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President Ford Committee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 1976

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The Steering Committee for President Ford's election campaign, composed of Republican leaders from around the country, will hold its first meeting at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, in the Maryland Room of the Mayflower Hotel, Chairman Rogers C.B. Morton announced.

The group also will meet with President Ford for an informal working dinner at the White House at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday.

Mr. Morton announced the names of 28 people who have agreed to serve with him on the committee.

The mission of the new Steering Committee is three-fold: (1) to provide for the President an objective overview of the progress of his election campaign; (2) to serve as a forum for discussion of strategy and ideas, and (3) to promote party unity.

Those named to the committee today are: Rep. John B. Anderson of Illinois; Sen. Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma; Robert Brown, Chairman of B. & C. Associates, Washington; Dean Burch, Washington; Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., of Providence, R.I.; Audrey Rowe Colom, Director of Community Affairs of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Harry S. Dent, West Columbia, S.C.; Gov. Daniel J. Evans of Washington; Ody J. Fish, Wisconsin Republican National Committeeman; Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

(more)



Also, Sen. Robert P. Griffin of Michigan; Richard L. "Dick" Herman, former National Committeeman for Nebraska; Mrs. Laddie F. (Pat) Hutar, President of the National Federation of Republican women; Sen. Jacob K. Javits of New York; Melvin Laird; Sen. Paul D. Laxalt of Nevada; Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., of Maryland, Kent B. McGough, Chairman of Ohio Republican State Central and Executive Committee.

Also Rep. Robert H. Michel of Illinois; Gov. William G. Milliken of Michigan; Leon Parma of San Diego; Mayor Ralph J. Perk of Cleveland; Rep. John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the House Minority Leader; Richard M. Rosenbaum, Chairman of the New York Republican State Committee; Sen. Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, Republican Leader of the Senate; Mary Louise Smith, Chairman of the Republican National Committee; William French Smith, San Marino, California, and Sen. John G. Tower of Texas.

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. STATEMENT
FOR
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We have just come from a meeting with the President. We come away even stronger in our belief that the American people know a good man when they see one - and that they will vote to keep that good man in the White House.

We're not going to say that last week was any banner week for the campaign. But by the weekend, the President in his highly successful appearances in Oklahoma, Texas and Southern California has recaptured the drive and momentum.

To be frank, the reason for this increasing support for the President is as much due to the doubts the voters have about Jimmy Carter as the decency they see in President Ford. We have talked with political leaders in some of the major states and we have found that independents and Democrats are beginning to turn toward the President because they are afraid of what a Carter Administration might do to the country. The issue in this campaign is rapidly becoming Jimmy Carter himself.

It goes deeper than just an apprehension about Carter's well known habit of flip-flopping on the issues - like abortion, right to work, or Humphrey-Hawkins. It's a real fear about some of the positions he has taken - for one thing some think Carter is trying to destroy the middle class of America with his big spending proposals. Middle income families are upset about Carter's statement that they should be taxed more heavily. They also are fearful of his statement that the tax exemption for the mortgage payments on their homes should be done away with or his pledge to remove the tax exemption on church property, like parochial schools or religiously-supported hospitals.

Secondly, I find American people are fearful of what a man without a day's experience in foreign policy might do to jeopardize the maintainance of peace. His statement that he would slash \$15 billion from the defense budget would signal the end of America as the leader of the Free World. The West would lack any deterrent to enemy aggression or war. This cutback, as well as the withdrawals Mr. Carter suggested in South Korea and N.A.T.O., risk upsetting the precious balance of peace.

But in these issues of peace, spending and taxes, frankly, we don't think the President has been aggressive enough. We urged him in our meeting today to address himself to Mr. Carter on these issues.

10/11/76

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