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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
PLYMOUTH MEETING MALL

9:00 P.M. EDT

Congressman Larry Coughlin, Senator Dick Schweicker, Congressman Bud Shuster, your good friend Bob Butera, and all of the other dignitaries here on the podium:

It is wonderful to be in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I love you, and we are going to win.

As I travel around the country, the crowds get bigger, the enthusiasm becomes even greater, but there is one thing I am an authority on; that is, the quality of the bands. Inside you have the wonderful Journeying String band, the Plymouth White March band, and as I came in I couldn't help but notice the fine music and the wonderful appearance of the Central Bucks Marching band, the North-South Marching Eagles and the Sun Valley High School band. Thank you all. They are the best. Congratulations. I deeply appreciate them all being here.

Let me be very straightforward with you tonight. It is great to be back in Pennsylvania. You have given me a wonderful welcome here. We had a wonderful welcome in Pittsburgh yesterday, and I thank all of the wonderful people from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the support that we are going to get on November 2, and we are going to carry the Keystone State.

I am going to extend to you a special invitation from Betty and myself. Come on down to Washington, D.C. January 20 and see the Ford-Dole ticket sworn in on inauguration day.

As we come to the final countdown days -- and we have just six days left -- I want you to know where I stand. I stand on your side for limited Government, for fiscal responsibility, for rising prosperity, for military strength, for peace in the world.

I remind each and every one of you that not a single young American is fighting or dying on any foreign battlefield tonight, and we are going to keep it that way.

After so many, many years in which America's defenses were short-changed, I proposed the two largest defense outlays in the history of the United States. I was fortunate enough to convince the Congress of the United States not to slash and cut our defense appropriations in 1976.

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After so many years of runaway growth in the Federal budget, I submitted a budget for this fiscal year which cut the rate of growth in Federal spending by one-half. I have held the line on Government spending with 66 vetoes and saved you, the hard-pressed American taxpayer, \$9 billion and each family in this country \$200 in Federal spending, and we are going to do better next year.

Because, as your President, I have not been afraid to say no to the big spenders in the Congress. We will submit a balanced budget in 1978 and we will have another tax reduction for the American people in addition.

My idea of tax reform is very simple -- it is tax reduction. I proposed last year, in January of 1976, that the Congress increase your personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000. Let me be very specific. I am sure in this great group here tonight there are families where there are three children, a husband and a wife. If Congress had done its job, if Congress had done as I recommended, that family next April in making out their income tax return, would have had \$1,250 more of tax exemption.

Congress failed you. We are going to put it on their doorstep next January. If they don't do it in 1977, we are going to submit it in 1978, and if they don't do it then, we will beat 'em in the next election.

I firmly believe that the middle income taxpayer -- which is about 50 percent of the American taxpayers -- they have been short-changed. Jerry Ford is on their side, and we are going to get that kind of tax reduction out of the next Congress, I pledge to you.

Since I have been your President in August of 1974, we have cut the rate of inflation by one-half, and I pledge to you we will do even better in the next four years.

After the worst recession in 40 years, we have added four million jobs to the American economy in the last two years, not by creating deadend taxpayer jobs but stimulating jobs with a future in the private economy. That is where we can make this country prosperous again. We will get tax reductions to get jobs, and we will get tax reductions so you will have more of your own money to spend for yourself and your family, and that is another pledge.

We still have too many people out of work. We are not satisfied with the progress we have made but more Americans were on the job in 1976 than ever before in the history of the United States -- nearly 88 million -- and that is a tremendous comeback from where we were just a year and a half ago.

MORE

After the tragic betrayal of public trust two years ago, America has had its faith restored in the White House itself. My Administration has been open, candid, forthright and straightforward, and we are going to keep it that way in the next four years under Jerry Ford.

I can stand before this wonderful group in Plymouth Mall and say America is on the move, America is on the march, the nation is sound, the nation is secure. This nation is on the way to a better quality of life for all Americans. This Administration has earned the trust of the American people for the next four years.

My record is one of progress, not platitudes; performance, not promises. Yes, we have our troubles, but in the last two years we have come a long, long way. We have made incredible progress, and we are going to make more in the next four years.

Here at home we are putting our old differences aside, we are putting old problems behind us, and we are healing the wounds. I am proud to be a citizen of the great United States of America. I look out here and I know that every one of us are just as proud to be an American as I am.

Since August of 1974 America has had a restoration of trust. We ended the war in Vietnam. We are making headway out of the recession. It is a record that I am proud to run on, a record the people of Pennsylvania and concerned citizens all across this nation -- Independents, Democrats, Republicans -- will support this record on November 2.

Give me your mandate, and we will reduce the rate of growth of the Federal Government. 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 they have so richly earned.

There is no reason why they should have to go broke just to get well, and they won't under a Ford Administration.

Give me your mandate, and we will create a tax structure that is fair to all, that will preserve the family in America, the family business, the family farm, that will give business the tax incentives to build new plants, to modernize old ones and to create more jobs in America.

Give me your mandate, and I will lead this nation on the path of peace through strength and we will live in peace, in freedom in the United States. I have no fear for the future of America. The future is a friend of America. As you and I go forward together, I promise you once more -- as 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 won't let you down.

Thank you very, very much.