The original documents are located in Box 37, “8/19/76 - Speech Accepting the Republican Presidential Nomination (draft number 7 only, no reading copy) (1)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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PRESIDENT'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES TO THIS REPUBLICAN CONVENTION:

I AM HONORED BY YOUR NOMINATION -- AND I ACCEPT IT.

I ACCEPT WITH PRIDE, WITH GRATITUDE, AND WITH A TOTAL
WILL TO WIN A GREAT VICTORY FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
WE WILL WAGE A WINNING CAMPAIGN IN EVERY REGION
OF THIS COUNTRY -- FROM THE SNOWY BANKS OF MINNESOTA
TO THE SANDY PLAINS OF GEORGIA.

WE CONCEDE NOT A SINGLE STATE. WE CONCEDE
NOT A SINGLE VOTE.

THIS EVENING I AM PROUD TO STAND BEFORE YOU AS THE FIRST
INCUMBENT PRESIDENT SINCE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER WHO CAN TELL
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AT HIS PARTY'S CONVENTION:

AMERICA IS AT PEACE.
TONIGHT I CAN TELL YOU STRAIGHT AWAY --

THIS NATION IS SOUND

THIS NATION IS SECURE

THIS NATION IS ON THE MARCH TO FULL ECONOMIC RECOVERY

AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL AMERICANS.

I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO STOOD WITH ME

IN WINNING THE NOMINATION OF THE PARTY WHOSE CAUSE

I HAVE SERVED ALL MY ADULT LIFE.
I respect the convictions of those who want a change in Washington. I want a change, too. Let's all work together, and change this Congress -- this Congress where one party has ruled and misruled for 22 long years.

My gratitude tonight reaches far beyond this arena, to countless friends whose confidence, hard work, and unselfish support have brought me to this moment.
IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO SINGLE OUT ANYONE. BUT MAY I MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR MY WONDERFUL FAMILY, MIKE, JACK, STEVE AND SUSAN -- AND ESPECIALLY MY DEAR WIFE, BETTY.

WE REPUBLICANS HAVE HAD SOME TOUGH COMPETITION. WE NOT ONLY PREACH THE VIRTUES OF COMPETITION, WE PRACTICE THEM. BUT TONIGHT WE COME TOGETHER, NOT ON A BATTLEFIELD TO CONCLUDE A CEASE-FIRE, BUT TO JOIN FORCES ON A TRAINING FIELD THAT HAS CONDITIONED US ALL FOR THE RUGGED CONTEST AHEAD.
LET ME SAY THIS, FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART:
AFTER THE SCRIMMAGES OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS, IT REALLY FEELS
GOOD TO HAVE RON REAGAN ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE LINE.

TO STRENGTHEN OUR CHAMPIONSHIP LINEUP,
THE CONVENTION HAS WISELY CHOSEN ONE OF THE ABLEST OF AMERICANS
AS OUR NEXT VICE PRESIDENT,
-12-
WITH HIS HELP, WITH YOUR HELP, WITH THE HELP OF
MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO CHERISH PEACE, WHO WANT FREEDOM
PRESERVED, PROSPERITY SHARED, AND PRIDE IN AMERICA,
WE WILL WIN THIS ELECTION.

-13-
I SPEAK NOT OF A REPUBLICAN VICTORY, BUT A VICTORY
FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
YOU AT HOME, LISTENING TONIGHT -- YOU ARE THE PEOPLE WHO PAY THE TAXES AND OBEY THE LAWS.

YOU ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE OUR SYSTEM WORK.

YOU ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE AMERICA WHAT IT IS.

IT IS FROM YOUR RANKS THAT I COME,

AND ON YOUR SIDE I STAND.

SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENED TO THIS COUNTRY OF OURS THESE PAST TWO YEARS.

WE ALL CAME TO REALIZE IT ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.
TOGETHER, OUT OF YEARS OF TURMOIL AND TRAGEDY, OF WARS AND RIOTS, ASSASSINATIONS AND WRONGDOING IN HIGH PLACES, AMERICANS RECAPTURED THE SPIRIT OF 1776. WE SAW AGAIN THE PIONEER VISION OF OUR REVOLUTIONARY FOUNDERS AND OF OUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS.

THEM VISION WAS OF FREE MEN AND FREE WOMEN ENJOYING LIMITED GOVERNMENT AND UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITY.

THE MANDATE I WANT IN 1976 IS TO MAKE THAT VISION A REALITY.
BUT IT WILL TAKE THE VOICES AND THE VOTES OF MANY MORE AMERICANS, WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN REPUBLICANS, TO MAKE THAT MANDATE BINDING AND MY MISSION POSSIBLE.

I HAVE BEEN CALLED AN UNELECTED PRESIDENT. AN ACCIDENTAL PRESIDENT. WE MAY EVEN HEAR THAT AGAIN FROM THE OTHER PARTY DESPITE THE FACT THAT 85 PERCENT OF THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS CERTIFIED MY FITNESS FOR OUR HIGHEST OFFICE.
HAVING BECOME VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT,

WITHOUT EXPECTING OR SEEKING EITHER, I HAVE A SPECIAL FEELING TOWARD THESE HIGH OFFICES.

