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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
REPUBLICAN RALLY

KNOLLCREST FIELDHOUSE, CALVIN COLLEGE

9:02 P.M. EST

Thank you very much, Paul. Thanks Bill Farr, Bob VanderLaan, Bill Zaagman, Pete, Marty, all of the other candidates at the State and local level, all of you who in all honesty overwhelm me as they did down at the Vandenberg Plaza.

I have been in a good many States in recent weeks, and I am going to a couple more the latter part of this week and the first of next. And let me say that this is beyond -- above and beyond the call of duty. I thank you. It is just wonderful to be here. I am deeply indebted to each and every one of you.

You know Bill Spoelhof, the great President of Calvin College. Bill and I started out as precinct workers together a long time ago. I was always scared to death that he would be a candidate for Congress. Thank goodness he did not, after that reaction.

But, Bill, I want to thank you for always making the Calvin facilities available. I have been here a number of times. As you know, I have always had a warm welcome, and this crowd tonight reminds me of a good Calvin-Hope basketball contest. Since I did not go to either one, I could be completely objective, pulling for both.

But I did see something that was on the chair as I sat down. It has been sort of a tradition of my campaign to put out these hot pads, or whatever they call them. And they were always gobbled up by thoughtful women who wanted to be reminded what a good Congressman would do. And we always used to put on those hot pads, "Vote for some Congressman by the name of Ford who works for you in Congress." That is what we emphasized -- work for you in Congress. And that is what Paul Goebel will do for you. He will work for you in Congress.

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I can see, as I look around this great crowd, some wonderful people from Ionia, from Montcalm, from Barry, from Eaton, from Clinton, as well as from Kent County. I love you, and it is just great to see you all. Naturally, I am delighted to be back home. I just wish Betty were here. But she did ask me to extend to you, one and all, her gratitude for the many prayers, many thoughtful messages, all of which have been extremely helpful to her and to us during this difficult period.

I thank you very much on her behalf.

I think all these wonderful balloons -- she is the best part of the family; I always said that -- but I got a big kick out of watching all these balloons come down from the ceiling at the start of the program. You might say this is the big difference between our position and our side of the aisle, and their position on the other side of the aisle. We put hot air in the balloons, and they put it in their speeches.

You know, a few weeks ago the Ohio State University was thoughtful enough to ask me to -- I said they were thoughtful enough to invite me to come and give a commencement address. And, gee, they could not have been nicer. But it does create a bit of a problem, with this contest coming up in a couple of weeks with the Buckeyes and the Wolverines. I try to be non-partisan as I go from one State to another, but it is particularly difficult to be non-partisan when it comes to such basic matters as football.

Now take this game between Ohio and Michigan in a couple of weeks. People keep asking me who I will be rooting for. Well, I think the late President Kennedy had a real good answer. He handled the problem extremely well. He was in Iowa, just before their big game with Notre Dame. And someone asked him the very same question, "Who will you be rooting for, Mr. President."

And Jack Kennedy said, "I will be rooting for Iowa."

And then he added, after a tremendous cheer went up, "But I will be praying for Notre Dame."

So come the Michigan-Ohio game, I will let you figure out who I will be rooting for, and who I will be praying for.

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Every two years for the last 25, for 13 campaigns, I have come back to your Congressional district seeking your support and gratefully receiving it. I have never been disappointed. I have always been most appreciative.

I guess it is kind of a habit to come back, and on the 14th it just seemed to me, even if I could come back for just one day it would be like coming home. It does not mean I can go from Kent to Ionia, to Montcalm to Eaton, to Clinton to Barry County.

That would be quite a bit in the limited time available, but whether I am in all six counties or not, my heart, my soul, my conviction, my dedication is there for the purpose of electing Paul Goebel to Congress from the Fifth Congressional District.

I thought it was very wonderful for the Governor to come to Grand Rapids today to participate in our ceremonies down at Vandenberg Center and to thoughtfully introduce me.

I have known Bill Milliken for a long time. I knew him when he was a State Senator. I knew him in his other responsibilities, and I watched him very carefully and extremely closely as Governor of our great State, and in the process, over the last months, I have had the opportunity of looking -- and I say this to anybody who has any doubt whatsoever -- I have had the privilege of looking at Governors from many States -- Democrats, Republicans -- and Bill Milliken by any standard -- and I say this as strongly, as vigorously as I can -- Bill Milliken by any standard is at the very top, and I hope he is re-elected.

