

The original documents are located in Box 33, “5/23/76 - Remarks at Rossmore Leisure World Clubhouse II, Laguna Hills, CA” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...IN

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT

LEISURE WORLD CLUBHOUSE II, LAGUNA HILLS,

CALIFORNIA, MAY 23, 1976

- THANK YOU, ERNIE BILLMAN
- CONGRESSMAN WIGGINS
- EVELE YOUNGER
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I SPOKE HERE AT LEISURE WORLD FOUR YEARS AGO,

WHEN I WAS STILL A CONGRESSMAN. I WAS IMPRESSED IN

1972, AND I AM IMPRESSED TODAY, BY THE ENERGY AND VITALITY

IN YOUR COMMUNITY. ~~IN FACT~~, LEISURE WORLD MUST BE

THE BUSIEST PLACE IN ORANGE COUNTY.

YOU ARE PROVING THAT RETIREMENT NEED NOT BE

A RETREAT FROM LIFE, BUT A FRESH OPPORTUNITY TO DO

ALL OF THE THINGS YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO•

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THAT

OPPORTUNITY•

MY MESSAGE TODAY CAN BE SUMMED UP IN JUST

A FEW WORDS:

AS MUCH AS I BELIEVE IN A STRONG AND PROSPEROUS

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, I HAVE COME HERE TO SAY

THAT THIS YEAR -- THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO TRADE

IN YOUR RELIABLE FORD FOR A FLASHIER MODEL.

LET ME TELL YOU WHY I AM ASKING YOU -- MY

FELLOW AMERICANS -- FOR YOUR SUPPORT. BECAUSE I HAVE DONE

A GOOD JOB UNDER TOUGH CIRCUMSTANCES. BECAUSE WE HAVE

MAINTAINED THE PEACE -- MOVED AMERICA ON THE ROAD TO

PROSPERITY -- AND RESTORED CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN THE

PRESIDENCY. I WANT A MANDATE FROM CALIFORNIA AND THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE TO FINISH THAT JOB.

ONE OF THE ~~TASKS~~ I WANT TO CONTINUE ~~IN~~ THE
ASSURANCE OF THE DIGNITY, { THE SECURITY AND THE QUALITY
OF LIFE EXPERIENCED BY OUR OLDER AMERICANS•

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, AMERICA HAS MADE

A FIRM COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT FOR OLDER CITIZENS IN OUR

SOCIETY -- NOT ONLY FOR THOSE WHO NEED HELP, BUT THOSE

WHO HAVE EARNED A RETIREMENT INCOME DURING THEIR WORKING

YEARS•

AS YOU ALL KNOW, THERE ARE PROBLEMS FACING

These problems have been building up for the last few years.

OUR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM. NEXT YEAR, UNLESS MY

REFORMS ARE ADOPTED, THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

WILL RUN A DEFICIT OF 3.5 BILLION DOLLARS. *The next year*

\$4 billion.

LET ME ASSURE YOU OF ONE THING VERY EMPHATICALLY:

MY ADMINISTRATION FULLY INTENDS TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY

AND THE SOLVENCY OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM FOR YOUR

BENEFIT AND THAT OF ALL WORKING AMERICANS / NOW AS WELL

AS IN THE FUTURE.

TO PREVENT A DECLINE IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY
TRUST FUND, WHICH NOW PAYS OUT MORE IN BENEFITS THAN
IT RECEIVES IN TAXES, I HAVE PROPOSED A SMALL PAYROLL TAX
INCREASE OF THREE-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT APPLYING TO BOTH
EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS. THE LARGEST INCREASE WOULD
BE LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR A WEEK.

THE PROPOSED TAX INCREASE WILL HELP TO STABILIZE

THE TRUST FUND SO THAT CURRENT AND FUTURE RECIPIENTS WILL BE

FULLY ASSURED OF THE BENEFITS THEY ARE ENTITLED TO.

have earned

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AS PART OF MY PROGRAM, I AM RECOMMENDING IN

MY BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1977 THAT THE FULL COST OF LIVING

INCREASE IN SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS BE PAID DURING THE

COMING YEAR.

