IS THE GREATEST AGRICULTURAL POWER

IN THE WORLD, AND AGRICULTURE IS AN ALL-IMPORTANT ELEMENT

IN DETERMINING THE SHAPE OF AMERICA'S FUTURE.

I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT AGRICULTURE AND THE BUSINESSES

DEPENDENT UPON IT RECEIVE THEIR FULL SHARE OF AMERICA'S

INCREASING PROSPERITY.

*Estate Tax
60/150
25 yrs.*

THAT'S WHAT MY ADMINISTRATION IS DOING,
AND THAT IS DUE IN NO SMALL MEASURE TO OUR SECRETARY
OF AGRICULTURE -- EARL BUTZ.

I WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO THE STATE OF INDIANA
FOR LENDING ME ONE OF YOUR NATIVE SONS TO HELP RUN
THINGS IN WASHINGTON. I BELIEVE EARL BUTZ IS ONE OF
THE FINEST SECRETARIES OF AGRICULTURE OUR COUNTRY
HAS EVER HAD.

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS ADMINISTRATION AND
SECRETARY BUTZ, WE HAVE MADE SOLID GAINS IN AGRICULTURE.
THE LAST THREE YEARS HAVE REGISTERED THE HIGHEST NET FARM INCOME
IN HISTORY. AMERICAN FARMERS HAVE BEEN RELIEVED
OF HEAVY AND COSTLY BURDENS OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION.
THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN NEW FREEDOM TO MEET THE CHALLENGE
OF THE OPEN MARKET AND HAVE BEEN REWARDED FOR IT.

NOT ONLY IS FARM INCOME IMPROVING,

BUT BUSINESS IS IMPROVING.

EMPLOYMENT IS GOING UP

AND INFLATION IS GOING DOWN.

WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN STALLING THE VICIOUS UPWARD
SPIRAL IN THE COST OF LIVING. THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
FIGURES FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1976 SHOW AN ANNUAL RATE
OF INCREASE IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX OF LESS THAN THREE
PERCENT. THAT'S A REDUCTION OF 75 PERCENT FROM THE
DOUBLE-DIGIT INFLATION WE HAD WHEN I FIRST BECAME PRESIDENT.

THE MAJORITY IN THE CONGRESS OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES
THAT MORE DIRECT FEDERAL INTERVENTION IN OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY
IS REQUIRED TO KEEP IT GOING.

THEY BELIEVE HIGHER FEDERAL SPENDING ON A HOST
OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS WILL STIMULATE A MORE RAPID RECOVERY
AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE JOBS FOR EVERYBODY
IF PRIVATE EMPLOYERS DON'T DO SO FAST ENOUGH.

THEY BELIEVE AN ACCEPTABLE PRICE FOR
ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS A NEW ROUND OF HIGHER INFLATION.

THEY BELIEVE THAT BIGGER FEDERAL DEFICITS ARE REQUIRED
TO KEEP THE RECOVERY UNDERWAY.

THEY ARE WRONG.

WE WILL NOT ACHIEVE FULL EMPLOYMENT BY LETTING
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PLAN AND CONTROL THE NATIONAL ECONOMY.

WE WILL NOT ACHIEVE FULL EMPLOYMENT BY RELYING
ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO CREATE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS
OF DEAD-END JOBS AT THE TAXPAYER'S EXPENSE.

BUT OUR MATERIAL PROGRESS WILL BE OF LITTLE
COMFORT TO US IF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE FORCED
TO LIVE IN A CLIMATE OF FEAR.

I FAVOR BRINGING THE CRIMINALS WHO CAUSE THAT
FEAR TO SWIFT AND CERTAIN JUSTICE.

MAKING IT EASY ON CRIMINALS INVITES CRIME,
AND THE CERTAINTY OF PUNISHMENT HELPS STOP IT.
I HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH THOSE WHO PICTURE THE
VIOLENT CRIMINAL AS A HELPLESS VICTIM OF SOCIETY'S
NEGLECT. MANY VIOLENT CRIMINALS ARE NOT VICTIMS
OF SOCIETY BUT THE ENEMIES OF SOCIETY AND SHOULD BE
DEALT WITH AS THE PUBLIC ENEMIES THEY ARE.

