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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
TO THE
PFC RECEPTION

HOLIDAY INN

1:30 P.M. CDT

It is great to be in this part of Texas and to see so many enthusiastic, so friendly supporters of Jerry Ford for the Presidency of the United States, and I thank you very much.

Did you know this is the second visit I have made to Texas in the last several weeks? We were down here earlier, we came back and started on Tuesday afternoon with a drop-by at Shreveport so we could get some good exposure in East Texas. And then we went to Longview and to Tyler, and we have been to Houston, and we are going to have two full more days coming down the road because we think that although we started as an underdog we have got the momentum going, I think we are getting awful close, and I think we might win next Saturday.

I was very pleased to meet the four delegates that are running as President Ford delegates, and I thank each and every one of them for being on the ballot and we will do everything we can to make certain that they get elected. But let me say a word or two about all of you wonderful volunteers.

First, John Tower has been a "tower of strength" -- if I can coin a word -- because he has given the leadership and his tremendous record of being the senior Senator from Texas certainly has been extremely helpful, and I want to thank John for his unselfishness and his great leadership on my behalf.

Secondly, I want to thank all of you for volunteering your efforts to help in this very crucial election, and we consider the election on Saturday as crucial, if not more so, than any other election in all the 31 or 32 primaries. It is a very important date, an important date I think for the future of the Republican Party, an important date for the philosophy that all of us believe in and espouse, the kind of philosophy that can give this country in the next century the leadership, the progress, the strength, the freedom that we want for ourselves but, more importantly, to these young people who are here with us.

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So May 1 is an important date. I know you are dedicating a lot of time -- you have made hundreds of telephone calls, you have talked to your friends, you have done everything -- but we have got about 70-some hours left and that is when the final whistle blows. So everybody you can get to the polls, everybody that you can convince to vote the right way can make a critical difference, for those four delegates, for our success in Kansas City in August, and for the success of our election process in November.

I know, after I get the nomination, I can win in November. And that means I can win against Hubert Humphrey or Jimmy Carter or any one of the other Democratic candidates. I don't care whether they elect them or nominate them in the election process or they do it in the smoke-filled rooms in New York City when they get down there for their convention.

We are going to win. But the crucial vote comes right here in the State of Texas so we want your maximum help.

But there is one thing you might use in talking to the many people you see from Montgomery County -- I think we have had programs that have been successful for the good of America.

As you can recall just a year ago, 12 months, we were in the depths of the worst economic recession in 40 years in this country. But by steady, constructive programs we have been able to turn that around. Instead of having inflation of 12 percent or more, for the first 3 months of this calendar year it is down to less than 3 percent. That is a 75 percent reduction in the rate of inflation, and that is progress, by any standards.

Also, I think it is worthy of considerable mention, in the last year, from April or May to the present time, we have added 2,600,000 more people on payrolls throughout this country, so that as of March we had 86,700,000 people gainfully employed in this great country -- an all-time record, and the Ford Administration can claim the credit for it.

So I think when you talk to your friends, by phone or in person, you have got something to sell -- an affirmative, constructive record -- and I promise you, as I said to all the good people of Conroe, that I think that our third century can be the greatest century in the history of America, and if we can have an opportunity to participate in the first four years of it, with a kind of leadership, we will be off on the right start.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 1:37 P.M. CDT)