

DEAN OVERMAN FILES, 1975-77

Collection Type

Federal Records

Extent

2.6 linear feet (ca. 5,200 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

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Processed by

Dennis A. Daellenbach, January 1982

Biography

Dean L. Overman

October 9, 1943 - Born, Harvey, Illinois

1961-65 - Student, Hope College, Holland, Michigan (B.A. degree)

1966 - Student, Princeton Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey

1966-69 - Student, University of California School of Law, Berkeley, California (J.D. degree)

1969-70 - Attorney, Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

1970-76 - Attorney, firm of D'Ancona, Pflaum, Wyatt, and Riskind, Chicago, Illinois

July-Oct. 1972 - Attorney, Office of Legal Services, Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C.

Sept. 1975-Aug. 1976 - White House Fellow serving as an assistant to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller

Aug. 1976-Jan. 1977 - Associate Director for Policy and Planning, Domestic Council

Scope and Content Note

The files of Dean L. Overman cover the period September 1975 - January 1977. They reflect Overman's activities as an assistant to the Vice President during his tenure as a White House Fellow, and his subsequent service on the Domestic Council staff as an associate director for policy and planning.

From September 1975 to late August 1976, Overman was a White House Fellow assigned as an assistant to Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, and reporting to Jack Veneman, counselor to the Vice President. Initially he was involved with the Public Forums on Domestic Policy, townhall meetings that the Vice President chaired at various locations around the country. In early 1976, partially as a result of New York City's financial problems, he began work on a study of the fiscal condition of

state and local governments. The project was a joint venture of the Vice President's staff and the Domestic Council under the direction of Arthur Quern of the Council and Veneman. Along with T. Norman Hurd, Overman drafted digests of articles relating to the financial condition of America's large urban centers. Also as part of the project, the Bureau of the Census prepared a detailed statistical report on financial indicators for city governments. Overman's other activities included serving on the White House Task Force on Regulatory Reform, and drafting papers on urban policy and federal health programs.

Overman transferred to the Domestic Council in late August 1976 when his year as a White House Fellow expired. As associate director for policy and planning, his position until the end of the Ford administration, he inherited special projects and planning activities previously handled by Quern and Allen Moore. Overman served primarily as a policy coordinator rather than a formulator, working most closely with Quern in the latter's new position as deputy presidential assistant for domestic affairs. His responsibilities included compiling both questions and answers (Q's and A's) briefing books for President Ford and responses to article requests for the President's stand on various issues. Another duty involved coordination of some of the decision papers for the President on bills passed by Congress. In addition, Overman continued his study of federal, state, and local government fiscal conditions, and contributed to the initial drafts of Ford's valedictory state of the union message. As part of his background material for the annual message, he received copies of agency and department reports describing their major accomplishments during the Ford administration and suggesting possible legislative initiatives for the new Congress.

During the last two weeks of the Ford presidency, Overman also worked on the administration's policy toward Puerto Rico. The status of the West Indies island had been under intensive study for several years. In 1973, President Nixon and Governor Hernandez-Colon appointed a joint U.S. - Puerto Rico ad hoc advisory group to review the existing relationship between the United States and its self-governing Commonwealth. The group's report, submitted to President Ford in October 1975, recommended a new Compact of Permanent Union. Domestic Council staff who worked on the proposal included Norman Ross, James Falk, and Sam Halper.

In early 1976, Richard Parsons of the Council staff assumed the responsibility for helping to coordinate the executive branch's response to the report and a congressional bill adapted from it. Then, in October 1976, Parsons drafted a decision memorandum to the President on various alternatives for dealing with the island. Rejecting the compact of permanent union format, Ford opted instead to propose making Puerto Rico the nation's fifty-first state. Overman took over Parsons' file in January 1977, and added material on the administration's hastily drafted bill calling for eventual statehood for Puerto Rico, a plan that later died for lack of congressional support.

The subject file is the largest series in the Overman files, combining material from his service on both the Vice Presidential and Domestic Council staffs. The bulk of his papers as assistant to the Vice President relate to the study of federal, state, and local government fiscal conditions. The material from this early period does not document the White House Fellowship program or the Public Forums on Domestic Policy, nor does it cover Overman's service on the regulatory reform task force. From the Domestic Council period, the file reflects Overman's direct involvement with the state of the union message; enrolled bills memoranda, especially the act to promote research and development of electric vehicles; and his continuing study on government fiscal conditions. Other sections of the subject file, including article requests, agency memoranda, and weekly status reports from the Domestic Council staff, are reproductions which he accumulated in his capacity as a policy coordinator. A small quantity of these reproductions appear to be Quern's copies.

The other three series are considerably smaller than the subject file. The question and answer file contains short, one or two page items drafted by the Domestic Council staff both on issues of national concern, including gun control, abortion, and energy policy, and on local topics, such as oil price inequities in California, that affected only a limited area. Serving as campaign briefing papers, the Q's and A's are loaded with ringing defense of Ford administration programs and sharp attacks on Jimmy Carter's proposals. There is much duplication in the file, with updated Q's and A's binders containing many of the earlier items that did not need rewriting.

In addition to a copy of the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rico series contains memoranda from the agencies and departments

commenting on the report and subsequent congressional bill, drafts of Parsons' Presidential decision memorandum of October 1976, and drafts of the Ford administration's statehood bill in January 1977.

