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 Office of the Press Secretary  
 December 10, 2003

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**President Discusses Economy in Michigan**

Dynamic Metal Treating International  
 Dearborn, Michigan

1:24 P.M. EST

**VIDEO** Multimedia  
 President's Remarks  
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THE PRESIDENT: Loren, thanks for having us. Let me say a couple things before we get started here. First, thanks for coming out to say hello. We're here, obviously, to talk about one of the great strengths of America, which is the entrepreneurial spirit of our country, the small business men and women who create the new jobs. And we're talking about jobs. And I want to thank you all for being here today to talk about your businesses and/or your personal lives.

Just a couple of things I want to remind our fellow citizens about -- we've done a lot, we've overcome a lot, when you think about what this country has been through in a short period of time. First of all, as Loren mentioned, things starting going bad in 2000 for this business. In other words, we were headed into a recession. And that's tough when there's a recession. That means negative growth. It means businesses, in order to survive, sometimes lay people off, which, worse, means that some of our fellow citizens are looking for work and are having trouble feeding their family.



And then the enemy hit us. Just as things were getting a little better, we got attacked. And let me take a step back. I'm never going to forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. The only way to deal with these cold-blooded killers is to stay on the offensive and bring them to justice, which is precisely what America will do. (Applause.)

And then we had some CEOs in corporate America forget what it means to be a responsible citizen. You might remember, right after the attacks, when the great resiliency of America came forth and the country began to recover from this unbelievable period of time, it turned out that we found -- there were some corporate scandals, and that affected our confidence -- tough laws that sent a pretty clear message to you: you betray the trust, if you don't tell the truth to your shareholders and employees, you need to be held accountable. That means justice needs to be sent your way. And that's what's happening. And then we had a march to war, and that all affected the people's confidence.

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And so when we talk about job creation and job growth, it's important to understand, we have come through a lot, which speaks really to the greatness of America, doesn't it? It speaks to the greatness the entrepreneurial spirit, to the high productivity of the American work force. We're the best workers the world. I think it speaks a little bit, as well, to the policies we put forth. I want to thank the members of the United States Congress who are here from the great state of Michigan.

A lot of them have come over here, for which I am grateful. We passed tax relief, and I want to talk a bit about tax relief as we go through the panel and its effect on economic recovery. Because when people have more money in their pocket, it means they're going to demand an additional good or a service, and they're likely to demand a good or a service. And when that happens in our economy, somebody will produce it. And when somebody produces the good or a service to meet the demand, somebody is more likely to hire a job. And so not only did the tax relief help hardworking Americans, with the pressures on their families and education needs, but it also helped the economy.

And the other thing I want to remind people about is that the tax relief was also geared toward small businesses. Most new jobs in America are created by small business owners. You just heard Loren talk about -- they laid off workers, they replaced those workers, and they've added workers. There's all kinds of companies like Dynamic Metal across the country that are adding workers, one or two or three at a time. And that's the vibrancy of our economy. And the Congress wisely cut the -- provided incentives for small businesses to invest. And if the proper incentive is in place, it means people will buy equipment, computer software, and that means somebody is likely to find a job as they provide that equipment for small businesses.

The other thing is, most small businesses do not pay corporate income tax. They pay tax at the individual level because they're a sub-chapter S or a limited liability partnership. And therefore, when you hear talking about reducing all taxes on individuals, you really hear also the message that we're reducing taxes on small businesses. And when small businesses got more money in their coffers, they're more likely to expand and someone will find a job.

So what we're here today is to talk about good economic policy. But really what we're here about is to make sure people can find a job. I mean, things look pretty good, the growth is high. Today the purchasing manager's index was released which shows the manufacturing sector of the American economy is coming back pretty strong. But my attitude is, so long as we have one of our fellow citizens out of work and who wants to work, says we've got a problem. So let's keep a pro-growth policy in place. We're here to emphasize the role of the small business in providing that job opportunity.

I want to thank both the small business managers, as well as the employees for joining us. And, Loren, after that kind of long-winded explanation of why I'm here -- (laughter) -- take over.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE PRESIDENT: I appreciate the story. It's indicative of how small businesses work. You'd better be on your feet and willing to change in order to survive, be flexible and fast to meet the needs of your consumers. Listen, government can create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong. But we can't make you successful. That's up to you. And I appreciate you just laid out your strategy. I hope your competitor isn't listening. (Laughter.)

MR. EPLER: We're up to the challenge. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, anyway, thank you for sharing that.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE PRESIDENT: A couple of points that Sam made. One, we need an energy policy. If you noticed said energy costs are high. And we need clean coal technology. We need an energy policy. We need encourage conservation and certainly efficiencies. But in order for manufacturing concerns to be vibrant and vital, they need reliable sources of energy. And I appreciate you bringing that up.

