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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
THOMAS CURTIS
AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF THE
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

THE ROSE GARDEN

12:45 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Members of the Congress, designated members of the Commission, and guests:

It is a great privilege for me to participate in the actual swearing-in of these six very distinguished individuals who will be undertaking a very serious responsibility.

The campaign reform legislation, which was enacted by the Congress in 1974, which I had the privilege of signing, is landmark legislation, and the responsibilities that these five men and this one most attractive lady have is a responsibility that I know they will seriously take.

It is a combination of individuals selected -- two by myself and four by the Congress -- who can really, in the months and years ahead, set a path for the kind of elections that we want.

We want clean elections. We want fair elections. We want the best people campaigning and the best results as the American people decide.

I have great faith in all of them. I know some better than others, but, as I have looked over their records, I think the House, the Senate and the White House have selected fine people for a great, great responsibility.

So, with the best of good wishes for them to carry out this mission, I now ask Mr. Ratchford to perform the service of swearing them in.

(Mr. John J. Ratchford administered the oath.)

Congratulations.

MORE

MR. CURTIS: Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Senate and the House, Mr. Comptroller General:

Because this Commission does take over a great deal of the work that the Comptroller General has been performing, as well as the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate, in behalf of my fellow Commissioners, I want to assure you and this distinguished audience that the Commissioners are going to do their level best to try to improve the election process in this country.

I think if there is a theme that we want to hit, it is to tell the people that politics is an honorable profession and to have them participate more in the political process, not less.

This Commission has within its power -- as I read the statutes -- the responsibility of giving advisory opinions to the public as to just how they can participate in a proper and honorable manner, and that includes helping to finance these costly campaigns and encourage people to run for office, encourage people to participate in the election process.

Indeed, we do need all Americans, more Americans, participating in the election process if this country is going to continue to bring forward its best citizenry.

It is with a deep sense of responsibility -- as I say I speak in behalf of my fellow Commissioners -- we accept this unusual and new task in the election process. This Election Commission, I think, can go a long way in re-installing the faith of the American people, and those around the world, in the democratic process.

Thank you.

END

(AT 12:51 P.M. EDT)