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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
OHIO STATE CAPITOL

12:30 P.M. EST

Thank you very, very much, Governor Rhodes and Mayor Moody. Let me express my deep appreciation to Congressman Sam Devine, Congressman Chalmers Wylie, Congressman Clarence Brown, John Ashbrook and Bill Harsha. I want to make sure you elect them and re-elect them for the benefit of Ohio and the United States.

But, I want also for the benefit of the great Buckeye State and for the benefit of our great country -- you send Bob Taft back to Washington as your next United States Senator.

You know this all began right here, right in front of the Capitol, and local and State Government is vital, and so I urge you to elect Bill Brownfield to the State Senate.

It is great to be in Columbus, the home of two of my good friends who represent excellence: First, Jack Nicklaus, a great supporter of mine. I thank him for that help and assistance. And then also one of my best friends, the kind of a person who represents excellence not only in coaching but excellence in the character. He believes in winning, and that is what we are going to do. Thank you very much, Woody Hayes.

You know, I come from that State up north. (Laughter) But, since 1963 I have visited the Buckeye State 56 times, and I love you. I had the honor and great privilege of speaking at a commencement at Ohio State in the fall of 1974. It was a great experience. But, I have also come to Columbus and all of the other places. You know what? Columbus likes to be, along with the great State of Ohio, on the side of a winner, so let's make it a home run, a touchdown tomorrow for the winning team, Jerry Ford and Bob Dole.

But there are several other people that I would like to recognize and indicate to them and to all of you my appreciation. First, we have on this platform one of the three greatest Governors in the State of Ohio, John Bricker.

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May I say, incidentally, from the appearance here of this great crowd and from the wonderful rally that we had in the Akron, Canton, Alliance and Massillon area this morning, I am going to issue all of you an invitation. Betty and I want all of you to come down to that inauguration on January 20 when Jerry Ford and Bob Dole are sworn in as President and Vice President.

Now let me introduce to you a person who is well known to you, who was a judge here in the State of Ohio and Cleveland, who was your Governor, and one of the three greatest Governors in the history of Ohio, who was a United States Senator. Now, it is my privilege to introduce a close personal friend whose support I really appreciate -- your former Senator, your Former Governor, Frank Lausche.

An endorsement from one of Ohio's great, great citizens means a great deal to Jerry Ford, and I promise you, Frank, I won't let you down.

As we enter this critical last 24 hours -- and this is one of the most critical elections in the history of the United States; it is the election that will set our course for the first four years of our third century -- I want you to know where I stand.

I stand for lower taxes, more jobs, a balanced budget, lower Federal spending, beating inflation, a clean environment, peace and liberty for the United States of America. From your ranks I come, and with you I stand.

In the last two years our great country, faced with adversity, has made an incredible comeback. When I spoke to you and to the American people in Kansas City, I said I would not concede a single vote, I would not concede a single State.

Ohio is going to be on the right side. We are counting on that Buckeye State to be with us tomorrow. With our momentum, let's do it, a home run.

I love that enthusiasm and applause, but take just a minute -- let's hear a pin drop -- because I want to talk about some of these, or at least two of the critical issues where I strongly differ with my opponent.

First, taxes. In the first debate, my opponent said that we could anticipate a \$60 billion surplus in the Federal Treasury. He said in that debate that he would spend that \$60 billion for more programs, piling one on top of another. In that debate I said if there is a \$60 billion surplus, I think it ought to go for a tax reduction to the middle income taxpayer.

I can stand here and say with good conscience that President Ford stands for the little taxpayer and President Ford is against the big tax spender.

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Within the last several days Mr. Carter has been pressed. Does he want a tax reduction, or not? He says, if, perhaps. President Ford has been on the line talking straight from the shoulder saying, yes, the middle income taxpayer has been short-changed.

I recommended to the Congress in January that we ought to have a \$28 billion tax reduction along side of a \$28 billion restraint on Federal spending -- for every tax dollar in reduction, a dollar reduced in the rate of growth of Federal spending. The Congress gave you half a loaf. They didn't go along with my proposal to increase the personal exemption from \$750 to \$1,000.

