

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL 6:00 P.M., EDT

APRIL 15, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO THE
REPUBLICAN SENATE-HOUSE DINNER

WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL

I am particularly pleased to see so many old friends here tonight -- as well as some new ones -- from the House and the Senate. And I want to say a special thanks to those of you whose generous support makes this great dinner possible.

The new campaign law has created a new ball game in financing House and Senate races. As a contributor, you are limited to a maximum contribution of \$1,000 for each candidate for federal office.

In practice, this means that our party must attract even more thousands of small, individual contributors. Our record of such broad support is excellent. I am proud of what we have accomplished. But we must do even better.

I believe this trend to a larger number of small contributors will prove to be a blessing. It has long been my conviction that anyone who gives as little as \$1 becomes committed by this individual action to helping either a candidate or a party.

By your presence, you are demonstrating the long-time faith all of us share in our party and its most fundamental goals. I am also extremely glad to see so many young people here from so many states.

I was an early sponsor of lowering the voting age to eighteen. Some of my colleagues disagreed because they feared young people would automatically vote for the other party. But I felt that the intelligent judgement of youth would attract very many to our own party. And I have been gratified by the results.

Young people are a vital new source of Republican energy, Republican idealism and Republican ideas. To young Republicans everywhere, I say we welcome you -- and we need you.

The proceeds from this dinner go to the Republican National Committee and to the House and Senate Campaign Committees -- whose combined efforts are vital to our goals.

(MORE)

After eight months in the White House, I know better than anyone--and I mean anyone--the importance of Republicans in the Congress.

And I promise you this: I do not choose to run in 1976 for myself alone--my 1976 campaign will be for all Republicans, everywhere!

This dinner begins a broad resurgence of Republican strength everywhere--but especially in the House, the Senate and the State Capitals. It is vital to my Administration--and to our entire nation--that we work in every state and every precinct to restore balance to our political system.

We will be partners in a common and crucial cause--the cause of Republican victory!

One thing I learned in more than a quarter-century of political involvement is that the prospects for victory are seldom so bleak or so good as they seem when you're in the thick of a fight. Time after time, a supposedly ruined party has rebuilt and returned--stronger than ever. And repeatedly, candidates once considered unbeatable have been beaten.

Looking over the hopeful Democrats in the Presidential sweepstakes, frankly, I don't see any who are unbeatable.

Let me remind you that when I became Minority Leader, we were outnumbered 294 to 141 in the House. Two years later, when the next House assembled, it was 248 to 187--a net gain of 47 seats for Republicans. We have done it before. We can--we will--do it again!

So let me make a prediction based on some experience. As the economy continues to improve this year and next, we will be in good shape in November of 1976 to win local races, House and Senate seats, and Governorships all over this country.

But for 1975, there is a lot of spadework to be done. The Republican Party must reach out as never before to attract new voters, non-voters, independents and Democrats deserted by their leadership.

Our task is not merely to strengthen our Party, and to broaden its appeal, but also to reverse a dangerous trend which finds congressional elections won or lost with less than half of our voting-age citizens actually voting.

What can we do about this problem?

As a starter, we can use this time before the next national election to rebuild the Republican Party into a strong competitor in the two-party system which has proven in the long haul of history to be the best political system in the world.

(MORE)

Let us resolve that our party's primary goal should be to attract the broadest spectrum of people sharing our basic beliefs. For the strength of America lies not only in its diversity, but also in its unity. The ultimate strength of our party lies in its commitment to principle.

Our effort to broaden the base of our party does not mean that we must abandon traditional Republican principles -- far from it. It means, instead, that we have to clarify and emphasize those principles, so that all persons of like political interests can join in support of the candidates of the Republican party.

Let me give you my thoughts on just three of these fundamental Republican principles:

First, Republicans have a long-demonstrated commitment to the free enterprise system and fiscal responsibility by the Federal Government. You can't have one without the other. For nearly a generation, this country has been headed in the wrong direction. Constantly increasing deficits and unchecked spending have been milestones on the road to economic disaster.

We must move in a new direction -- a Republican direction -- toward budgetary discipline and fiscal restraints.

One thing we must do is to slam the brakes on the spending schemes of the Democratic majority party -- schemes which could run the 1976 budget deficit up by as much as \$100 billion -- schemes which could by the end of the century result in one-half of all Americans living off the taxes of the other working half. Is that what you want for your grandchildren?

Never forget: A government big enough to give us everything we want is also a government big enough to take from us everything we have.

A second principle upon which Republicans are agreed -- although I do not want to suggest it is a partisan principle because many fine Democrats also support it -- is the need for a strong national defense posture as the only sure way to a peaceful world.

At a time of international uncertainty and stress such as the present, the need to keep our military forces strong and alert should be obvious to every American. We must guard our own national security and maintain the mutual strength of our alliances in Western Europe and the Far East, keep our vital commitments to longtime friends and keep pace in the research and development of future defense systems if our recent progress toward reducing the dangers of war is to continue. An essential element of a modern national security system is a sound intelligence organization -- and I do not intend to permit ours to be either publicized or paralyzed in times like these.

The third Republican article of faith I would mention is our basic belief in freedom -- the freedom of States and local governments to make their own decisions and the best use of their resources; the freedom of employees and employers to reach their own economic terms without government coercion; the freedom of every individual to aspire and to achieve his own goals within his own concept of a good life.

I say that freedom is an article of faith because it is on trial throughout the world tonight -- it is no more certain now than it was for our forefathers who founded this great Republic.

When the drafters of the Constitution finished their work in Philadelphia in 1787, Benjamin Franklin was recognized as he left the hall by a crowd of curious citizens gathered outside.

(MORE)

"What kind of a government have you given us, Dr. Franklin?" a woman's voice called out.

"A republic, Madam," he replied, "if you can keep it." We have kept it now for almost 200 years, through many triumphs and quite a few tribulations.

Once, when it seemed almost lost, the Republic was saved by a man who came from the people and whose faith in the people -- in all people -- never faltered. I will not claim that Abraham Lincoln belongs to our Republican Party, for he belongs to all Americans. But I do urge that our Republican Party remains faithful to the principles of Abraham Lincoln.

On these principles, Republicans can and will unite, Republicans can and will increase their numbers and their political strength, Republicans can and will come back to win in 1976.

#