The chronological file spans Overman's entire service, with the bulk of it dating from his work as an assistant to Vice President Rockefeller. The most prominent items, in addition to the usual internal memoranda, are courtesy thank you letters, drafted by Overman for Rockefeller's signature and sent to participants in the domestic policy forums and attendees at meetings Rockefeller held on the administration's proposed Energy Independence Authority.

Related Materials (January 1982)

Other files in the Ford Library contain a variety of material related to subjects in the Overman files. The Domestic Council files of Arthur Quern and, to a larger degree, James Cannon reflect some of the same activities. Within the administrative series of the Cannon files there are more detailed presidential issues books for the campaign period, compiled by Pat McKee who worked under Overman. The files of Ray Hanzlik have extensive documentation on the Public Forums on Domestic Policy, and the Records Office's Legislative Case Files cover the decision memoranda on enrolled bills. Material on Puerto Rico is scattered through several collections, including the files of Sam Halper, Norman Ross, Dawn Bennett-Alexander, and James Cannon of the Domestic Council staff, and the Subject File of the White House Central Files.

Last Modified Date

2024-04-09

Subject File, 1976-77.

(Boxes 1-4, 1.4 linear feet)

Correspondence, memoranda, briefing papers, reports, article digests, congressional bills, articles and clippings, and printed material. The major topic from Overman's service with Vice President Rockefeller is the fiscal condition of state and local governments; major subjects from his Domestic Council service include article requests, enrolled bills memoranda, administration initiatives, and the 1977 state of the union address.

Arranged alphabetically by subject, and chronologically thereunder.

Box 1 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Alaskan Highways
OPEN	Alaskan Highways - Study Outline
OPEN	Anti - Lobbying Laws
OPEN	Article Requests (1)-(5)
OPEN	Article Requests - Article Copies
OPEN	Budget Information
OPEN	Cities in School
OPEN	Earthquakes
OPEN	Electric Vehicles
OPEN	Energy Independence Authority Information (1)-(3)

Box 2 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Enrolled Bills Memos (1)-(3)
OPEN	Federal - State - Local Government Fiscal Condition (1)-(5)
OPEN	Federal - State - Local Government Fiscal Condition - Article Digests (1)-(3)
OPEN	Financial Environmental Indicators for City Government (1)

Box 3 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Financial Environmental Indicators for City Government (2)-(3)
OPEN	General
OPEN	Goldwin Crime Proposal
OPEN	Health White Paper
OPEN	Housing, Community Affairs, and Communications
OPEN	Initiatives - Domestic and Economic (1)-(2)
OPEN	Initiatives - Foreign Policy
OPEN	Initiatives - New Domestic Ideas
OPEN	Issues

Status	Title
OPEN	Legislative Proposals (1)-(3)
OPEN	Presidential Advisory Committee Recommendations
OPEN	Shafer (Governor) Project
OPEN	Social Programs
OPEN	State of the Union, 1977 - Agency Material
OPEN	State of the Union, 1977 - Background

Box 4 - Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	State of the Union, 1977 - Drafts
OPEN	State of the Union Materials (1)-(3)
OPEN	Urban Policy
OPEN	Weekly Status Reports (1)-(2)

Questions and Answers (Q's and A's) File, 1976.

(Boxes 4-5, 0.6 linear feet)

Information in question and answer format contributed by the Domestic Council staff for use in the President's campaign briefing books. National topics include gun control, abortion, busing, and energy policy; local areas of emphasis include California, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, New York, and New Jersey.

Arranged by briefing book, or by correspondence which is arranged chronologically thereunder.

Box 4 (Continued) - Questions and Answers (Q's and A's) File

Status	Title
OPEN	Briefing Book (1)-(2)
OPEN	Briefing Book - California
OPEN	Briefing Book - Illinois/Iowa/Missouri
OPEN	Correspondence (1)-(4)

Box 5 - Questions and Answers (Q's and A's) File

Status	Title
OPEN	Magnetic Tape in Gergen's Office (1)-(2)
OPEN	New York and New Jersey (1)-(3)

Status	Title
OPEN	Received from Associate Directors, September-November 1976 (1)-(4)
OPEN	Received, up to September 22, 1976 (1)-(5)

Puerto Rico File, 1975-77.

(Box 6, 0.4 linear feet)

Memoranda, reports, press releases, and congressional bills relating to the congressional bills and Presidential decision memoranda that developed from the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico in October 1975. Richard Parsons accumulated most of the material, with Overman contributing a draft bill in January 1977 for Puerto Rico statehood.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 6 - Puerto Rico File

Status	Title
OPEN	Background Material
OPEN	Chronological (1)-(9)
OPEN	Report of Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico (Publication)

Chronological File, 1975-77.

(Box 7, 0.2 linear feet)

Copies of Overman's outgoing letters and memoranda, briefing papers and reports, primarily dating from his service as an assistant to Vice President Rockefeller. Included are materials on revenue sharing, and numerous courtesy thank you letters, under the signature of Rockefeller, for meetings the Vice President held on the Energy Independence Authority.

Arranged chronologically.

Box 7 - Chronological File

Status	Title
OPEN	September 1975-January 1977 (1)-(6)