

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
IN A TELEPHONE CALL  
TO THE  
KENT COUNTY REPUBLICAN  
LINCOLN DAY DINNER  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

THE RESIDENCE

8:30 P.M. EST

Let me say on behalf of Betty that we are both delighted to have an opportunity to express to all of you our gratitude for the great support that everybody had given us in the Fifth District and in the State of Michigan over the years.

I think a good many people there know that I have attended Lincoln Day Dinners as far back as 1946, and it seems that every one of them gets better and better. With all of the Senatorial candidates there, as well as the Lieutenant Governor, I am sure this will be a first-class Republican Lincoln Day Dinner in Grand Rapids on this occasion.

I still read the local newspapers. I have noticed that you had a kind of rough time last week with all of the bad storms, the ice and sleet, and the high water flooding of the Grand River. Obviously, we were deeply concerned about the fact that the water was high and the power was out.

I hope that the damage to Western Michigan was not too severe, and particularly I hope it wasn't bad as far as those great fruit ridge orchards up there in the Northwest corner of Kent County.

On a happier note, I wish I could see some of your faces tonight because the support that I have gotten over the years from so many people has made my job easier in the Congress, in the first place, and my job easier as Vice President, now as President, and I thank everybody for what they have done over the years on behalf of my candidacy, and I hope that what I have done justifies continued faith in the future.

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We know, Betty and I, how hard so many of you have worked, how much time you have given and how much energy you have expended over the years for a good cause, which I trust will be justified in the primary as well as the general election on November 2.

One of the great thrills that we got, Betty and myself, was that 18 of you paid your own way to travel to Florida in my behalf, and believe me, that group that went down there, Pete, did a great job. It had superior press--the radio, television and the writing press was tremendous--and I think it had a significant impact on the election results last Tuesday.

You know, it was great to see those pictures of Cliff Gettings and Mose Haddam, who were such good friends of mine and did so much for me when I was at South High. To see them working side by side with some of the students from Calvin College, the high schools and other colleges in Western Michigan, really gave me a thrill and made me feel just real good inside.

But, with that kind of spirit and that kind of dedication, we are going to keep up our unbroken string of victories.-- New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts -- Florida -- and I just heard a few minutes ago that one of the networks said we were going to win 63 percent of the vote in Illinois. Another one said 58 percent.

Whether it is 58 or 63, that is a great victory and another real clincher in our effort to win the nomination and to go on to victory on November 2, 1976.

We are going to keep on with the same programs. We are going to make certain that what we do is right and that we are going to make certain that we have progress on our domestic economy at home and peace abroad. I am convinced that those programs will win not only the primaries but it will win the general election on November 2, 1976.

I would like to add this, Pete, if I might: We have a great Senatorial election, or race, coming up in 1976 in Michigan. I happen to think that Bob Griffin is one of the finest Members of the Congress, either in the House or the Senate, on the Democratic or Republican side.

Bob does just a tremendous job, but it would be a great help to him and a great help to me if we had another good Republican Senator from Michigan elected on November 2.

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Now we are going to say to all of you that we have appreciated your help and assistance. We want support from the younger people, from those in the middle and those who are among our senior citizens.

We think we have a good program. It is aimed at solid solutions, not at quick fixes. These who advocate the quick fixes are looking at today and forgetting about tomorrow. We have to have a program in this country that takes care of our present problems and makes certain that we have a solid, strong, vigorous, progressive America in the years ahead, and I pledge to you, the younger people, and all above, that age group, that as far as this Administration is concerned, we are going to be for a strong America both at home as well as abroad.

Let me conclude by simply saying we have a tradition in this country that goes back some 200 years, and we are on the brink of our third century. It should be the greatest century in the history of America, but we can make it that way by being proud that we are Americans and proud of America.

I thank you all, on behalf of Betty and myself, very, very much. The best to you and to all of those who are there. Good luck and God bless you.

END (AT 8:40 P.M. EST)