The other thing is, Sam, is I understand these tax cuts save you and your family about \$2,000.

MR. DOMKE: For this next tax year, yes. And that's great. I can really use the money.

THE PRESIDENT: The other thing, as I understand -- we had a little visit beforehand -- that Sam had a chance to refinance his home. Maybe some of you have done that, as well. Part of the vitality of the economy is the fact that people are able to refinance because of lower interest rates, which puts a little money in the pocket because you've got lower monthly payments. But the \$2,000 is an important part of an economic recovery package. You see, it's his money to begin with. And we hear people say, well, government is giving government money. It's not government money, it's the people's money we're talking about. It's the hardworking people that make this economic grow.

My attitude is the more money you've got in your pocket, the more likely it is your family is going to be okay. But more importantly, the more likely it is it will increase the demand for a good or a service.

MR. DOMKE: I know we had the \$800 checks that came back for the child credit, and that came in quite useful.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Actually, when the government said the check's in the mail, it actually was. (Laughter.) One of the things about the tax cuts that's important for people to understand is they're not permanent, they're temporary, because of a quirk in the law. And particularly, in the United States Senate after a period of time, the tax cuts go away. And so one thing we need to do and make sure this economy stays strong is to make the tax cuts permanent. We don't want the child credit to go down. That will affect you. It's like a tax increase. We don't want the marriage penalty to be as onerous as it used to be. We want the tax cuts to stay permanent, so that people -- small businesses can plan and citizens can plan their lives.

And so one of the ways that Congress can respond to the economic recovery and to make sure that the recovery keeps going is to make these tax cuts real and long-lasting. I'm for it, I think it's essential that we do this. And I hope Congress joins. (Applause.)

\* \* \* \* \*

THE PRESIDENT: Again, government can create an environment to encourage investment. It's up to you to produce the product so people want to invest with you, or buy your stuff. And I presume the reason why you're doing good is you've got a good work force.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Yes, we do. In fact this is a --

THE PRESIDENT: Two of them happen to be here.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Let me put them on here. This is John Krynak and Cliff Daniels. Pass it on to John

MR. KRYNAK: Mr. President, it's good to be here. It's an honor and a privilege to have you here. I'm a family man myself. I was fortunate enough not to be one of the 10 percent that was laid off. I'm very thankful for that. Spectrum is a wonderful company.

I'm blessed to have a wonderful wife, Krystal, and I have four children, two daughters, seven and nine and two boys, 11 years old.

THE PRESIDENT: Twins?

MR. KRYNAK: No, we're a blended family.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MR. KRYNAK: So we got \$1,600 back.

THE PRESIDENT: That's good. (Laughter.)

MR. KRYNAK: We got \$1,600 back for this year. It came in handy. Went down to Myrtle Beach. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody had to feed you when you're down there, so you helped that person keep his job. But you also got some tax relief from the reduction of the rates, as I understand it -- \$2,700 somebody told me.

MR. KRYNAK: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not putting numbers in your mouth. (Laughter.)

MR. KRYNAK: Yes, the tax relief can be a big help this year. Income is still not quite where it was, but I'm thankful that it is on the rise. Overtime is back -- kicking right now. I'm ready to put my shoulder to the wheel, keep it going.

THE PRESIDENT: I suspect old Tom is happy to have you working with him.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Very much so. A good person. Same with Cliff.

\* \* \* \* \*

MR. DANIELS: I want to retire. Your plan if you can sign -- your Medicare prescription bill, is going to help me immensely.

THE PRESIDENT: It is going to help you.

MR. DANIELS: With this plan I should save about \$5,000 a year. And I do want to thank you for that very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank the Congress, they finally got moving. (Applause.)

MR. DANIELS: One more thing, sir. Can you make a presidential order that our local football team, the Detroit Lions, win a road game? (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter.) If I could, I might be thinking about some of those Texas teams. (Laughter.)

I appreciate you bringing up health care. Small businesses have got an issue with health care. I think

you were to talk to these owners they'll tell you, small businesses need to be able to pool risk in what's called Associated Health Care Plans. Congress needs to allow this to happen so that you can share across jurisdictional boundaries. And that will help with health care costs.

I appreciate you bringing up Medicare. The people in the Congress worked hard to get a good bill out. And I think it's going to make a difference in a lot of seniors' lives. It will mean we've kept our promise. It's also going to make a difference in the lives of those of us who are fixing to be seniors. It means you're going to have more choice in the marketplace, plus prescription drugs will be available as part of the basic Medicare package. And those who can least afford it will get the most help, of course, from the government. So I thank you for bringing that up.

