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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH
EDITH GREEN
GEORGE FELDMAN
AND

DOM DIMAGGIO
CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE
CITIZENS FOR FORD

SUTRO RESIDENCE

9:28 A.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody. It is typical San Francisco weather, which we enjoy.

I am especially pleased this morning to have the opportunity of announcing a Citizens For Ford Committee, and the three co-chairpersons are all very good friends of mine. Let me announce them individually.

First, former Congresswoman Edith Green of Oregon. Edith and I served in the House of Representatives together for 19 years. She was on the other side of the aisle but we worked together in many, many areas in order to try and enact good legislation. She was a wonderful person to have on your side but a person that was awesome if she was on the other side. But I always felt that Edith Green was one of the most able, most articulate, most dedicated Members of the House that I knew in my 25-plus years as a Member. So, I am extremely pleased to have Edith Green as one of the co-chairpersons of the Citizens For Ford Committee.

The next is George Feldman of New York and Massachusetts. I first got to know George Feldman in 1958 when he was the staff Director of the Select Committee on Space. I was a member of that committee. He was chosen by the then Chairman of that committee, the former Speaker, John McCormack. I worked with George Feldman for the whole time in the hearings and the writing of the report and the preparation of the legislation.

Subsequently, George served under President Kennedy as the Ambassador to Luxembourg and to Malta. In addition, he was a delegate to the United Nations. He was a member of the Law of the Sea Conference in 1961.

Our friendship has gone on from 1958 to the present time. And I thank him for his willingness to participate in the Citizens For Ford Committee.

MORE

The third member of this top group is Dom Dimaggio. Dom is well-known out here on the West Coast. I have known Dom Dimaggio-- because I am an avid reader of the sports page -- I know from the records that he was one of the outstanding baseball players of all-time. He had a batting average of 300 over a good many years in the American League. He contributed significantly to the success of the Boston Red Sox.

He is a person who has shown an active interest in public affairs, and I am very, very pleased to have Dom Dimaggio as a member of this group of three.

So, I would like the three of them -- Edith, George and Dom -- to come down here and we have agreed that we will answer some of your questions concerning the organization or any questions that they might like to respond to.

QUESTION: Mr. President, is this a group for Democrats primarily?

THE PRESIDENT: This is a group that will permit Independents and Democrats who wish, to support the Ford candidacy. It doesn't put an emphasis on either group. It is a citizens committee that will seek to invite and involve non-Republicans on my behalf.

QUESTION: Mrs. Green, why did you decide to go Republican?

MRS. GREEN: I really did not decide to go Republican. In my own State of Oregon, I am supporting a good many of the Democrats. By and large, I am supporting Democrats.

If the question is, why did I decide to support Ford, the reasons are many. As the President said, I worked with him in the House of Representatives -- I was going to say 20 years, 19 is correct -- and during all of these years we knew that President Ford, Jerry Ford at that time, as the Minority Leader, was a very honest, decent, capable guy. We knew that when he got up on the Floor he had done his homework, that he said what he believed in and he perhaps was not the flamboyant kind of a person as Adam Clayton Powell or maybe Bella Abzug, but he was a guy to be trusted and that, very frankly, is the reason that I am supporting him.

QUESTION: Mrs. Green, did you think you did not have an alternative in the other candidate? (Inaudible)

MRS. GREEN: I never, in the 20 years that I ran for office, tried to say things adversely about my opponent. And my comments are not against anybody else but they are for the President, and I guess I just really do not know Carter. I do not know what he stands for and, believe me, I tried to find out.

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I do know that the record that the President has set, not only during the time he was in Congress but since, is one where I feel I have confidence in the way the country would be run.

I might add one other thing. When I was in the House I was one of those -- some 400 I think, about -- who voted for Jerry Ford for the Vice Presidency, and I think I do not need to remind you that at that time there were 300 FBI people who were out investigating everything that he had ever done and said -- almost from the day you were born, I guess -- and that was a Democratically-controlled Congress and it was when Watergate was just beginning to surface and the Democratically-controlled House and the Senate were certainly looking at everything that Jerry Ford had ever done.

It went to the Judiciary Committee in the House. They investigated again. He came through with flying colors and in a Democratically-controlled House and Senate -- as I recall, the vote was somewhere around 400 to 30 or at least there were about 30 of the Democrats who would not support him -- but the big majority, 10 to 1 of Democrats and Republicans, voted for him because they did trust him and knew that he had been a decent and honorable guy.

QUESTION: How are you setting up the national committee? Are you going to have groups in every city?

MRS. GREEN: We will try to reach as many people as possible. We are going to talk about that this afternoon and certainly we want to appeal to as many -- not only the Republicans but also the Independents and the Democrats.

QUESTION: Mr. President, how do you think you will do on the debates tonight on foreign policy and defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Helen, I am looking forward to it. I would like to wait and see how it comes out, but I am optimistic and I am looking forward to it.

QUESTION: Mr. President, does the formation of this group at this time, a month before the election, indicate that your campaign is in a little trouble with Democrats and Independents?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all. I think it is a reflection that there are many, many Independents and Democrats who are uncomfortable with my opponent and who believe that the record that I had, both as a Member of Congress and as Vice President and as President, is one that they can wholeheartedly support.

We find there is a groundswell of Independents and Democrats, and this is reflected in the increase of the Ford margin in the polls, so Dom and Edith and George are going to be the heads of that group to stimulate an even greater movement toward the Ford candidacy.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: It is nice to see you all. See you tonight.