TO ME, THE PRESIDENCY AND THE VICE PRESIDENCY WERE NOT PRIZES TO BE WON, BUT A DUTY TO BE DONE.

SO TONIGHT, IT IS NOT THE POWER AND GLAMOR OF THE PRESIDENCY THAT LEADS ME TO ASK ANOTHER FOUR YEARS.

IT IS SOMETHING EVERY HARD-WORKING AMERICAN WILL UNDERSTAND -- THE CHALLENGE OF A JOB WELL BEGUN, BUT FAR FROM FINISHED.
TWO YEARS AGO, ON AUGUST 9, 1974, I PLACED MY HAND ON THE BIBLE WHICH BETTY HELD AND TOOK THE SAME CONSTITUTIONAL OATH THAT WAS ADMINISTERED TO GEORGE WASHINGTON.

I HAD FAITH IN OUR PEOPLE, IN OUR INSTITUTIONS AND IN MYSELF.

"MY FELLOW AMERICANS," I SAID, "OUR LONG NATIONAL NIGHTMARE IS OVER."
IT WAS AN HOUR OF OUR HISTORY THAT TROUBLED OUR MINDS AND TORE AT OUR HEARTS. ANGER AND HATRED HAD RISEN TO DANGEROUS LEVELS, DIVIDING FRIENDS AND FAMILIES. THE POLARIZATION OF OUR POLITICAL ORDER HAD AROUSED UNWORTHY PASSIONS OF REPRISAL AND REVENGE.

OUR GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM WAS CLOSER TO STALEMATE THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE ABRAHAM LINCOLN TOOK THAT SAME OATH OF OFFICE. OUR ECONOMY WAS IN THE THROES OF RUNAWAY INFLATION, TAKING US HEADLONG INTO THE WORST RECESSION SINCE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT TOOK THE SAME OATH.
ON THAT DARK DAY I TOLD MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN:

"I AM ACUTELY AWARE THAT YOU HAVE NOT ELECTED ME

AS YOUR PRESIDENT BY YOUR BALLOTS, SO I ASK YOU TO CONFIRM ME

AS YOUR PRESIDENT WITH YOUR PRAYERS."

ON A MARBLE FIREPLACE IN THE WHITE HOUSE IS CARVED

A PRAYER WHICH JOHN ADAMS WROTE. IT CONCLUDES:

"MAY NONE BUT HONEST AND WISE MEN EVER RULE UNDER THIS ROOF."

SINCE I HAVE RESIDED IN THAT HISTORIC HOUSE,

I HAVE TRIED TO LIVE BY THAT PRAYER.
I faced many tough problems. I probably made some mistakes, but on balance, America and Americans have made an incredible comeback since August, 1974. Nobody can honestly say otherwise.

And the plain truth is that the great progress we have made, at home and abroad, was in spite of the majority who run the Congress.
FOR TWO YEARS, I HAVE STOOD FOR ALL THE PEOPLE
AGAINST THE VOTE HUNGRY, FREE-SPENDING CONGRESSIONAL
MAJORITY.

FIFTY-FIVE TIMES I VETOED EXTRAVAGANT AND UNWISE
LEGISLATION. FORTY-FOUR TIMES I MADE THOSE VETOES STICK.

MY VETOES HAVE SAVED AMERICAN TAXPAYERS BILLIONS AND BILLIONS
OF DOLLARS.
I CALLED FOR A PERMANENT TAX CUT COUPLED WITH SPENDING REDUCTIONS TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND RELIEVE HARD-PRESSED MIDDLE INCOME TAXPAYERS. YOUR PERSONAL EXEMPTION MUST BE RAISED FROM 750 DOLLARS TO 1,000 DOLLARS.

THE OTHER PARTY'S PLATFORM TALKS ABOUT TAX REFORM; BUT THERE'S ONE BIG PROBLEM -- THEIR OWN CONGRESS WON'T ACT.
I CALLED FOR REASONABLE, CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON COURT ORDERED BUSING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

THE OTHER PARTY'S PLATFORM CONCEDES THAT BUSING SHOULD BE A "LAST RESORT"; BUT THERE'S ONE BIG PROBLEM -- THEIR OWN CONGRESS WON'T ACT.

I CALLED FOR A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF CRIMINAL LAWS TO CRACK DOWN ON CRIME AND ILLEGAL DRUGS.

THE OTHER PARTY'S PLATFORM DEPLORES AMERICA'S 90 BILLION DOLLAR COST OF CRIME; BUT THERE'S ONE BIG PROBLEM -- THEIR OWN CONGRESS WON'T ACT.
YOU KNOW THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS NOT
A MAGICIAN WHO CAN WAVE A WAND, OR SIGN A PAPER THAT WILL
INSTANTLY END A WAR, CURE A RECESSION OR MAKE A BUREAUCRACY
DISAPPEAR. A PRESIDENT HAS IMMENSE POWERS UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION, BUT ALL OF THEM ULTIMATELY COME FROM THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND THEIR MANDATE TO HIM.