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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT
SPRUCE PINE, NORTH CAROLINA

MORRISON FIELD

6:47 P.M. EST

Governor Jim Holshouser, distinguished sheriffs, honored guests, all of you wonderful mountain folks:

It is nice to be with you. We got half way up here this afternoon by helicopter and then this mountain dew kind of interfered a bit. (Laughter) So, we had to go back and drive up here. For the hour and a half, or whatever the time was, that Jim and I were in the car, I learned more about this mountain area than I could have learned anywhere else because Jim is proud of the fact that he comes from here and he praises you, he commends you. You are just great people, and I thank you very, very much.

I want to thank these Avery High School Mountain Cloggers. I just wish I could be there a little closer and see all that fancy, intricate footwork and those pretty girls and nice fellows.

I thank all of you for staying out here under these adverse weather conditions. It just makes me feel awfully good. I know that you sacrificed a lot, but I just have the feeling that you are not going to let me down on Tuesday, just like you are here today.

Now, let me take just a minute or two to talk about some of the things that I think are significant.

First, I am not a stranger to North Carolina. Quite a few years ago I went to your great law school at the university. I spent nine months at the Navy Pre-flight School at Chapel Hill and then my son, Mike, and his wife attended and graduated from Wake Forest University. So, the Fords have a lot of connections with the great State of North Carolina.

As Jim said, I have traveled a good bit in your great State, trying to help Governors get elected, Senators get elected, Members of the Congress get elected, and also to help in any way I could for the great cause of the Republican Party, which is a good cause and a cause that we should be proud of. It represents the philosophy, it represents the cause that is important as I look down the road for the future of America.

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As Jim said, we have gone through some tough times in the last 19 months. When I became President, the cost of living was rising at the rate of 12 to 14 percent. We have cut it in half. As you might have read in the paper, or heard on radio or television, just yesterday we got some great economic news -- the cost of living increased at the lowest rate in four years. We are on the right track, and we are going to keep going that way.

When I became President, we were right on the brink of the worst recession in 40 years. Economic clouds were dark. Everybody was pessimistic. The doomsayers were predicting all kinds of catastrophe for this country. But, we kept a firm, steady hand on the tiller. We didn't panic. We had a good course of action. We had the right kind of plans to keep America strong in the future.

Although unemployment went high and employment went down, we ended up with the right trend right now. Employment is going up and unemployment is going to go down, and it is going to get better and better in the months ahead.

Now let me talk about two of the things that I think are vitally important. There are some people up in Washington who have been trying to sell the idea that the bigger the Government got, the better it was for everybody. I don't agree with that. There is no person in Washington who knows all the answers.

Some of the people that have been trying to sell these quick fixes, these patent medicine solutions are wrong. Let me tell you what we are trying to do under this Administration. I have a lot of faith in your locally elected officials, your mayors, your councilmen, your sheriffs, your Governors, your State Legislators. They are good people. They can make better judgments, they can make better decisions than some of those bureaucrats who sit behind those fancy desks in Washington, D.C.

So, we are going to send some of the money back to you so you can make the decisions at the local level. We are trying to cut down on the bureaucracy in Washington, get rid of the red tape. I think we can run the Government an awful lot better. There are some who want to bust the Federal budget and pile one bureaucracy on top of another. That is the wrong approach.

You know the Congress challenged me a good bit in the last 19 months. They sent down to the Oval Office in the White House a lot of bad legislation. I vetoed 46 bills, almost an all-time record. I was sustained 39 times by at least one-third of the Members of the House and Senate, and do you know how much money we saved by those vetoes -- \$13 billion.

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If a spendthrift Congress, a budget-busting Congress sends any more big spending bills down to the Oval Office, they are going to be vetoed again and again and again.

Now let's talk about the affirmative, what we ought to do in Government, what the responsibility is of the Federal Government. First we have an obligation to our older people who are on Social Security. We have a Social Security program at the present time that people have paid into, they have earned their retirement and we are going to keep that Social Security trust fund sound.

There are some that have gotten fancy schemes one way or another. I won't get into the details but I will promise you as your President for the next five years that you will have a sound and secure Social Security program to take care of those who are now on retirement and those who are working and earning their retirement.

But let me say at the same time, the Social Security program is run well. There are some programs in the Federal Government that aren't any good and we are going to get rid of them. There are those in Washington who want to pile this bureaucracy on top of another bureaucracy. That is the wrong way to give freedom in America. I am scared that if we go down the wrong path, we are going to lose our freedom in America. And that is as valuable and that is as priceless to us as anything.

Now let me just say if you put the wrong people in Washington, you have to be fearful that they are going to husband all this power, take it away from you. There is one real fundamental danger that we have to watch and it is put in about one sentence -- just don't forget this -- a Government big enough to give you everything you want is a Government big enough to take away everything you have.

Now we are at peace. We have the military strength and capability to keep that peace. We have the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and the Marines that are strong enough to prevent aggression. We have the Department of Defense that is powerful enough to protect our national security and, if I am elected President -- as I think we will be -- on November 2, I will guarantee to you that the United States of America will stay strong, will be strong and will keep the peace in the future.

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You know, back in January of this year there were a lot of doom sayers saying, or writing, or talking, that President Ford couldn't make it and they looked at the polls and they said, he never won an election outside the State of Michigan. We went up to New Hampshire, we were behind. We had good people as volunteers, we worked hard, we had good programs, and, by gosh, we won.

Then we went to Vermont and Massachusetts and we won real well there. Then we went down to the State of Florida and some politicians down there were saying that President Ford is going to lose two to one. All these doom sayers and pessimists were predicting the worst results.

We had a lot of fine people -- just like you are -- down there in that State of Florida. They went to work. We went down and campaigned. It rained a little bit down there, too, but people came out. We had a lot of enthusiasm and we won real good.

Then we went up to that area that I came from, the Middle West, and in Illinois we had again some tremendous inspirational leadership. We had lots of enthusiastic people and we just walloped the devil out of them out there in Illinois. (Laughter)

Now we are right here in North Carolina. What are you going to do in North Carolina?

As I look over this great, great crowd here tonight that came out and stayed out and are here now, I can look in the eyes of those old people, and young people, and everybody else. I just know that this mounyain area is going to give us a great big victory on Tuesday.

We have five victories. Let's make it six. In North Carolina let's get a real good margin. Betty and I will be watching and I can't wait to see those results come in because they are going to be good, because all of you, and all of the other people in the great State of North Carolina, they want a winner in November, and I can win.

Thank you very much, Jim. Thank all of you who have come and stayed and are here. Again, I am deeply thankful. I wouldn't let you down and, boy, you haven't let me down.

Thank you very, very much.

END (At 7:01 P.M. EST)