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Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 26, 2019

The President. Well, thank you very much. Please. And it's always nice to begin by saying: The stock market is up again. We just set another record, so we should say that. Very substantially up. And I think that's 132 times that we've set a record from the time we got elected on that very great day. But it's good to know. A lot of people are very happy.

We're doing well. Our country is doing very well. And the First Lady and I are delighted to welcome you all to the White House on this magnificent autumn day. On behalf of the entire Trump family, I wish each and every one of you a very happy Thanksgiving. It's going to be a great Thanksgiving.

We're glad to be joined today by Representatives David Rouzer and Jason Smith and a man who has done an—and, I have to say, they are warriors. They have all been great warriors. Mark Meadows, thank you very much. The three of you, please stand up. They are warriors and great people. And Deb, thank you very much for being here. Thank you.

Thanks also to the president of the National Turkey Federation, Joel Brandenberger and its chairman, Kevin [Kerry][*] Doughty, who is here with his family and his wife Jan. Where is Kevin—Jan, thank you very much. Please, stand up for what you do. He's also the head of Butterball, chairman of Butterball. That's the biggest there is. Great job. And we appreciate your involvement. Thank you very much.

As we gather this week with loved ones across our beautiful land, we give thanks to God for the many gifts that he has bestowed upon us. Today we also come together to honor the beautiful, feathered friend, the noble turkey. [*Laughter*] Now, that's a beauty.

It's said that Abraham Lincoln was the first President to spare a Thanksgiving turkey, at the request of his son. In 1947, President Harry Truman accepted the first annual National Thanksgiving Turkey. In the decades that followed, Presidents, from Kennedy to Reagan, would show mercy——

[*At this point, a turkey gobbled.*]

See? [*Laughter*] Wow. That's a strong bird—to their birds, but it was George H.W. Bush who first issued an official pardon. In keeping with that tradition, today I will issue a pardon to a pair of very handsome birds: Butter and his alternate, Bread. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That's true. Look at you.

Their names were chosen by the students of Harrells Christian Academy in North Carolina. Great State. Bread and Butter were raised in Tar Heel State by farmer Wellie Jackson, who's here with us with his wife Tara and their lovely family. And I want to thank you very much. Great job. Great job. Thank you very much.

Thankfully, Bread and Butter have been specially raised by the Jacksons to remain calm under any condition—[*laughter*]—which will be very important, because they've already received subpoenas to appear in Adam Schiff's basement on Thursday. [*Laughter*] It's true. Hundreds of people have. It seems the Democrats are accusing me of being too soft on turkey. [*Laughter*] But,

[*] White House correction.

Bread and Butter, I should note that unlike previous witnesses, you and I have actually met. [*Laughter*] It's very unusual. Very unusual.

In any event, I expect this pardon will be a very popular one with the media. After all, turkeys are closely related to vultures. I don't know if I like that line, but there is a little truth to it. [*Laughter*]

But today, after, the birds will retire to Gobbler's Rest at Virginia Tech—great college—where they will be cared for and enjoy a terrific life.

This Thanksgiving, we bow our heads in gratitude for the newfound prosperity and spirit that's taking place all across America. The country has never been more successful. Our military has been rebuilt. We captured the number-one terrorist in the world and killed the number-one terrorist in the world, al-Baghdadi. And I want to thank our military, because there's nothing like our military.

And I want to thank almighty God for the—shedding his grace on our Nation. Our Nation is special, and we especially send our love to members of the United States Armed Forces serving all around the world. We are forever thankful for those who wear our Nation's uniform and the families who support them. The families are so important. They can never be the same without those great families. Because of their selfless service, millions of our fellow Americans are celebrating another wonderful Thanksgiving in safety and in peace.

And it's just a very special country, a very special place, the Rose Garden at the White House. If you're looking back here, that's the Oval Office. Some of you haven't been here before. But every time we walk onto the grounds of the White House, we realize how special it is.

So now we reach the moment Bread and Butter have been waiting for so patiently, their Presidential pardons. Melania and I wish all Americans a very happy and blessed Thanksgiving. We love you all.

Butter, let's talk to you for a second because I'm going to do something that you're going to be very happy about. Uh-oh, that looks like a dangerous bird. [*Laughter*] It just escaped. [*Laughter*]

Wow. Butter, I wish you a lot of luck. [*Laughter*] But I hereby grant you a full and complete pardon. Good. Full and complete. Thank you. That's great, huh?

The First Lady. Yes, beautiful.

The President. Beautiful bird. What are you going to do now? Are you going to take him right back?

Clinton, NC, resident Wellie Jackson. I'm taking him to Gobbler's Rest, and I'm going to visit him Friday.

The President. That's great. Thank you all very much. That was great. A lot of fun. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Debbie Meadow, wife of Rep. Mark R. Meadows; and Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

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