The other thing for health care, by the way, is it's very important that we have a society that allows a person to sue a bad doc if they get hurt. But we don't need a society in which there's junk -- frivolous lawsuits being filed all the time, which raise the cost of medicine, particularly to these businesses. (Applause.) It hurts these small business owners when these people file these lawsuits over and over and over again. And therefore, for a while -- I looked at this issue for awhile, and then I decided it was a national issue because it affected our Medicare budgets, the Medicaid budgets, the veteran health care costs, because docs practice what's called defensive medicine. If they think they're going to get sued they'll provide more medicine than needed. And you would, too, if you were a doctor who thought you were going to get sued. And that, then, makes medicine more expensive and it runs the cost up for you as well as the employers all around the country.

And then the other thing that happens is, docs have to pay a high premium for liability reform -- insurance -- and they're starting to quit the practice of medicine, which means now, medicine is more expensive and less available. And so we need medical liability reform.

I want to thank the members of the House who are here who voted with us on that bill. It's a good piece of legislation. It's stuck in the Senate, however. We need to get it out of the Senate.

And so that can help us. I'll tell you the other thing that I think is important for these small business owners to hear is at the state level -- and I know that Terri Lynn is here and the Attorney General is here and others from the state of Michigan are here -- we need less paperwork requirements on small business. Less regulations and the paperwork that these owners have to file -- same, by the way, at the federal level. It's one thing to regulate; it's another thing to over-regulate. And a lot of times government has a tendency to over-regulate, which is a non-productive cost to these small business owners who would rather be employing people and making it easier for somebody to find work, than filling out reams of paperwork that probably doesn't get read anyway.

Finally, I know there's a lot of talk about trade. I just want you to understand my position on trade. If you're good at something, we ought to try to find more markets. And we're good at a lot of things. We've got the most productive work force in America. And we've got some of the greatest farmers in America. And we've got some of the greatest entrepreneurs in America. And therefore, it seems like, to make sense to me, that we ought to be opening up markets for us to sell our goods. But the other thing I want you to understand is we're going to make sure it's fair. We want the playing field to be level, so we can compete in a fair way.

But those are some of the things that we can do to keep the economy growing. And that's important. We're really here to talk about how to sustain the economic growth. About 286,000 new jobs were created over the last three months, and we need more. I think the foundation is laid. You've heard these two small business owners talk in terms of their hiring new people and how confident they are, and that's good. We've just got to keep it going. We want everybody in the country working. We want the people who have the responsibility to put food on the table to be able to find a job to do so. We want to answer that universal desire of a responsible dad to be able to say to his four children in this case, here's something for you to eat, but something for you to maybe put aside for your education. That's what we want.

And a vibrant economy will provide that opportunity for people to seize the moment. And we've got so many people up here who -- one has already seized the moment. He kind of looks like he's going to try to do it, but you never retire, by the way. (Laughter.) You never retire. And we've got some great workers and great owners up here.

I want to repeat to you that the entrepreneurial spirit of America is strong. And we aim to keep it that way. We want people owning their own business. We want people to feel like if you want to be a small business owner, there's a chance for you. No guarantees of success, but the opportunity is available to people from all walks of life, I might add, all throughout our society. One of the great strengths of America is the fact that we've got a lot of people that say, I want to own my own company, and feel confident about trying to start that business and making it work. It's really what makes our society such a vibrant and wholesome place.

We're looking at two people right here who have taken on the tough task of running a small business. It's not easy. It may look simple when you hear them talk about it, but it's hard work. But it's the creativity and the spirit of the entrepreneurs in America that I think sets us apart, and kind of the backbone and vibrancy of our society.

I want to say one other thing, and then I promise to be quiet. I met a guy at the airport today. Where was he? Did he come out? There he is. This is a good man. This is Brad Simmons. You probably never heard of Brad. I hadn't either until I landed. The reason I mention Brad is he works for Ford, but more importantly, he is in charge of encouraging Ford employees to volunteer in your communities. See, he's taken it upon himself to tap into the true spirit of the American soul, and that is that spirit that says, I want to help a neighbor in need. And Brad's particular focus has been on Boy Scouts. But he's got a broad job at Ford, and that is to say -- to encourage volunteerism.

You know, the reason I like to talk about people like Brad -- as I told Brad, he is a soldier in the army of compassion in our country. It's the Brad Simmonses of the world who really define the true character of America. You see, our strength is not measured by the size of our military or the size of our treasury. Our strength is measured by the size of the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens, people who are willing to love a neighbor just like they would like to be loved themselves. Brad reflects the true spirit of America. He's a great credit upon the country.

And for those of you who are doing your duty as responsible citizens, whether it being a good mom or dad or helping a neighbor in need, I want to thank you on behalf of a grateful nation. The strength of America is the people of this country. And it's my privilege to be the President of such a great country.

God bless you all. Thank you for coming. (Applause.)

END 1:53 P.M. EST

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