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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS

9:40 A.M. EDT

Thank you very, very much, Governor Godwin. It is a very high honor and a very great privilege for me to be in this great State capital, and have the kind and very generous observations and compliments by your great Governor, Mills Godwin.

May I say it is a pleasure also to be on the platform with Congressman Ken Robinson, Lieutenant Governor Dalton and my old and very dear friend who I served with in the Congress of the United States for many, many years, former Governor Tuck.

Distinguished officials, ladies and gentlemen: At Kansas City, I said that I would not concede a single State, I would not concede a single vote, that I would campaign from the snowy banks of Minnesota to the sandy plains of Georgia. I have kept that pledge -- just today Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, ending up in California. So, let me say without any hesitation or reservation, we are going to see as many people as we can to keep that pledge that I would not concede a single vote or a single State.

I had last night one of the greatest honors to spend the night with Governor Mills Godwin and his lovely wife Catherine. Back in the days when Governor Godwin was a Democratic Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I envied him, I respected him and I had a long hope that some day we could be together. And let me say very, very strongly that Governor Mills Godwin is one of the giants of American politics, and we are proud of him.

But I am also proud to say that Virginia is the second home of the Ford family. We lived in Alexandria for some 25 years before we moved into the White House. In fact, for the first few days after taking the oath of office on August 9, 1974, we lived in our home in Alexandria and actually commuted to the White House and to the Oval Office. So, one could honestly say for a limited period of time Virginia was the White House for the United States.

Our four children went to the public schools in Alexandria. I paid taxes in the State of Virginia. I even belong to the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Company in Alexandria, thanks to my good friend Marshall Beverly of Alexandria. (Laughter)

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Yes, the Commonwealth is widely known, and properly so, as the Mother of Presidents, and I am proud to be an adopted son. Our Bicentennial celebration vividly reminds us of the native sons and daughters of Virginia who have written glorious chapters in the history of this great country. Their names are American legends -- George and Martha Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Patrick Henry, George Mason, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, John Tyler, Woodrow Wilson, John Marshall, Robert E. Lee, Harry Byrd, Senior, and now Harry Byrd, Junior.

In this campaign you know where I stand. I stand on your side for limited Government, for fiscal responsibility, for rising prosperity, for lower taxes, for military strength and for peace in the world. I stand for your principles. Can I count on your support November 2?

After so many years of war, America has enjoyed the blessings of peace with freedom. Not a single young American is fighting and dying today on any foreign battlefield, and I intend to keep it that way. Not a single American wife or sweetheart, mother or father, is wondering whether their loved ones will be a wartime casualty tomorrow, and I intend to keep it that way.

After so many years in which America's defensive needs were shortchanged, I proposed in 1975 and again in 1976 the two largest defense outlays in America's history and convinced the Congress to stop slashing away at our military spending and our defense capability.

After many, many years of runaway growth in the Federal budget, I submitted a budget for fiscal year 1977 which cut the rate of growth in Federal spending in half. I have held the line on Government spending with 64 vetoes and saved the hard-pressed taxpayers \$9 billion.

Because I have not been afraid to say no to excessive spending, we will submit a balanced Federal budget by 1978 and we will have another tax cut in the meantime for the hard-pressed American taxpayer.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a well-deserved reputation for financial integrity, and I will do my very best in the next four years to see that your Federal Government matches that reputation you so well earned under Governor Mills Godwin.

After so many years of uncontrolled inflation, we have cut inflation in half, and will do even better in the future, because you know, as I know, that inflation is the cruelest tax of all. It hits all segments of our population, but particularly those who live on fixed incomes.

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Now, after the worst recession in this country in the last 40 years, we have added four million new jobs to the American economy, not by creating deadend jobs at the taxpayer's expense but by stimulating jobs with a future in the private economy where five out of the six jobs in America exist today. Still, too many people are out of work. We are not satisfied with the progress that we have made, but more Americans were working in 1976 than ever before in the history of this country, nearly 88 million, and that is a tremendous comeback from where we were just 18 months ago.

After suffering a tragic betrayal of public trust two years ago, America has had its faith restored in the White House. My Administration has been open, candid, forthright, and we will keep it that way during the next four years.

As I told the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk earlier this year, I firmly believe that private morality in public service can and must go hand-in-hand, and it will under a Ford Administration.

This is only a part of my Administration's record over the past two years. We inherited a great many difficulties, as I said in the debate last night. But I was honored to come and to try and serve you during this very troublesome period in American history.

I have outlined some of the things we have done but let me quickly tick off some of the other things I think are accomplishments. Farm exports and farm income are at an all-time high. A major effort is already underway to cut red tape in the Federal bureaucracy. We are working for peace and justice in the Middle East and throughout the world. In every field, America is on the move. We have made an incredible comeback in the past two years, and I promise we are not through yet.

You can believe me when I say America is strong, and we will keep it strong, because the American people are willing to pay the price for that kind of national security.

You can believe me when I say this Nation is sound, this Nation is secure, this Nation is on the way to a better quality of life for all Americans, and this Administration has earned the trust of the American people.

My record is one of progress, not platitudes; performance, not promises. It is a record I am proud to run on, a record the people of Virginia and the concerned citizens throughout this country -- Democrats, Independents, and Republicans -- will support on November 2.

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Give me your mandate and we will reduce the growth of Government still more.

Give me your mandate and we will insure the integrity of the Social Security system. We will improve Medicare so that our older citizens can enjoy the health and happiness that they have earned. There is no reason they should go broke just to get well.

Give me your mandate and we will make sure that this rich Nation does not neglect its citizens who are less fortunate than we, but provides for their needs with compassion and with dignity.

Give me your mandate and we will create a tax structure that is fair to all, that will preserve the family home, the family business, the family farm, and give our industry an opportunity through tax incentives to provide jobs by modernization, building new factories, competing abroad, so that America's economy will be healthy and strong for the betterment of all.

Give me your mandate and we will expand the recreational opportunities and restore the healthy environment of this great country as our legacy to future generations.

Give me your mandate and I will lead this Nation on the path of peace through strength and we will live in peace and freedom in the United States of America. I have no fear for the future of America. The future to all of us is a friend. And as we go forward together I promise you once more what I promised you before -- to uphold the Constitution, to do what is right as God gives me to see the right, and to do the very best that I can for America.

God helping me, I will not let you down.

END (AT 9:55 A.M. EDT)