

James C. Hagerty Press Secretary to the President

(AS ACTUALLY DELIVERED)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT
THE POLISH-AMERICAN CONGRESS,
SHERMAN HOTEL, CHICAGO,
ILLINOIS, SEPTEMBER 30 1960

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In 1952, I promised the American people that whatever I could do by peaceful means would be done, in order that those people who are held in bondage by a tyrannical dictatorship might finally have the right to determine their own fates by their own free votes.

This is still a tenet in the faith of every right-thinking American. It is as yet unachieved, but this does not mean that anyone must give up hope. We must continue, by our unity and freedom throughout the world, to oppose the bloc that by making the State a deity and the individual just a plodding animal do the bidding of that state.

So, just as we keep faithful to our religious teachings, and the religious background on which this nation was formed, we keep faithful to the ideal of freedom, well realizing that freedom and peace are in the long run indivisible.

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The individual's way of discharging his responsibilities is found in many channels. It is in obedience to the law; it is performing with others the cooperation works of communities and sects and organizations that have to do with the alleviation of suffering. But it is one thing that right now is uppermost in our minds: it is discharging your responsibility of expressing your view about the political future or the immediate political future of our country.

This you do by registering and by placing your vote in the ballot box. It makes no difference, so far as I am concerned—but I don't mean to say I am disinterested—but it makes no difference for what individual or party you vote, as long as you are voting your own honest convictions. And if you do not do that, you are not discharging your responsibilities either to this great

country, or to the traditions that you have brought with you from the culture from which you came.

I cannot tell you what great importance I attach to this business of making certain that our government is surely a representative one. It is not representative of us all if anyone fails to perform this duty. You know, after I go, but before you people leave this room, I would like each person here to turn to his two neighbors or her two neighbors and say, "Have you registered? Are you going to vote?" If you get a hundred persons to agree out of this room, this will be one of the most magnificent meetings that I have ever attended—and it will be an example for all the United States. And then, as you go out, and you meet two other people—in your homes, at your work, wherever you are living—and say "Have you registered and are you going to vote?" This is truly what we must do, if self-government, representative government, is going to exist permanently and healthily.