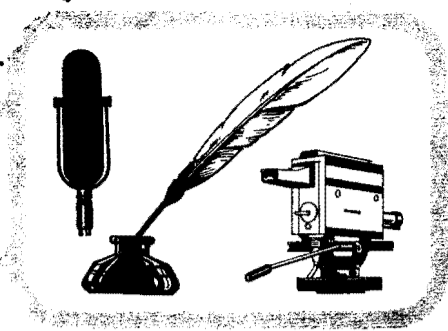


**The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “Optimist Club, Grand Rapids, MI, September 30, 1970” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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CONGRESSMAN  
**GERALD R. FORD**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS  
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON--  
September 30, 1970

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford before the Grand Rapids Optimist Club

The U.S. House of Representatives has voted to push the Congress into the 20th century--and there is good reason to believe the U.S. Senate will do likewise.

That is the significance of the vote Sept. 17 by which the House decided, 326 to 19, to modernize the procedures of the Congress and to overhaul its legislative processes.

The House approved what is known as the "Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970." If the Senate follows suit, the Congress will have undertaken a comprehensive reorganization of its functions. This has happened only once before--in August 1946. And so the current move to modernize Congress is the first such step in 24 years.

Is this development meaningful? It is a major accomplishment, an historic action. I am pleased and excited about it. I am especially pleased because it comes about as the culmination of many years of Republican effort.

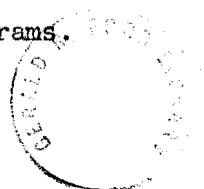
Let me tell you why congressional reorganization is so badly needed and just a few of the things that the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 does.

In April 1969 a Reader's Digest article posed the question: "Is Congress Destroying Itself?"

The author noted that the Congress had been described as "obsolete," "inefficient," and worse. He pointed out that the Congress was in serious trouble for a number of reasons--inadequate staffs to carry out the incredible array of duties which fall upon a congressman; a fantastic flood of information and pitifully little time to allot to it; an insufficient overseeing of programs previously enacted; too much secrecy; antiquated and time-consuming procedures.

The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 is designed to plug up the holes in the leaky legislative vessel that is the Congress, to bridge the gaps that prevent the Congress from functioning effectively. It is aimed at helping the Congress do an effective job of shaping laws needed to cope with today's complex problems and to untangle the bureaucratic mess created by overlapping programs.

(more)



What does the Act do?

It authorizes the use of electronic equipment on rollcall votes. This, once the details are worked out, will save tremendous time.

It will make information swiftly available to members of Congress by creating a Congressional Research Service in the Library of Congress, a unit which will greatly assist the Senate and House in analyzing, appraising and evaluating legislation. In fact, as I see the Congressional Research Service it will help Congress assert its own initiative in advancing legislative proposals instead of simply waiting for the White House to send up a sheaf of Administration measures.

It will improve the availability of information on fiscal affairs, insist that price tags be attached to all new programs and require a four-year projection of Federal spending beyond the fiscal year for which the Presidential budget is prepared.

It will expand and strengthen the General Accounting Office and thus greatly assist Congress in reviewing and overseeing Federal programs already in existence.

It will eliminate much of the secrecy in Congress by requiring that most committee sessions be open to the public and by placing on the record all teller votes, those votes in which members of the House now simply pass up the aisle to be counted on one side or the other of a motion or amendment.

It will open House committee meetings to radio and television news coverage under rules laid down by members of the committees.

I count the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 a great achievement. It did not come easily. And I say with pardonable pride that Republicans--I and others--were in the forefront of the movement that brought it about.

The current move for comprehensive legislative reform began with creation of a Joint Committee on Organization of the Congress in March 1965. That was a response to long-felt awareness that Congress needed modernization.

On March 30, 1965, the House Republican Conference created a GOP Task Force on Congressional Reform and Minority Staffing. In July 1966 the Task Force went to press with a book called "We Propose: A Modern Congress." On Oct. 10, 1966 the House Republican Policy Committee issued a statement urging immediate consideration of a congressional reform bill introduced in the House by then-Rep. Thomas Curtis, R-Mo.

Meantime the Joint Committee had produced a bill which the Senate subsequently passed, 75-9, on March 7, 1967.

(more)

But what happened to the Senate-passed bill? The House Democratic Leadership put a lock on it and kept it in the House Rules Committee.

On August 22, 1967, the House GOP Task Force on Congressional Reform was reactivated to put pressure on House Democrats to report out the bill bottled up in the Rules Committee. On Oct. 11, 1967, the House GOP Conference unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the House Democratic Leadership to schedule the reform bill for floor action.

On Jan. 17, 1968, I personally urged action on congressional reform in a GOP State of the Union Message. On March 29, 1968, the House GOP Task Force sent a comparison of the Senate-approved bill with all prominent "compromise" versions of the bill to every member of the House and to news editors throughout the country.

On August 6, 1968, I called for action on the congressional reorganization bill in a nationally televised speech during the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Fla.

On August 7, 1968, the Republican National Convention adopted a platform which included the following call for congressional reform: "Congress itself must be reorganized and modernized in order to function efficiently as a co-equal branch of government. Democrats in control of Congress have opposed Republican efforts for Congressional reform and killed legislation embodying the recommendations of a special bipartisan committee. We will again press for enactment of this measure."

We did indeed press for congressional reform legislation and the bill recently passed by the House and now pending in the Senate is the fruit of our efforts, produced with the help of Democrats right-minded enough to be reform-minded.

# # #

reforms-impeded.

efforts' produced with the help of democratic rights-impeded groups to be  
recently passed by the House and now pending in the Senate for the purpose of  
the bill which passed Congress in 1955. The bill is now pending in the  
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recommendations of a special subcommittee. The bill also passed for  
efforts for congressional reform and better legislation including the

branch of government. The bill is expected to pass in the near future  
and be reauthorized and modernized in order to improve efficiency and

which included the following: "Congress (next  
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*Political  
Submits*

*Cassey / Luchowicz*

*Re-order*

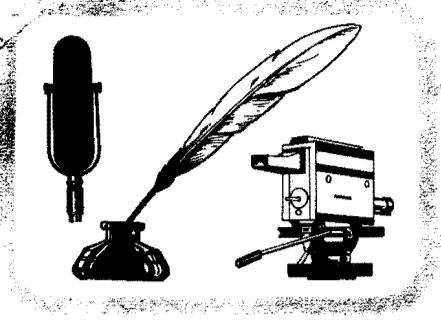
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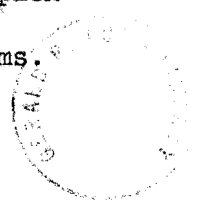
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