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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
SPRINGFIELD ART CENTER

3:05 P.M. EDT

Thank you very much, Mayor Parker. I really appreciate not only the key but the plaque, and I want to express to him on behalf of all of our party what a wonderful welcome we have had here in Springfield.

Thank you very, very much, Bud Brown -- incidentally, I think he is a darn good Congressman, too -- Jim Rhodes, Bob Taft, Mayor Parker:

It is wonderful to be in Springfield. I am overwhelmed with so many wonderful people, so warm and so friendly. You vote for me tomorrow and I won't let you down.

But let me talk for just a minute about why that election tomorrow is very important and why I think you ought to vote for President Ford for the Republican nomination, so he can win in November. Let me take just a minute.

In August of 1974 -- refresh your memory -- this country was in terrible trouble. The American people had lost faith and confidence in the White House itself. We were suffering inflation of over 12 percent. We were on the brink of the worst economic recession in 40 years. Unemployment was going up and jobs were going down.

At the same time, on the international front, our allies were uncertain and our adversaries might have been tempted to take advantage of the situation we faced. Let me assure you, it was not a very happy and pleasant time to become President of the United States.

But in the past 22 months we have done the right thing. We have been open, we have been frank, we have been candid in the way in which we have dealt with people at home and with our allies abroad. And the net result is the public has had a restoration of confidence and trust as far as the White House is concerned, and give me four more years and we will do even better in that period of time.

A year ago we were facing a serious economic problem, the worst in 40 years. What did we do? We didn't panic. We were calm, we were tough, and the net result is the rate of inflation has dropped from 12 percent to under 3 percent. That is a 75 percent reduction and that is a darn good record.

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That just happens to mean that when that paycheck comes from home or from the factory, you can go to the store and you can do a heck of a lot better. Your spendable income -- because the Ford Administration did the right thing -- means more in 1976 than it did in 1974.

But let's talk about jobs for a minute. A year ago, we were losing jobs and this country faced a terrifically serious economic situation. But what have we done in the last 12 months? We have added 3,600,000 jobs in 12 months. We added 700,000 more jobs in the month of May and we have now -- as of the month of May -- 87,700,000 Americans on the job, an all-time record, and we are going to do better than that in the months ahead.

Let me tell you what I think we have to work for. People are always saying, "What statistics are you talking about when you discuss unemployment?" The only way I know to describe it is simply this: I want a job for everybody in America who wants a job and will go and get one.

One comment about foreign policy. This Administration has brought peace to the United States. This Administration has the military capability and the diplomatic skill to keep the peace and this Administration will keep the peace in the future, because we have the resolve, the military capability and the skill to do so. I commit myself to that. And let me add, I think it is important for all of you to remember that there is not a single American boy today fighting or dying on any foreign battlefield. That is the record of the Ford Administration.

And I might say parenthetically, the Ford Administration is not going to commit any U.S. military personnel to Rhodesia or South Africa.

But now let me make this comment: Tomorrow you may well be making the decision, who will be the Republican nominee for President of the United States. If you want a Republican candidate to win you should vote for Jerry Ford. He can win in 1976. And if you want a candidate at the top of the ticket to help elect Bob Taft -- which is important -- a candidate who will help to elect Bud Brown and the rest of the State legislative and local ticket, you vote tomorrow for Jerry Ford, who has done a good job. I want your vote. I appreciate your help.

Thanks for being here.

END (AT 3:15 P.M. EDT)