I guess I am prejudiced, but for good reasons. If Bill Milliken is going to do the job that he is expected to do as Governor of our great State, then Bill needs support in the State Legislature.

You know the ones that have served you well, the ones who are seeking to serve you well, and I just hope that Bill gets the team that he deserves to do the best job for the great Wolverine State. Do your best, if you possibly can, for this great group of State legislative candidates.

You know, I have gotten a lot of advice lately from friends and foes and neutral observers. They said, "Mr. President, you ought to stay in Washington, surround yourself with that beautiful atmosphere at the White House, spend some time with your new dog Liberty, and cogitate over these great decisions that are presented to you, and then let the voters out in the respective areas of this country make up their own minds."

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I respectfully disagree with that view. I happen to believe that a President of the United States who has conviction and dedication ought to go out and talk to the people and listen to them instead of sitting in the Oval Office at the time of a great campaign.

It is my deep belief, it is my honest conviction, that we are doing right, both at home and abroad. We have some tough hurdles to cover, but as you look across the spectrum internationally or domestically and compare the role of our country with other countries, the problems of our country with other countries, the United States is doing well and we should be darned proud to be Americans and to participate in our society.

In the last three months since I became President, I have traveled almost 17,000 miles, met literally hundreds and thousands of citizens in many, many States, and I think it is the most refreshing, the most helpful experience, because there are literally, unbelievably, great numbers of wonderful people who have some thoughts and ideas and suggestions and contributions to make.

I think their help and assistance is just as vital as what I can get sitting in the White House looking at a lot of memorandums and papers that come from a fine staff or come from others.

This group here has got the power, the genius, the drive, the help, and I am darned fortunate to be here and to see you all and to get the message that you are giving me, which is the message you gave me in 13 previous elections -- integrity, dedication, work, objectivity and a love for America as much as you have it, and I hope I do, and I believe I do.

I am here tonight for a particular purpose, but I must express my gratitude to the local officials, Jack Root of the county, Lyman Parks of the city, and their respective associates for the unbelievable reception down at the Vandenberg Center and in the Calder area.

You know, the weather was a little bad, but I think it is fair to say that they were not good weather friends. They were there because we had a rapport, and I did not ask that group because it is a nonpartisan group, but I am here to ask every one of you to help in any way you can -- and this is a message from Betty as well as from me -- to elect Paul Goebel on November 5 so I can have the good help that I need from the Fifth District in Washington, D.C.

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I said a moment ago I traveled almost 17,000 miles, 16 States. My hope is that to some extent I can be beneficial, helpful in electing a Congress that will help me in the battle we are undertaking to lick inflation and to strengthen our economy.

What I want is a Congress that will help me make sure -- and let me emphasize this very perfectly, very categorically -- I want a Congress that will help me make certain and positive that your paycheck buys as much on the day you cash it as on the day that you earned it. That is our program.

If I know anything about the people of this district, whether you are in business or on the production line or on a farm or in the service, or in a service organization, the people of this district understand the sound fundamentals of how to run a business, a church, a school, a PTA or the Government.

I want to, if I might, address a few observations and comments to what I believe, and I hope you believe, is public enemy number one -- inflation. With your help and with the election of a cooperative Congress, I am confident that we can whip inflation and this button, WIN, means Whip Inflation Now, and we can with a good program, which I have submitted to the Congress and with the cooperation of 213 Americans, we can do it, but we need the Congress and we need the help of all of you.

And as I look around here, I see a great many people who have the WIN button on them, and if you don't have one, write us and the White House will see that you get it as long as you enlist in that army to Whip Inflation Now.

But let me make this observation: When I talk about a cooperative Congress, I am talking about a Congress that will be conscientious about how they handle your tax dollars.

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In the Congress, from 25 years' experience, I could pick out the big spenders and the savers, and the record clearly shows that in the Congress of the United States the majority of the big spenders are on the Democratic side of the aisle.

The majority of the savers are on our side of the aisle. It is just that simple.