AS LONG AS I AM PRESIDENT, WE ARE GOING TO

KEEP SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION AND EVERY OTHER RETIREMENT

PROGRAM STRONG, SOUND AND CERTAIN•

YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT• *under a Ford Administration*

I HAVE ALSO PROPOSED MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN

THE MEDICARE PROGRAM TO MAKE IT SERVE YOU BETTER•

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD PROVIDE

FOR THE PAYMENT OF ALL BUT A VERY SMALL FRACTION OF THE

COST OF CATASTROPHIC ILLNESS AND EXTENDED CARE•

THERE IS NO REASON THAT OLDER AMERICANS SHOULD

HAVE TO GO BROKE JUST TO GET WELL OR STAY WELL IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

UNDER MY PROPOSAL, THE INDIVIDUAL'S CONTRIBUTION

TO MEDICARE WOULD GO UP SLIGHTLY, BUT CONSIDER WHAT THE

INCREASE WOULD PROVIDE: | NOBODY ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICARE

WOULD HAVE TO PAY MORE THAN 500 DOLLARS A YEAR FOR HOSPITAL

OR NURSING HOME CARE -- OR MORE THAN 250 DOLLARS A YEAR

FOR PHYSICIANS SERVICES. MEDICARE WOULD PAY THE REST

OF THE BILL, | WHETHER IT IS 1,000 DOLLARS, | 10,000 DOLLARS |

OR 50,000 DOLLARS.

IT IS A GOOD PROGRAM, AND IF THE CONGRESS
PASSES IT, THE RUINOUS ECONOMIC BURDEN OF CATASTROPHIC
ILLNESS IS ONE THING YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT
AGAIN.

I AM ASKING THE CONGRESS TO AUTHORIZE TWO
OTHER PROGRAMS THAT WILL BE OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO OLDER
AMERICANS.

ONE WILL EASE THE BURDEN OF ESTATE TAXES●

WHILE THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR HAS ERODED, OUR SYSTEM

OF ESTATE TAX LAW HAS CHANGED VERY LITTLE SINCE THE 1930's●

TO RESTORE FAIRNESS TO THE SYSTEM, I HAVE PROPOSED

INCREASING THE PRESENT 60,000 DOLLAR ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION

TO 150,000 DOLLARS●

A SECOND PROPOSAL OF MINE IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE
TO MARRIED COUPLES. AT PRESENT, TRANSFERS OF ASSETS
BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES ARE OFTEN SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIAL
TAXATION. I HAVE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WHICH WILL MAKE
THOSE TRANSFERS TOTALLY TAX FREE. THIS COMMON-SENSE
TREATMENT OF THE ASSETS OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE IS LONG
OVERDUE.

IF I HAD TO SUM UP THE RECORD OF MY ADMINISTRATION

IN JUST A FEW WORDS, IT WOULD BE PEACE, PROSPERITY AND

TRUST•

TODAY AMERICA IS AT PEACE. THERE ARE NO

AMERICAN BOYS FIGHTING ANYWHERE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH --

AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

I WILL MAINTAIN THE PEACE

SECURE THAT PEACE

THROUGH STRENGTH AND PERSEVERANCE

AND LEAVE THAT LEGACY

OF PEACE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN.

I WILL CONTINUE MY POLICIES OF CUTTING YOUR

TAXES, EXPANDING THE PRIVATE ECONOMY, REDUCING BUREAUCRACY

AND USELESS REGULATION, AND RESTRAINING SPENDING.

MY POLICIES HAVE BROUGHT US FROM THE DEPTHS OF RECESSION

TO A SUSTAINED RECOVERY, AND WILL ENSURE THAT RUNAWAY

INFLATION NEVER AGAIN ROBBS US OR OUR LOVED ONES OF THE

REWARDS OF HONEST WORK AND LIFETIME SAVINGS.

FINALLY, I WANT TO FINISH MY MOST IMPORTANT

JOB -- RESTORATION OF TRUST IN THE PRESIDENCY ITSELF.

AS YOUR PRESIDENT, I WILL PROMISE NO MORE THAN I CAN
DELIVER, AND I WILL DELIVER EVERYTHING THAT I PROMISE.

I NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO ENSURE PEACE, PROSPERITY

AND TRUST FOR THE FUTURE. THE FUTURE THAT WE OWE TO OUR

CHILDREN.

AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS WANTED LIFE TO BE BETTER

FOR OUR CHILDREN THAT IT WAS FOR US -- BECAUSE LIFE FOR

US HAS BEEN BETTER THAN IT WAS FOR OUR PARENTS.

WHAT DO I SEE AHEAD FOR THIS GREAT COUNTRY

OF OURS?

I SEE A STRONG AND CONFIDENT AMERICA, SECURE

IN A STRENGTH THAT CANNOT ALONE BE COUNTED IN MEGATONS

a Nation
AND REJOICING IN RICHES THAT CANNOT BE ERODED BY INFLATION

OR TAXATION.

I SEE AN AMERICA WHERE LIFE IS VALUED FOR ITS
QUALITY AS WELL AS ITS COMFORT, / WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL IS
INVIOLETE IN HIS CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, / WHERE THE
GOVERNMENT SERVES AND THE PEOPLE RULE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT