

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 29, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY  
(Houston, Texas)

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PRESIDENT FORD COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER RECEPTION

THE HYATT REGENCY HOTEL

7:53 A.M. CDT

It is wonderful to see all of you bright and early this morning in untypical Texas weather. (Laughter) But let me just give you a quick evaluation of the wonderful day and a half or almost two days that we have had in Texas. Of course, we started just across the border in Shreveport near East Texas and moved from there to Longview and on further West.

Everyplace we have been we have had a warm, receptive and, I think, enthusiastic reception. Let's be honest and frank. All the polls and everything else indicated we started as underdogs. But, we are closing that gap, we are going to give them a real tough go, and I think we can win.

Let me tell you why I think we have made such substantial progress. Number one, in Senator John Tower we have an outstanding leader, and you should all be very proud of him as your senior United States Senator.

Secondly, the kind of people that all of you are and the time and effort and the determination that you have had and, as I said, whether it is in Longview or Tyler or anyplace else, we not only have an awful lot of quantity like all of you here, but we have the best in quality in our volunteers, and thank you very, very much.

Then I happen to think we have some pretty good policies, both at home and abroad. So, when you call and talk from a phone bank or when you speak to your neighbor or you talk to somebody at the supermarket or one of you in your professions, whether it is the law or otherwise, you ought to have some affirmative selling points, and let me give you those very quickly.

We are on the upswing, and we are moving more rapidly every day to a prosperous and stable and healthy economy in the United States, and we can take credit for it.

MORE

When we talk about jobs, we now have 86,700,000 people gainfully employed in the United States. That is the highest figure in the history of the United States. That is not bad. In the last year, we have gained 2,600,000 jobs. A year ago, in May or April, we had a very bad economic situation. Jobs were being lost, the unemployment was much too high, but in this last 12-month period we have gained this 2,600,000 jobs, we have reduced the rate of unemployment and the headway on jobs is up and the trend on unemployment is down.

But, the most important factor when we look at the overall picture is what happened in the area of inflation. When I became President 20 or 21 months ago, the rate of inflation was 12 to 14 percent, unbelievably high, caused by a number of factors, but we undertook some sound, I think constructive, steady courses of action.

We didn't let the Congress roll us over (Laughter) and the net result is the rate of inflation for the first three months of 1976 is under 3 percent. That is a 75 percent reduction.

Then there is another factor that I think we can sell. A President has to be firm and decisive. In dealing with the Congress, we have a good batting average. We vetoed 48 bills. Thirty-nine of them have been sustained and in the process, we have saved the American taxpayer \$13 billion.

The person that occupies the White House, you know he can't have any retakes. (Laughter) He has to make a decision and stand with those decisions. About a year ago some international bandits tried to capture -- and did capture -- an American merchant ship. What did we do? We took firm action and got it back, and that is the kind of leadership that this country has to have.

I might say that if any future international bandits want to use those kinds of tactics, they have been well warned that this Administration is not going to tolerate any adventurism throughout the world.

But, let me say in conclusion, we have strength, we have the calm, determined attitude that is necessary and required in this country, whether it is in the handling of domestic policy or in the area of foreign affairs. We have strength in our alliances around the world, and we have convinced our adversaries that it is more important to negotiate than to confront.

So, we have some selling points. But, all of it really comes down to this bottom line. All of you are an important -- in fact, I would say the main -- ingredient in how well we do on Saturday. The phone calls you make, the efforts that you undertake, that will make the difference. We are going to be working 16, 18 hours a day between now and Friday night. We will do the best we can. We won't let you down, and I know you will make a maximum effort and those clouds on Sunday could look awfully bright, and I think they might.

Thank you very, very much.