Now, I admit there are a few crossovers on one issue, or perhaps on the overall. But I am talking to you very pragmatically, that this district has consistently had a Congressman who is in the category of a saver, not a spender. And if you want to restore that reputation, you darn well better vote for Paul Goebel in the next election.

Now, I have been reading newspapers, and listening to some of the commentators recently, and I have noticed that everybody is predicting the worst possible results from the Republican point of view. They say we are going to be clobbered, we are going to be wiped out. There is going to be a catastrophic defeat for the Republican party. We are going to have a terrible time in this election.

I respect those who want to vote for a legislative dictatorship. I don't agree with it, because the balance in our Government is predicated on what our forefathers wrote in the Constitution and what we have adopted by practice over the last 200 years, of a balance between the Executive, the Legislative, and the Judicial Branches, so that no part of our Government, no individual could control the destinies, the fate of people in this great land.

And this system of checks and balances, this finely-tuned system of balance between our three coordinate branches of Government, has given us more freedom, more opportunity, and more blessings than any people in the history of mankind. And we have got to keep that balance.

But you can destroy that balance. You can destroy that balance if the opposition were to gain a net of 50 in the House or 7 or 8 in the Senate. It would put a strangle hold on the legislative process because it would mean the inevitable election of those of the most liberal persuasion in the Democratic party.

I am not condemning all Democrats because some of them have been extremely helpful, and particularly the Democratic leadership in the House and the Senate. But their troops run wild. They are like a commander who tells them to do what is right, and then they scatter all over the ballpark.

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And so what I am saying to you is what we really need is competition in the Congress, not an overwhelming majority in the ranks of one political party, because if you get that kind of 2-to-1, 3-to-1, 4-to-1 strength in one political party, inevitably you have this legislative dictatorship which destroys that very fundamental concept that has made it so great for all of us in America, a balance.

So a veto-proof Congress is not what we want. I have got a better idea, this forecast: We want an inflation-proof Congress, not a veto-proof Congress. And Paul Goebel will give us that result.

Now if you get a veto-proof Congress, if you get a legislative dictatorship, as I have indicated, the whole system of checks and balances go out the window.

Now some of my good Democratic friends have a different idea of checks and balances -- a little different from mine. They write the checks even though there are never any balances. (Laughter)

And from your own personal experience, you know where that could lead. But let me make this observation, if I can. I am told that there is a great degree of apathy in America, and yet when I go to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, they have 10,000 in an auditorium like this and 5,000 people who could not get in. When I went to Lincoln in Nebraska, they had 5,000 or 6,000 at an airport rally. We have been to other communities where the crowds have been good. We have had a few disappointments, but we have had good reception.

Tonight is the best, and I thank you for it.

But do you realize that all of you here tonight can directly affect this election come November 5? You have it within your own grasp. You have it by your own vote, and how you can persuade, how you can help, by just what this group does here tonight.

On the other hand, if some of you sit it out, this election can be lost. I do not think you are going to be the kind of a villain who won't participate.

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I don't think you are going to be apathetic or you would not be here tonight, but there are many of your neighbors and your friends who, according to the statisticians, are not going to participate.

Let me give you something that is terribly disturbing -- it ought to scare you as it does me -- that the national percentage of votes cast in the Congressional off-year elections, like the one that is coming up next week, based on the total number of eligible voters, only 46.3 percent cast their ballots in 1962, only 45.6 percent took the time to do so in 1966, and the percentage of eligibles who voted in the last off-year election, 1970, was even lower -- 43.8.

Now, in this last special election that was held in February, about 35 percent in this district went to the polls. According to the statisticians, the computer projection, only 42 percent of your fellow Americans are going to vote in this election in all fifty States on November 5.

I made a speech earlier this week at Arlington Cemetery. I made a speech there because it was Veterans Day. We were paying tribute to and memorializing the hundreds and hundreds who have been buried in this wonderful cemetery. It gave me an inspiration to say to you that if they could give their lives to give you the right to vote, you ought to exercise that right to vote.

I cannot imagine an election that is more important to this district, to this State, than what will take place and transpire right here in the Fifth District next week.