MOST CRIMES IN THIS COUNTRY ARE COMMITTED
BY A SMALL, HARD CORE OF LAWBREAKERS, MANY OF WHOM
ARE CHRONIC OFFENDERS. TOO OFTEN THESE VIOLENT
AND HABITUAL CRIMINALS ARE RETURNED TO THE STREETS
WITHOUT SPENDING A DAY IN JAIL, EVEN AFTER THEY ARE
CONVICTED OF A SERIOUS CRIME.

THIS IS NOT JUSTICE TO THE VICTIMS OF CRIME OR TO

SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. AND I INTEND TO SEE

THAT JUSTICE IS DONE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I ADVOCATE MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES

FOR CRIMINALS WHO REPEATEDLY COMMIT FEDERAL CRIMES

THAT HARM OR ENDANGER OTHERS.

~~ONLY~~ LAST WEEK, I SENT THE CONGRESS LEGISLATION
TO REQUIRE THE IMPOSITION OF MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES
FOR THOSE CONVICTED OF TRAFFICKING IN HEROIN AND SIMILAR
NARCOTIC DRUGS. SENTENCES UNDER THIS LEGISLATION WOULD BE
AT LEAST THREE YEARS FOR THE FIRST OFFENSE AND AT LEAST SIX YEARS
FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES OR FOR SELLING HARD DRUGS TO A MINOR.
PAROLE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED.

I HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT THE CONGRESS REDUCE
THE CRIMINAL USE OF HANDGUNS BY IMPOSING MANDATORY
SENTENCES FOR CRIMES INVOLVING THE USE OF A HANDGUN
OR OTHER DANGEROUS WEAPON. DISARMING LAW-ABIDING
CITIZENS IS NOT THE WAY TO DO IT.

I HAVE ALSO ASKED FOR THE FUNDS TO BUILD

FOUR NEW FEDERAL PRISONS TO RELIEVE OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS --

WHICH SOMETIMES DISCOURAGE JUDGES FROM SENTENCING CONVICTED

CRIMINALS TO PRISONS.

I CAN ALSO REPORT THAT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT
ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION AND THE ADMINISTRATION ON AGING
LAST WEEK SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO TARGET LAW ENFORCEMENT
RESOURCES ON THE CRIMINAL THREAT TO THE ELDERLY IN AMERICA.

THE SUCCESS OF OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

CAN BE SEEN IN THE FACT THAT THE RATE OF INCREASE

IN CRIME NATIONWIDE HAS BEEN CUT IN HALF

DURING MY ADMINISTRATION.

OF COURSE, WE MUST PURSUE THE CONSTITUTIONAL GOAL
OF INSURING DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY, WITH DUE REGARD
FOR THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF THE ACCUSED.

BUT THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON THE PROTECTION
AND SAFEGUARDING OF THE RIGHTS OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS
OF CRIME.

THE PEACE THAT AMERICA ENJOYS INTERNATIONALLY,
AND THE PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY WE ARE WORKING FOR HERE
AT HOME WILL PROFIT US LITTLE UNLESS WE ENSURE FOR OURSELVES
THE MOST BASIC BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY -- INCLUDING THE ABILITY
TO WALK OUR OWN STREETS AND RAISE OUR FAMILIES AND LIVE
OUR LIVES IN SAFETY.

WE ARE AT PEACE ABROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS,

AND NOW WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON RESTORING DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY

TO OUR CITIES AND SUBURBS.

THIS IS A TASK BEFITTING OUR VERY BEST EFFORTS

DURING THIS HISTORIC YEAR, FOR THE WISDOM OF OUR FOUNDING

FATHERS WAS THAT WITHOUT PEACE THERE CAN BE NO TRUE PROGRESS,

AND WITHOUT RESPECT FOR THE LAW, WE CAN HAVE NO TRUE FREEDOM.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

NOW I WILL BE GLAD TO RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

END OF TEXT