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TEXT

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, U.S.
OFFICE OF THE MINORITY LEADER
PUBLIC DOCUMENT
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RICHMOND, VA.

MAR. 21, 1970

Gerald R. Ford
M.C.

SATURDAY
8:00 P.M.

P/No newsman saw me
except photographer.
Let's check Richmond
papers to see if
any coverage on
Sunday or Monday.

RICHMOND PUBLIC FORUM



Distribution: 20 copies Mr. Ford

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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE RICHMOND PUBLIC FORUM
AT RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
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FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M. SATURDAY

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From that time forth, Americans have been envied and feared, seldom loved. We have been much admired, much maligned, and much misunderstood. It might also be said we have difficulty understanding ourselves.

It was another Frenchman, De Toqueville, who saw Americans clearly. In his famous book, "Democracy in America," De Toqueville talked of the perpetual dissatisfaction of Americans with their situation in life, their constant striving for something better.

Said De Toqueville of Americans:

"They have all a lively faith in the perfectibility of man; they judge that the diffusion of knowledge must necessarily be advantageous, and the consequences of ignorance fatal; they all consider society as a body in a state of improvement, humanity as a changing scene, in which nothing is, or ought to be, permanent; and they admit that what appears to them today to be good, may be superseded by something better tomorrow."

De Toqueville put his finger on the key character trait of Americans -- their restlessness, their thirst for something better, their drive toward change, the riveting of their eyes on tomorrow.

So it has always been in this great and glorious land we call America, and so it is today.

We stand today on the threshold of great change. I am sure this is not apparent to some, perhaps even to millions of Americans. I am not speaking of the kind of changes sought by the violently revolutionary elements in our society but of changes that are being wrought within and at the instigation of what is called "The Establishment."

I am talking about the "new ecology." I am talking about welfare reform. I am talking about population planning and population control. I am talking about giving cities and states a percentage slice of Federal income tax revenue, and of everything else that comes under the heading of "the New Federalism."

(more)



These are revolutionary changes, and they are changes which I believe will not only be acquiesced in but demanded by what has come to be known as The Silent Majority.

So far "the kids" -- the college students -- have only taken hold of the crusade to restore our environment and the population control movement, but there is the fire of reform in all of these proposals.

In fact, if all of the exciting new programs now before the Congress are enacted into law, we will see a greater reform of our political and social system than at any time since the first administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. I might add they will have come about because of the new atmosphere of reform that harkens back to another similar era -- the days of Teddy Roosevelt.

Some of these reforms stem from the fact that we have witnessed the demise of the New Deal, as surely as if a curtain had been drawn across the spectacular drama which began with the Great Depression.

We have reached a point where Federal programs have piled upon Federal programs in a mix that constitutes a mess, duplication that has mounted to chaos, a multiplicity of Federal programs that has mayors and State officials groping for Federal help as in a maze.

We are now striving to straighten out that mess, bringing order out of chaos, cutting a direct route through the maze. We are reversing the flow of power. Far too much power has become concentrated in Washington. We are seeking to turn some of that power back to the cities and states.

This is what we call "the New Federalism." It can be found in the Administration's proposed new comprehensive Manpower Training Act, the proposed Family Assistance Act which would turn welfare into "workfare," changes in the unemployment insurance system, and a long overdue Revenue Sharing Act.

This is a fundamental change in Federal policy -- a new approach in manpower training, income maintenance, and Federal aid to cities and States with top priority to local priorities.

We want to return more responsibilities to the States and local communities and to help them with the fiscal burden of shouldering those responsibilities. This is a sharp departure from the New Deal pattern of "the Federal bureaucrat knows best and you'll do it our way or else."

As the President has stated, we want to do this "not as a way of avoiding problems but as a better way of solving problems."

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Last Sept. 24 I joined with more than 75 other members of the U.S. House of Representatives to introduce legislation that will make federally-collected revenues available for percentage sharing with the cities and states. The aim of this legislation is to carry out a proposal made by President Nixon last August 13.

The introduction of this revenue-sharing bill marked the first time in recent history that a concerted effort has been made to give states and local governments funds that will allow them effectively to live up to their commitments to their citizens.

Now, money flowing from the Federal Government to the states is being dispensed in the form of categorical grants, with the Federal Government determining how and where the funds will be spent. The legislation we are seeking would provide additional funds that states and cities could spend as they see fit.

There are those who lack confidence in the ability of states and local governments to spend money effectively or properly. But we have no farther to look than the Federal Government to see how great sums of money have been badly spent on poorly devised programs devised for questionable reasons.

A majority of Americans have lost faith in heavily centralized government. And the cause for that is not hard to find, for in the five years prior to 1969 we saw scores of new Federal programs enacted with tens of thousands of new employees added to Federal payrolls and tens of billions of dollars spent with the avowed aim of healing the Nation's grave social ills. Yet despite this massive infusion of Federally-directed programs and dollars, the problems of our cities deepened into flaming crisis.

I believe more and more Americans are turning away from the central government to their local and State governments as the best way to deal with local and State problems. Yet the Congress has not begun to move on revenue-sharing.

Earlier I mentioned manpower training in connection with the New Federalism. I did so because at present mayors control none of the Federal manpower funds that come into their cities under the Manpower Development and Training Act and the Economic Opportunity Act.

In contrast, if the Administration's new Manpower Training Act was fully implemented, the Nation's mayors would have administrative control over about three-quarters of a billion dollars in Federal funds each year.

Instead of a large number of unrelated projects in a certain metropolitan area, we would have one coherent program and one sponsor -- and the sponsor would

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design a mix of services and program components uniquely suited to the needs of the community.