Paul Goebel I have known since he was just a lad. His dad knew me when I was back at South High -- an inspired if not very competent football player. I have known the Goebel family a long time, and they are strong and they are tall, and they are the kind of people who are dedicated to public service. Paul Jr's. father was; Paul Jr. himself is.

And I have seen nothing but the finest in that family and young Paul, he epitomizes all the great characteristics of that family.

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And therefore, on the basis of quality as a person and experience in business and government, you have a great candidate. You have the kind of candidate that will do a job for all of you and for our State and for our country.

I know that he will stand up when the going is tough in the House of Representatives, and I know that the trials and the tribulations that a Member of Congress goes through when he has to decide what is good and what is bad, and it is not always black or white, there is a little gray here and there.

But Paul has the brains and the conscience and the understanding to sift out the good from the bad and to give you a right answer and, therefore, without hesitation, reservation or qualification, I can tell you I have already voted for Paul by absentee voter's ballot.

I am not going to try and vote again. Once is enough to show my support for a darned good Congressional candidate.

Now, let me add one final word, if I may. There are some people on the dias here who, to some extent, began politics about the same time I did or had an interest in it.

We are sort of -- that generation that came along after World War II -- most of us came back from some military service. Most of us saw the mistakes that our country made in the twenties when we thought, mistakenly, that the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Pacific on the other would be an adequate protection and we, as a Nation, could close our eyes, close our ears and not pay attention to the problems in the rest of the world and let them fight it out, or whatever they wanted to do.

That was the mistake of the twenties, and the thirties, and the consequence was between Hitler and Mussolini and others. We got involved in a contest between freedom on the one hand, and the effort on the part of some to subjugate people on the other.

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Whether it was in Hitler Germany or Mussolini Italy or elsewhere, the issue was clear-cut, and 16 million Americans went to war in the Pacific or in the Atlantic. And you know, most of us came back convinced that this was a glow, and we had to live together and work together to find peace together, to build together, to help one another in one way or another.

As I sat down at Calder, the one that convinced me that this approach was right, the approach of cooperation, was Arthur Vandenberg, a great Senator from our city and from our State.

And Arthur Vandenberg convinced me if we were going to solve the problems of the Mediterranean, we had to support Harry Truman's program of Greek-Turkey aid; that we had to help a Democratic President even though both Senator Vandenberg and I were Republican, by helping the rehabilitation, the reconstruction of Western Europe, including the Netherlands.

And he convinced me that we, on the other side of the political aisle, had to help a Democratic President build a sufficiently strong defense program, not for aggression, but for the maintenance of peace. So Arthur Vandenberg was a great, great leader for our country, and a great inspiration to me.

He taught me how to work with Democrats. He taught me the right approach as far as foreign policy was concerned. And the net result was we have had, relatively speaking, in Western Europe and many other parts of the world, a policy that was basically bipartisan--some variations, some deviations--and all of us, in my judgment, have been better off. It has led to peace in Europe. It has led to the detente that was initiated in the last five years. It has led to the achievements of a new approach to our relations with the People's Republic of China.

This bipartisanship under the leadership of our party has given to us, I think, the most solid foundation for peace over a longer period of time.

Now this last session of the Congress was very difficult. The Democratic leadership and the Republican leadership have worked with me, a Republican President. But unfortunately, too many of the troops have gone in a hundred different directions.

And the consequence is, we have not had the support to find the proper answer to help the Greeks and Turks resolve their problems in Cyprus. There has not been the kind of support which we need to keep a sound policy in Southeast Asia. There has not been the kind of support that I think is needed to help us find the difficult key to the problems of the Middle East. And they are tough and they are treacherous, and they are explosive.

What I am saying is we have got some tough problems overseas, and Paul Goebel -- because I know him, I have talked to him, and because I have looked at the record of his opponent -- in my judgment is the best man to help me keep the peace and strengthen the peace in the months ahead. And I hope you will support him.

Well, it has just been wonderful to be here. I love every one of you. You have put up with me in the past. You have been kind to me when you thought I was wrong. You supported me much too often for which I am grateful. But I hope and trust that in the months ahead, whatever I do will justify your faith, because I promise you, as I did the day I was sworn in, that I will do everything I can to make America strong and good, and do everything I can to make America for the best of all.

Thank you very, very much.

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(9:40 P.M. EST)