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TALKING POINTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS, NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, PORTLAND, OREGON, OCTOBER 1980.

It's good to be back in Oregon, back home. Today I would like to share with you some of the thoughts and experiences from my past 14 months of service in Jimmy Carter's cabinet.

Perhaps the most important perception that has shaped my experience is one that will shape yours as well. Very simply it is this: this period of American history and the decade that is ahead will, I believe, be one of the most important in our history. And, in particular, I believe we have entered a time of unprecedented change. Change not only here at home but in the relationships around the world. How we direct that change, the choices that we make for ourselves, will ultimately determine what kind of future lies before us. To make those choices I believe we must remember some basic principles that are as true here in Oregon as in Washington, D.C. Principles that we must remember in order to make sound choices.

First is the simple affirmation that even in a period of change that which is fundamental doesn't change. I think Oregonians probably understand this better than most. Perhaps because of the special feeling we have for the land and for our natural environment and certainly that cannot change. The importance we place on work and opportunity for people is also unchanging and our commitment to preserving freedom and the freedom of choice. All of this will not change in the future for it defines what it is that we are all about.

Second, I think we must remain convinced that there is opportunity in this country and that America will remain a land of opportunity. I have seen this in Washington and believe it to be true around the country. People who are willing to work hard and stand for something, to advance new ideas or argue for strong beliefs can still find America, a place where they will be listened to.

Third, we must remember that anything worth doing takes time and takes work. It is easy to fall into the game of quick fixes, simple solutions, and easy answers. None of these are for real.

Perhaps the most compelling lesson that I have learned in Washington is that individuals do make a difference. Whether it is a matter as simple as casting a vote on election day as an expression of personal responsibility, or participating in a community activity, or any of a hundred other efforts. Even in an organization as sizeable as the Federal Government, the fact remains that what each of us does with our talent, time, energy and ability ultimately does still matter, and as long as that is the case I think we can still feel hopeful about the future and about our ability to direct the future in a positive course.

Ultimately that is what a political election is all about. It is our country's way of saying something about ourselves and about the future. Obviously I believe that the vision that President Carter has of this country's future course is preferable to that of his opponent. I can tell you that the expectations that I had of the President and his advisors when I went to Washington have been more than confirmed. He is, I believe, a man whose values are an expression of those that we as Oregonians care about deeply and I feel confident that in the next four years this President would continue to work in support of the fundamental beliefs that I have outlined and that we share. And, finally, I think that would serve Oregon well and serve the country well.

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