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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE RECEPTION

FORUM 30 HOTEL

3:45 P.M. CST

What I would like to say is first, I want to thank all of you for coming and the help and assistance, not only with the fund-raising, but also with the support that you gave otherwise. I am absolutely convinced we have momentum going. We had a close raise in New Hampshire, but we came from behind and we prevailed.

We had a good victory in Massachusetts. I did not spend any time up there, but we had a good organization and, of course, we entered in Vermont and our opponent didn't, so we came out of that in good shape. I have been down to Florida twice and the momentum has turned around and even the campaign manager for the opposition, who originally said they were going to win by two to one, has conceded that it was 55 percent and 45 percent, so we made a 12 point gain almost overnight.

Then I think the momentum is even going better and at the present time, it is neck to neck. But, I am certain with our people, with the momentum we have, I am optimistic about what is going to happen in Florida.

As I hear about what Dick Ogilvie and the others have done here with the help of you, that Illinois can be a good strong State for us in Kansas City. The point that we are trying to make is that we have some proven polls.

I think domestically we have done extremely well in the last month or six weeks. We had a very tough time there, as all of you recognize, about a year ago, but we did not lose our cool, we did not panic.

We took our lumps; we got some strong help in the Congress. I was saying down stairs we vetoed I think 46 bills. 39 of them have been sustained, but if you add up what has been saved with those vetoes, \$13 billion -- and that is \$13 billion less deficit, less borrowing by the Federal Government -- I think that has had an impact in preventing crowding out as far as the capital markets are concerned.

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It has given confidence to the American people. We had some additional good news this morning. Unemployment dropped from 7.8 to 7.6, which proved that last month's reductions in unemployment was not a fluke but it was for real. We had another 125,000 go on the employment roles.

It is interesting that we have now regained every lost job from the depth of the recession. Now our problem is to continue the gains so that the new people entering the labor market -- about two million of them a year do enter the labor market -- we are all convinced that with the programs we have unemployment is going to continue to go down.

Alan Greenspan yesterday in an interview by some of the top reporters in Washington was very optimistic that our forecast that we included in the budget were being exceeded, and if we get some more healthy good signs, which I am confident will be the case, we will have to perhaps revise our estimates for fiscal year 1977.

For the benefit of the press, I am not telling you that we are going to (Laughter) but if plans continue I think with our policy of frankness and honesty we will have to take another look at it.

But, it just looks very encouraging politically, economically, and I feel that our international policies are achieving results through strength, and we are going to keep that strength up there. Any comments to the contrary -- we are second to none. We do have the necessary strength to reassure our allies and to convince any adversaries that we can negotiate from strength, not from weakness.

So, I am an optimist about 1976, and the next four years, and so I hope we can justify your faith in us.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 3:54 P.M. EST)