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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
FROM THE
PRESIDENTIAL EXPRESS

KALAMAZOO AMTRAK STATION

2:48 P.M. EDT

As soon as First Mama gets here, we will say a few words. Here she is. You can see who gets all the cheers in the Ford family. (Laughter)

Let me say that Betty and I are very grateful for the wonderful reception we have had in the State of Michigan, starting in Flint and here in Kalamazoo. Of course, the further West we get in the State, the closer to home we get, so we know many, many people here in Kalamazoo. It is just great to be back in Michigan and have an opportunity on this train ride to see as many of our friends as we have.

You know, that train started in Flint. It is going to end down in Niles, Michigan. It is a train that is going to go from here to Kansas City. We are going to win in Kansas City and we are going to win in November just as well.

I would like to take just a few minutes, if I might, to first ask for your support and tell you why I want you to vote for Jerry Ford. You ought to have some good reasons, and let me tell you what they are.

When I took the oath of office in August of 1974, this country was having all kinds of trouble. There had been a loss of confidence in the American people as far as their national Government was concerned. There had been scandals in high places. The American people were uncertain as to the leadership of this great country.

At the same time, we were on the brink of an economic recession that was the worst in 40 years. This country was suffering in August of 1974 inflation at a rate of 12 percent or more. In August of that year, our allies abroad, whether it was in Western Europe or in the Pacific, were uncertain as to the leadership in the White House, and they were uncertain of the will and the resolve of the American people. And our adversaries abroad could have, if they were so disposed, might have taken advantage of this uncertainty.

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In the last 21 months I have tried to correct those problems. And if you look at the record, Jerry Ford has done a good job and he wants the job for another four years to do even a better job for all of you Americans. My program for the last 21 months has been one of peace, prosperity and trust. We have the peace, we achieved it. We have the military capability, we have the diplomatic skill to keep the peace that we have now, and I pledge to you we will make a maximum effort and we will be successful in keeping the peace in the future for this country and for the world as a whole.

Let me say a word about the progress we have made in tackling effectively the economic problems that I inherited. I told you about 12 percent inflation. For the first three months of 1976 the rate of inflation on an annual basis has been under 3 percent. That is a 75 percent reduction in the rate of inflation. That is a darn good record, and we ought to be proud of it.

But, as I said, shortly after I took office we were hit with the worst economic recession in 40 years. Unemployment went up, employment went down but let's talk about what has happened in the last year. A year ago this recession had hit us very badly, but since last April and May we made tremendous progress.

In this 12-month period that we have added 3,300,000 more jobs in America, and in the month of April of this year 710,000 more people got employment, got jobs in America. That is a good record. We ought to be proud of it.

According to the Department of Labor that reported to all of us a couple of weeks ago, 87,400,000 American people are gainfully employed in America today. It is the highest number in the history of the United States. That is good, but in the next four years we will do better every year. I pledge that to you as the President of the United States.

So, Betty and I are here as your President and First Lady -- some of you call her First Mama. We would like to serve you for the next four years, and we would like to do it on the basis of a successful record.

The election next Tuesday is a very important election. It would give us the momentum that is needed and necessary to win in Kansas City. It would give us the momentum to win the November election. One pledge that Gerald Ford has always made when I had the privilege of serving the Fifth Congressional District -- Kent County, Ottawa County, Iona County and parts of several other counties -- was that I was open, I was forthright, I had an integrity I think was unmatched by anybody in public office, and as President of the United States I have followed those same basic characteristics.

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The net result is that I can say to you that the American people have good reason to feel that the person in the White House has restored public confidence.

I am honored and privileged to have with me on this trip your great Senator Bob Griffin and your fine Congressman Garry Brown, who both support me.

One thing that I always believed in public life -- you should promise only that which you can deliver and you should always deliver what you promise. So, I promise you in the next four years peace, prosperity and trust.

I want your vote on the basis of the record on Tuesday so we can keep that momentum going.

Thank you very, very much.

We also have your great University of Michigan basketball coach here, who is a good friend of mine and supporting me, Johnny Orr. I hope my record is as good as his.

Betty and I will come down and shake hands with as many as we can, and I don't have the time to shake hands with everybody, but I do want to thank each and every one of you.

Eddie Hutchinson, nice to see you. Eddie Hutchinson who has been one of the fine, fine Congressmen from the Fourth Congressional District. Eddie, I appreciate your endorsement and your support.

(AT 2:58 P.M. EDT)

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3:20 P.M. EDT

Let me just add a note as we leave Kalamazoo. When I first ran for the Congress back in 1948, a great American, a Democrat by the name of Harry S. Truman, whistle stopped across the United States, and he won. A couple of years later another great American, another President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, better known as Ike, whistle stopped across the country. Those were good ideas, one for a Democrat and one for a Republican. I think it is a good idea for President Ford, and we are going to win in 1976.

Thank you all very, very much.

END (AT 3:21 P.M. EDT)