

**The original documents are located in Box D19, folder “Kellogg Community College, Battle Creek, MI (telephone speech), March 31, 1965” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The Council donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Telephone speech for Kellogg Community College, Battle Creek, Mich.

8:30 a.m. March 31

Speak 20 minutes, answer 10 minutes of questions

Subjects: Voting rights and aid to education

Among the major issues in the Nation today are voting rights and  
~~heavy centralization~~ *heavy centralization of power in Washington.*

One has been in the headlines for weeks. The other is given somewhat  
~~more restrained~~ *more restrained* ~~quicker~~ attention in the news media.

We have seen the marches, read about them, been appalled at the violence,  
hopeful that peace would ~~return~~ return to the battleground of ~~the~~ <sup>voting</sup> rights.

Climaxing a series of turbulent events, the President gave a special  
message to a joint session of Congress recently. A few hours later the  
Administration sent a proposed voting rights bill to Capitol Hill following  
the President's urgent request for quick adoption of the legislation.

Although there are differences of opinion among both Democrats and  
Republicans as to the exact language of voting rights legislation, I believe  
we are generally agreed that a law must be passed insuring that all qualified  
citizens, wherever they live, can cast their ballots by 1966.

I certainly cannot speak for the Democrats. But, I can tell you that  
early in this 89th Congress---before the demonstrations across our land---  
Republicans in the House introduced at least 20 bills all aimed at insuring  
voting rights.

We believe that we can develop a bill within the framework of the  
Constitution and without being the target of long legal debate that will  
end the bitter dispute over voting rights for all qualified Americans.



I emphasize that "Republican action on voting rights was not ~~triggered~~ triggered by demonstrations of social revolution. Our own consciences were aroused by the need to have stronger legislation and we moved ahead without trumpeting fanfare to tackle the job.

Working quietly and earnestly under the leadership of Rep. William McCulloch, chairman of the Republican ~~Committee~~ <sup>task force</sup> on voting rights and ranking member of our Party on the Judiciary Committee, Republicans are hammering out a bill we hope will solve a vitally important social problem in our country.

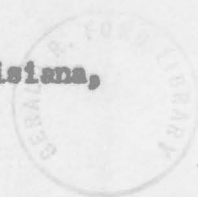
When the President's bill came to Congress, it would have been ~~simple~~ easy for Republicans as the loyal opposition to riddle the proposal with blistering criticism, ~~with~~

This is not to say that we haven't found holes, weaknesses and even apparent violations of the Constitution in the Administration's proposed answer to the problem of voting rights.

For example, the first article of the Constitution gives states the authority to decide the qualifications of voters. The Administration bill would violate the Constitution by blocking the rights of certain states to establish such qualifications.

Under a complex formula in the Administration's proposed bill, Federal authorities would have the right to abolish voter qualifications and to supervise voter registration.

In actual practice, the formula would apply only to Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia.



The law the President virtually demanded that Congress hurriedly  
adopt would give ~~illiterate~~ <sup>illiterate</sup> citizens in these six states more voting  
rights than they would have if they lived in New York.

~~Another provision would require general registration by Federal  
authorities~~

Meanwhile, Republicans are working on constructive alternatives  
to the President's bill that was spawned in secrecy. It is a tough, demanding  
and complicated job. The Administration bill also is undergoing extensive  
investigation by the House Judiciary committee.

At this point, I can tell you that Republicans in the House will  
support legislation to achieve maximum registration and voting by the target  
date of 1966.

Turning now to centralization of power in Washington, I believe  
a crushing over-balance of strength in either party for too long a time makes  
a mockery of our traditions of government, weakens and softens the voice of the  
people, and places control in the hands of a comparatively small majority.

-more

