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(Saginaw, Michigan)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
SAGINAW TOWNSHIP BICENTENNIAL PARK

SHERWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3:39 P.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much Al Cederberg. My good friend Guy Vander Jagt, the Congressman from the western part of the State is here. George Olson, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Kennedy, Reverend Beck, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

May I say at the outset I hope I have as many friends in this audience as George Olson and Al Cederberg have. (Laughter)

It is a great privilege and pleasure for Betty and Susan and myself to be here in Saginaw Township with so many, many fellow Michiganders who are proud of their birthright and who are celebrating what is good and great about America. Saginaw Township -- I have known from talking with Al Cederberg and others -- is a young, vibrant community with a very real sense of purpose.

In the planning and the organization of the Bicentennial celebration, you have brought people together in a wonderful community spirit and a community effort, and for that I congratulate each and every one of you.

In the tradition of American you have established new links between families and between neighborhoods. You have given your Township what is so vitally important for so many communities that are searching for it, and that is the feeling of identity as well as a common purpose.

If I might say, in my own way in the Oval Office I have been trying to do precisely the same thing. On August 8 of 1974, when I was sworn in as your President, I said to the American people our long national nightmare was over, and it is, my fellow Michiganders. In the last 21 months we have dispelled the climate of darkness and despair that hung over their troubled nation, and we have let the sunshine in.

I did not seek this office, as all of you know, but neither did I shirk from it, and I never will in the future. I said that I would promise only what I could deliver and deliver everything that I promised, and as you look back over the 21 months that is precisely what we have done.

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I said I would be candid and forthright, I would be open and frank with the American people, and I have been. I said that a policy of firmness and common sense would bring us out of our economic recession. It has. When I took office, inflation was running as high as 12 percent throughout our great country. The prophets of doom and disaster said we were on the verge of a collapse in America and that only massive Federal spending programs would save us.

Under the pressure from all sources, I didn't panic because I had a lot of faith in all of you, and I knew that you had the faith and the trust in me. I fought the attempts of many Members of Congress to spend more and more, to create bigger and bigger deficits that would have led us to higher prices and more layoffs in our economy. Instead, despite the pressure from many sources, I vetoed 49 bills that Congress sent me, and thank goodness 42 of those were sustained, saving the American taxpayer \$13 billion.

If I could personalize it, it would save each family in America some \$200, and that came in mighty handy. But, let me say this. The ball game is not over yet. This session of the Congress is still going on, and I promise you that during this session of the Congress I will hold this country on its course of full economic recovery by using my veto power again and again and again for our country's best wishes.

Why do I do this? I think the answer is very, very simple. I want to make sure that your tax dollars work as hard for you as you did for them, and I know how hard each and every one of you did work for those tax dollars, and your Government better spend them just as well as you can spend them.

But as we trace the last 21 months, let me say a word or two. We have reduced inflation by more than half. We have increased national employment by 3,300,000 people since last June. More men and women in America are working today, are gainfully employed than ever in the history of the United States -- 87,400,000. You have my promise that I am going to keep the pressure on until every American who wants a job has a job, a rewarding permanent job with a real future instead of a deadend, temporary, make work job created by the Government itself.

Let me say a word or two about taxes. I am no expert of the situation in Saginaw or otherwise in this area, but I can talk with some authority about the Federal Government. I promised to you that we would have a tax cut last year. We got it at the Federal level. I promised to you that we are going to work hard to get the Congress on July 1 of this year to give you another \$10 billion tax cut.

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Why do we do that? Because I have an abiding faith that you can spend your money much better than your Government can for you and your family and your community. That is what we want.

If you look at the record, the middle income people of this country have been shortchanged in the last few years by Federal tax policy, and in the recommendations that I made to the Congress in January of this year the one, the quickest, the best way to change that was to propose that increase from \$750 a person to \$1,000 in personal exemptions.

You don't have to worry about Al Cederberg supporting that, but boy, put the pressure on the Congress because that is the way we can give you in the middle income people the kind of a tax break that you need and that you have earned and that you deserve.

May I say my Administration is determined to stop the extention of Government intervention, Government interference and Government control in your daily lives. As a Congressman, as Vice President and now as your President I have never lost sight of one very basic fact -- a Government big enough to give you everything you want is a Government big enough to take from you everything you have.

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I have tried to follow a course as your President that has led to a strong and rising prosperity, a renewed trust and a lasting peace. Throughout 27 years of my public service in the Nation's Capital, my total commitment was, is and always will be a policy of peace through strength.

Because we are militarily powerful, because our national defenses are strong enough to meet any challenge, to carry out any mission, America is at peace today. We must maintain that peace. We must advance the prospect for peace among all nations and make certain that the legacy of peace continues for our children and our children's children in the years ahead.

Why do we sacrifice? Why have we, of my generation and the generations before us and the generations that have followed, sacrificed? We work hard. We save. We do our very best. It is to make the generation that follows us a happier, a healthier, a more prosperous generation.

That is what my parents did, that is what I am trying to do for my children, and as I look at this great audience I know that every grandfather and every grandmother have done it for their children and you who have children today are doing exactly the same thing.

That is the history and the tradition of this great country, and this is what each one of us, as we make our decisions, whether it is in our work or our church or in our Government, must say to ourselves: How can I make a better and better America?

So, as I come before you today I seek a mandate from you to finish the very important job that I have begun and done the best that I could for the last 21 months -- to complete the restoration of faith and trust in the Presidency of the United States.

I have been honest with you. I have been candid and forthright, and so is my campaign for the highest office in this great country. I am proud of my country. I am proud to be an American, just like every one of you are, and in the process of doing what we can I want to lead our country away from a wasteful preoccupation with what went wrong with America and get on with the job of making things right in America.

You have shown here in this Bicentennial weekend, in everything you do in Saginaw Township, that love of country and belief in our ideals not only exist but thrive in the United States of America.

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In the future, I see an America where the spirit fills each and every one of us with renewed confidence to face the challenges before us, an America dedicated to the simple but enduring values that give a nation and give its people integrity, an America where life is valued for its content as well as its comforts, and where Government serves but the people rule.

If you share that vision of America which I have, I urge you to go to the polls next Tuesday, join with me in making this Bicentennial year, not only in Saginaw Township but in all of the other 39 governmental areas in this great country, not only a year of celebration but of determination where, once again, we show the world that American dream which we all have had in our lifetime is best achieved when we are wide awake and where we, as Americans, are moving forward.

Think for a moment, if you will, some 200-plus years ago some 3 million Americans fought for freedom in some 13 poor, poor colonies. They took on a Government 1,000 or more miles away but they had the courage and the vision and the determination, and they won that battle for what we have today, and they gave us in this country the greatest Constitution, the most wonderful document for the governing of people in the history of mankind.

We believe in it. We can make it work. And the Bicentennial Commission and all the things that they are doing here in Saginaw Township and elsewhere give us the light, the hope, the vision for a better and better America.

Thank you very, very much.

END (AT 3:54 P.M. EDT)