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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN . . .

REMARKS AT SHAIN PARK

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

MAY 12, 1976

It is great to be back in my home state of Michigan again.

It is particularly gratifying to be on home ground today as I head into the final rounds of a fight which I believe will determine the direction our country will take in the next four years.

It is a fight to insure the continuation of policies that have brought us from the depths of a recession to a new level of prosperity in America.

Just one year ago, some well known labor and political leaders were predicting that we were headed into a depression and that only massive action by the Federal Government could avert tragedy.

Unemployment stood at 8.9 percent and inflation was at an annual rate of 12.2 percent. We were, in fact, at the bottom of our worst recession in forty years, and if there ever was a time to push the panic button, that was it.

But, instead of discredited quick-fix solutions involving more big government, we pursued a calm, steady policy of relying upon the American system of private enterprise. As a result, we meet today -- not in the gloom of a recession -- but in a steady, confident economic recovery.

Everything that is supposed to be going up is going up, and everything that should be coming down is coming down.

The rate of inflation has been cut by more than half. The Index of Consumer Confidence is double what it was a year ago. Total employment now stands at an all - time high of 87.4 million, an increase of some 710 thousand jobs in the past month alone.

This is also a fight to continue my policy of rolling back the bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. There, my principal weapon has been the veto. I have vetoed 49 bills sent to me by this Congress and 42 of my vetoes have been sustained, saving the American taxpayers some 13 billion dollars --- an average savings of almost 200 dollars for every household.

And this is a fight to maintain the peace through strength that we now enjoy.

In providing funds for new military weapons and national security needs, an area of the budget that Congresses have systematically shortchanged by some 50 billion dollars over the past decade.

I am happy to report some real progress. The preliminary Congressional figures for this year show support for the record 114 billion dollar defense budget I submitted in January. Defense spending, at this level, will reverse the dangerous trend of recent years, and assure America's national security in the years ahead.

And finally, it is a fight to continue the renewed faith and trust that the American people now have in the Presidency itself.

The record of my first two years in the White House is peace, prosperity, performance in office and trust. It is a record that I am proud of and ask for your mandate to continue.

The course we take in the next four years will shape America's future for many years to come. I want to pursue the steady course that leads to peace through strength, from recession to recovery, from fear to faith. With your help we will pursue that course.

Thank you very much.

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