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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PONTIAC AMTRAK STATION

ABOARD "THE HONEST ABE"

10:40 A.M. CDT

It is great to be in Pontiac, Bill Harris' home town. Let me introduce some of the very special guests we have on "The Honest Abe" special: Senator Chuck Percy; Jim Thompson, the next Governor of the State of Illinois; of course you know Bill Harris -- where is Bill, there he is; and then an old favorite of yours of many, many years, Les Arends; the next Congressman from this district, Tom Cochran; and then a favorite of mine, (Laughter) Betty Ford; Ed, how are you, Ed Madigan, and a fine, fine Congressman. Re-elect him, too.

Betty and I are delighted to be in Pontiac, Livingston County. We had a good start in Joliet this morning. I couldn't help but notice that Abe Lincoln made a very famous statement in the State of Illinois just a few years ago when he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Jimmy Carter wants to divide America. President Ford wants to heal America, and that is where we are going.

Betty and I are here in the great State of Illinois because we want your help, we need your vote, and with your help we are going to carry Illinois on November 2 and we hope and trust that we can do it emphatically and successfully and win that election for the good of America on November 2.

I can't help but make the observation that Jimmy Carter will say anything anywhere to be President of the United States. When he is in California, he sounds like Cesar Chavez. When he is in Chicago, he sounds like Mayor Daley. When he is in New York, he sounds like Bella Abzug. (Laughter) When he is in Washington, D.C., he sounds like George Meany. And when he comes to Illinois, he sounds like just a little old peanut farmer. (Laughter) He wavers, he wanders, he wiggles and he waffles, and he shouldn't be President of the United States.

Now let me just give you what I think is the reason Betty and I can come here and honestly ask you for your support. Since I have been President, we have restored trust and confidence in the White House. Since I have been President, we have turned the economy around and the United States today is on a surge toward the kind of prosperity that we expect and will have in the four years under President Ford. Thirdly, the United States is at peace, and I am proud to say that not a single young American is fighting or dying on any foreign soil under this Administration.

MORE

(OVER)

One other very important point -- taxes, spending, national security. Jerry Ford believes the best tax reform is tax reduction, and that is why I recommended to the Congress that they increase your personal exemption from \$750 per person to \$1,000. The Congress didn't do it, but we are going to pressure them to do it in 1977 and we will keep on pressuring them until they do do it. Tax reduction is the best tax reform.

Now what does Jimmy Carter want to do about your taxes? He had an interview a few weeks ago and he said that he would increase taxes on all taxpayers from median income on up, and that means that 50 percent of the taxpayers in the United States will have a tax increase under Jimmy Carter.

So, the issue is clear. President Ford wants to reduce the middle income taxpayer's obligations to the Federal Government. Jimmy Carter says he will increase them. So, when you go to that ballot box, think about how you can get a fair shake in the Federal tax payment that you have to make.

One other point: I think we have got to put the lid on Federal spending. Jimmy Carter has embraced 60-some spending programs that will add \$100 billion to \$200 billion annually to the Federal expenditure.

Jimmy Carter also says he wants to reorganize the Federal Government. Let me point this out: When he was Governor of the State of Georgia, four years, he increased the number of State employees by 25 percent or more, he increased the spending by the State of Georgia by 50 percent or more, and he increased the bonded indebtedness of the State of Georgia by over \$200 million. Can you trust him with that record to reorganize the Federal Government? I don't think you can.

Let me say this: Jimmy Carter, on two occasions, has made public statements that he would cut defense spending by \$15 billion. Of course, he denied it, but the facts are he did say it. He wants now to cut defense spending \$7 to \$9 billion, or \$5 to \$6 billion. At the same time, he says the United States is not strong enough. Now he can't have it both ways.

And let me remind you of a statement made by a great President of the United States -- Teddy Roosevelt, who once said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick." With the kind of cutbacks in defense spending that Jimmy Carter wants to make, Jimmy Carter in effect is saying speak loudly and carry a flyswatter. (Laughter)

Jimmy Carter has said that the United States, our country, is not respected any more around the world. That is an inaccurate statement. Every single leader in the free world has said that relations between the United States and their country is good, never been better, and when Jimmy Carter says that your country and my country are not respected, Jimmy Carter is slandering 215 million Americans and the United States of America, and we shouldn't stand for it and we won't.

So I say to you, Betty and I are delighted to be in the Land of Lincoln, here in Pontiac, Bill Harris' hometown.

I urge you to elect Jim Thompson, your next Governor. I urge you to elect Bill Harris. I urge you to elect Tom Cochran. I urge you to give support to the kind of record of performance that we have given to you in the last two years, and I say Betty and Jerry won't let you down during the next four years.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 10:50 A.M. CDT)