

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL 4:15 P.M. (EST)
February 29, 1976

February 28, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary
(Fort Lauderdale, Florida)

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED AT THE AUSTIN
BUILDING COMPLEX
Austin Building Complex
Tampa, Florida

We had some good news earlier this week. Thanks to a lot of hard work by some wonderful people in New Hampshire, we won that first primary of the 1976 campaign -- and thanks to the great work some wonderful people are doing for us here, we're going to win in Florida on March 9th.

And, we're going on from there. We intend to win the nomination in August in Kansas City. And then we're going to win on November the second, as well.

We'll win because we have the policies, the programs, the performance and above all, the people on our side.

We'll win because the American people know that it took action, not words, to put America back on course. We've made real, solid, measurable progress in solving the problems that affect you most, and you're going to see a lot more progress in the months and years ahead.

When I became President nearly 19 months ago, America was faced with some very serious concerns:

- Runaway inflation and recession both threatened our economic strength and stability;
- International tensions threatened the peace in many areas of the world;
- A crisis of confidence in our own government and in the basic institution of our society threatened the promise of the 200-year-old American experience.

It was a bleak, depressing, even frightening picture. It was a time that called for strong, affirmative action.

Nineteen months later the results are there for all Americans to take pride in and all the world to note. Our national economy is growing stronger and more prosperous every day. The business community is planning ahead with a new-found sense of certainty and security. The economic indicators point to good news ahead.

The Department of Commerce announced just two days ago that the index of leading economic indicators rose by 2.2 percent in January -- the largest gain in six months.

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The index showed improvements in the length of the average work week, the job layoff rate, wholesale prices, vendor performance, stock market prices, contracts and orders, net business formations, new orders and building permits.

This shows that almost every segment of our economy is rebounding in a strong, dynamic, encouraging way. We're on the road to a new prosperity in America, and we're not going to be sidetracked now.

Employment has gone up. In January alone, we gained 800,000 jobs -- the biggest monthly increase in nearly 16 years -- and that's progress. In January alone, unemployment fell by five-tenths of one percent -- the biggest monthly drop in more than 16 years. We're still not moving as fast as I would like, particularly in Florida, but we're moving, and moving in the right direction, and I'm not going to let up until every American who wants a job can find a job.

During 1974, inflation was raging at an annual rate of more than 12 percent. The latest indicators show we've cut it almost in half. Again, I'm not satisfied, but that's real progress, and the American people know it, and they like it.

The latest index of consumer confidence -- how you and your family and your neighbors look at the future -- is double that of a year ago.

Real earnings for the average American worker rose significantly in January -- well above the rate of inflation. That means your purchasing power is on the increase. Now when you get a bigger paycheck it doesn't buy a smaller bag of groceries.

Nearly two million, one hundred thousand jobs have been recovered since last March. That's 96 percent of all the jobs lost during the worst recession in more than 30 years. And we did it without scrapping fiscal responsibility, without massively tapping the Federal Treasury, and without zapping the American taxpayer.

We did not resort to expensive temporary "quick fix" government solutions. Through the commonsense steps I initiated -- tax cuts for individuals, tax incentives for business expansion and job production, and extended income cushions for those Americans out of work -- we have weathered the worst of the storm.

As a result of this Administration's action, we have begun a vigorous economic recovery. But the price of America's economic recovery was not a new round of double-digit inflation, nor was it billions and billions of extra dollars from the Federal taxpayer.

And if we can hold the line on Federal spending, if we can keep the budget busters in the Congress under control, then another major tax cut will be entirely possible by 1979.

You know where I stand on unnecessary Federal spending. I've vetoed 46 Bills since becoming President, and without endangering or weakening our economic recovery, those vetoes will save the American taxpayer 13 billion dollars.

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And I'll continue to veto these extravagant spending Bills again and again and again until we restore fiscal self-control to Washington. You have to keep your financial house in order. You have every right to expect your Federal Government to do the same.

We have a strong economy and I intend to make it even stronger. I want more jobs for more Americans, and I want those jobs to provide Americans with a future -- to give you pride as well as a paycheck.

I want to make sustained prosperity not only a goal but a fact of life in the United States of America.

But economic progress is not the only progress we have made.

Today America is at peace. Today there are no Americans fighting anywhere in the world, and I want to keep it that way.

I believe in peace through strength. We will stand tall and strong and keep our powder dry, so the United States can negotiate from a position that commands respect and invites cooperation.

I have taken firm steps to ensure that our major alliances are strong, our commitments are valid, and our defenses are without equal in the world.

I have proposed the two largest peacetime defense budgets in America's history, reversing a trend that was reducing our defense expenditures year by year to levels that were dangerously low.

The price of our national defense may be high, but the price of freedom is one Americans have always been willing to pay ... in blood, in sacrifice, in treasure. We are no less willing to pay that price in America today to keep our Nation secure.

But America's security rests on more than armaments alone.

It rests in part on our determination to make the lives of our own citizens secure here at home. This is especially important for America's older citizens, to whom this Nation is so deeply indebted.

In my State of the Union Address to the American people, I pledged to ensure the integrity and the solvency of the Social Security system. I am fighting to maintain it.

American working men and women have labored too long and contributed too much to the greatness of America -- to be denied the income they have earned for retirement in their later years.

I will continue to push, prod and press the Congress to make sure that your Social Security benefits, now and in the future, will be responsibly funded and fully protected.

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To be strong and secure from within is a great bulwark of our liberty, and that is something we must never forget.

But our ultimate strength is one of the spirit --- the love of freedom, the pursuit of justice, the commitment to progress which Americans have shared for 200 years.

We live in a Nation that is the envy of the world and frankly I'm tired of hearing America downgraded!

I believe in America. I believe in its strength. I believe in its purpose. I believe in its goodness. And I believe in you -- it's people.

Working together, you and I, we can look to an even brighter future for our children and their children.

We can see an America in which all men and women live in dignity and security and harmony and in peace.

We can see a people taking pride in their work and finding pleasure and purpose in their lives.

We can see an America in which government is the capable servant and not the master of its people.

We can see an America which cherishes the old values of honesty and compassion and determination and courage.

We can see an America in which dreams still come true.

This is my goal, and that is why I ask for your support in the challenging years ahead.

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