What I am saying is that governors and mayors and their Federal partner all have unique capabilities. They should all perform the roles best suited to them. They must share power, for ours is a system which provides not only for checks and balances but for constructive collaboration between the partners in the system. The American people will be the beneficiaries.

I spoke at the outset about the insatiable desire of Americans to better themselves. This has been translated throughout American history into what I call the work ethic -- the idea that every man worth his salt works for a living if he is able to do so. At the same time Americans are most generous to those of their countrymen who are so badly handicapped they can neither toil nor can they spin.

One of the most dramatic stories of American heroism unfolded during the Great Depression when millions of families throughout the country found some way to piece together a living.

While Americans clung to the work ethic throughout the depression, millions were forced onto the dole. Welfare became a way of life for them and for their sons and daughters.

Today we have an opportunity to break the welfare cycle -- to make a viable truth of the principle that it pays to work.

I am speaking of the proposal now before the Congress to wipe out the scandalous welfare hangover of the depression days -- wipe it out by replacing it with a new plan called "workfare." The new program is called workfare because it encourages people to work.

Under the present welfare system, a poor man who is working can look across the street at a family on welfare getting more for not working.

With workfare, the "disincentive" to work is removed. A poor family with a working member will always get more than a family without a working member.

Under the present system, every dollar a welfare recipient earns is subtracted from his welfare payments. But under the proposed new system, he would keep 50 cents out of every dollar he earns as he works his way out of poverty.

What we want is to take people off welfare rolls and put them on payrolls. We think these people would rather have a hand up than a handout. They will if the incentive is there.

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You will hear it said that the new workfare program will cost too much. We admit it will initially cost more than the present welfare system, but these are start-up costs of the kind you have when you start a new business. Ultimately we will reap profits from workfare -- both in dollars and in the restoration of human dignity.

The workfare program will save money in the long run. If the present welfare program is not replaced and continues to grow as it has been burgeoning, it will cost the taxpayer a billion dollars a year more than the workfare program.

Our program will be far more inclusive than the present system. It will provide an income floor for the working poor. But it will also say to those on welfare who are able to work, we are going to give you a chance to work and you'll be glad we did. In fact, these people must work in order to receive government payments.

The workfare program will show us what the dignity of work can do for a human being. And it will help to keep families together. That, alone, will be worth the price we must pay, for the family is the foundation on which our republic is built. If the family is strong, the Nation will be strong.

And as we invest in human resources through the workfare program we must also accept the expensive challenge of restoring the American environment -- cleaning up our air and water and dealing with the solid wastes that clutter up our land.

The challenge of the "new ecology," as it is called, is being taken up by government at all levels, the students in our colleges, and our forward-looking industries.

It is a challenge that demands far more of us than putting a man on the moon, magnificent as that mission was.

It is far more difficult because it involves far more than the assembling of great brains and technology in pursuit of a clear-cut national goal. It does involve the assembling of a complex technology but it also requires coordination of effort on the part of the Federal, state and local governments.

I hope it will be possible to bring this crusade together with coherent and coordinated policies and leadership. There inevitably will be varying plans of attack. But although the troops will be attacking specific problems at local and state levels, they will be fighting the common enemy under one commander-in-chief -- the President of the United States.

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There is a blueprint for battle -- a 37-point battle plan submitted to Congress by the President. The major thrust of it is a \$10 billion attack on water pollution, joined in by Federal, state and local units of government.

The new technology already is emerging, and the magic word is "recycling." This is the key to the human waste treatment being employed in Muskegon County, Mich., which uses the lagoon method of settling out solid wastes and then spray-irrigating land with the waste water which is left. Recycling also is the key to a new waste-cleansing method being used by one of the largest paper companies in America.

So I believe we can win this fight to save our environment. We can establish a bridgehead early in this decade and achieve victory within 10 years.

I am encouraged by the tremendous interest in the new ecology on our college campuses. As you may know, ecology teach-ins are scheduled on campuses throughout the country on April 22. The University of Michigan, my alma mater, recently anticipated the nationwide teach-in with early bird sessions of its own.

Hundreds of students became excited about what they call "people pollution." They believe we can never lick pollution without curbing population growth. To show their devotion to the population control movement, they signed pledges of social responsibility limiting themselves to two children.

I might mention at this point that the Congress recently passed and sent to the President the Administration bill setting up a Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, a step toward population control in the United States.

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Let me point out to you that last year, as in every year since the Korean War, national defense ate up the biggest part of the Federal dollar. In the

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fiscal 1971 budget, by contrast, the largest share of the Federal budget goes to the civilian sector, specifically to human resources programs -- education, health, welfare, veterans and manpower projects.

The shift is quite dramatic. In fiscal 1969, 44 per cent of the budget went to defense and 34 per cent to human resources. In fiscal 1971, nearly the reverse is true -- 41 per cent to human resources and 37 per cent to defense.

We must reorder our priorities and advance the cause of reform in this country or suffer the ravages of far greater violence.

But our aversion to violence should not be the most compelling motive for righting wrongs wherever we find them.

Our only needful motive should be the rightness of the causes before us.

If we act in the right, as God gives us the power to see the right, we will come out right in the end.

And we will perceive anew the great truth in the words of Plutarch when he said:

"Perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which cannot be overcome when they are taken together, yield themselves up when taken little by little."

Little by little, we shall work together toward that "perfectibility of man" in which all Americans believe. Thank you.

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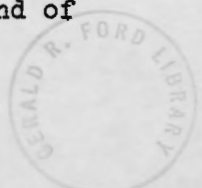
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