Now, let me tell you what that means. It means that the middle income taxpayer -- 50 percent of those that pay our taxes -- would get -- and let me illustrate it with an incident that happened: I was in a factory the other day, down a production line, and one of the men said to me, "President Ford, where do you stand on taxes?" I told him how I wanted to increase the personal exemption. I said, "How many children do you have?" He said, "I have three." I said, "If you have a wife, three children and yourself, if Congress had acted responsibly, next April when you made out that income tax return, you would have had under President Ford's tax reduction program \$1,250 more in personal exemption for you to spend and not have in the Federal Treasury.

Now Congress didn't do it. But on January 3, when that next Congress convenes -- and I want all of this good Ohio delegation back there to help me -- I will have on their desk a tax reduction proposal that will include the increase in the personal exemption, it will increase jobs incentive legislation to help industry expand, to modernize, and if that Congress doesn't pass it in 1977, they will have it on their desk in January of 1978, and if they don't give that kind of decent, equitable tax reduction in 1978, I will join every one of you trying to beat them in that election in 1978.

But now let's talk about defense. Today the United States, with our Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, we are number one, and under President Ford we are going to keep them number one. I have recommended appropriations so they will have the best weapons, the best leadership, the best training. That is the way to keep the peace. And under President Ford, with the strength that we have, we will strengthen our alliances. We will be able to look our adversaries straight in the eye and they will respect us.

But let me say, you make a great contribution in the City of Columbus because in the recommendations that I made for a strong defense -- and that is the way you keep the peace -- that we have a B-1 bomber to replace those aging B-52s that are now 20 and 25 years old. If we don't get the B-1 bomber as an instrument of peace, the President in the next five, the next ten years, if we continue to rely on the B-52, will be sending our young combat pilots to protect us in the aircraft older than they are, and that is not going to happen under President Ford.

I am proud to stand before you and say that I am the first President since Dwight D. Eisenhower who can tell the American people that America is at peace. I am proud of the fact that not a single young American is fighting or dying on any foreign soil today. And we are at peace because the United States is strong. We are not at war because the United States is strong.

And let me say, wasn't it a great, great celebration on the Fourth of July when America celebrated its 200th birthday? I happened to have the privilege to fly over New York Harbor and see those Tall Ships coming in, representing many, many countries. And why did they come to the United States? Because they respect America and we are proud of America, and we will continue to be proud of America.

But now as this great campaign comes to a conclusion, I have the feeling that we have reunited as a people. When I became President, people were angry, divided, disillusioned. I will never forget that day in the East Room of the White House when I put my hand on the Bible, held by my wife Betty, and took the oath of office when America was troubled.

Yes, we were in trouble. Inflation was over 12 percent; we were still involved in Vietnam; there was a loss of confidence in the White House itself; we were on the brink of the worst recession in 40 years. And, after having taken the oath of office to be your President, I said, since you have not elected me by your ballots, I ask you to confirm me with your prayers.

With those prayers, we put the ship of State on a steady keel. I had a firm, common sense hand on the tiller, and we have made incredible progress in the last two years. We have cut inflation by better than 50 percent; we have added four million jobs; we have 88 million people working today, the most in the history of the United States; we are at peace, and we are going to keep the peace.

And I can say with pride to all of you and to my former colleagues in the Congress -- Bob Taft, Sam Devine, Chalmers Wylie, Clarence Miller, Bud Brown, Bill Harsha, Will Gradison -- that we have restored that confidence in the White House. I have been open, candid, frank.

And now, as we come to the final quarter -- in fact, the final minutes -- of this great campaign, you have a critical decision to make tomorrow. It couldn't have been put better than the way Frank Lausche put it.

But let me add, I have been proud to be your President during troubled times. I want the opportunity to build on that firm foundation, to keep America moving.

Therefore, I ask when you go to the polls tomorrow that you not only confirm me with your prayers but you also confirm me with your ballots, and I won't let you down.