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**THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN. ....**

**VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 31**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

— MR. SPEAKER

— GOVERNOR GODWIN

— MR. JUSTICE POWELL

— MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

— DELEGATES TO THIS OPENING SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA )  
LEGISLATURE

— LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I AM HONORED TO SPEAK BEFORE THIS  
SPECIAL JOINT SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY -- MY FIRST ADDRESS OF 1976 DEVOTED TO THE  
NATIONAL BICENTENNIAL.

YOUR ASSEMBLY IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE  
FORUM IN AMERICA FOR A DISCUSSION OF SELF-GOVERNMENT  
IN THE 200th YEAR OF OUR NATIONHOOD• TODAY, IN THIS  
HALL OF THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES, YOU CONTINUE OUR OLDEST  
REPRESENTATIVE LEGISLATIVE BODY -- A LIVING SHRINE OF THE  
AMERICAN HERITAGE•

THERE WOULD BE NO BICENTENNIAL WITHOUT  
THE CONCEPT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT WHICH BEGAN IN VIRGINIA  
IN 1619. WE MEET TODAY WHERE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF  
THE PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA PERFECTED AMERICA'S LEGISLATIVE  
PROCESS.

IT WAS HERE THAT BRAVE VIRGINIANS CHALLENGED THE  
OPPRESSION OF A DISTANT AND UNRESPONSIVE REGIME /  
THAT SOUGHT TO IMPOSE TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION,  
AND GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

THE VIRGINIANS CREATED A NEW WAY OF LIFE /  
STRIKINGLY DIFFERENT FROM THE LIVES OF THE COMMON PEOPLE  
OF EUROPE OF THAT DAY.

WHEN THE FIRST SETTLERS LANDED AT NEARBY  
JAMESTOWN, THEY BROUGHT THE SEEDS OF AN IDEA THAT WOULD  
MAKE MEN STRIVE FOR LOCAL CONTROL OVER THE FATE OF  
LOCAL PEOPLE.



AMERICA'S MOST MOVING CHRONICLE IS HOW  
VIRGINIANS DEFIED THE CENTRALIZED AUTHORITY  
REPRESENTED BY ROYAL GOVERNORS AND TAX COLLECTORS  
APPOINTED BY A KING ON ANOTHER CONTINENT.

THE MOMENTOUS EVENTS THAT BEGAN IN  
VIRGINIA CULMINATED IN THIS GREAT BICENTENNIAL.

THE PROCESS THAT STARTED HERE IN 1619

LED TO PATRICK HENRY'S DEFIANT OUTCRY FOR LIBERTY OR

DEATH, TO GEORGE MASON'S VIRGINIA DECLARATION OF RIGHTS,

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON'S ROLE IN FORMULATING OUR DECLARATION

OF INDEPENDENCE, AND TO THE SERVICE OF YET ANOTHER MEMBER

OF BURGESSES, GEORGE WASHINGTON, AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

AND THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

AS 38TH PRESIDENT, I COMMEND THOSE WHOSE  
INITIATIVE AND PATRIOTISM HAS PRESERVED AND RESTORED  
COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG. THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG  
FOUNDATION SERVES THE WORLD BY VIVIDLY RECONSTRUCTING  
AMERICA'S HERITAGE.

YET, IN THIS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, WE MUST DO  
MUCH MORE THAN MAINTAIN THE TREASURED STRUCTURES OF OUR  
NATIONAL LEGACY. WE MUST REVIVE THE CHERISHED VALUES  
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION WITH A RESURGENCE OF THE SPIRIT  
THAT RANG FORTH IN THE STREETS OF WILLIAMSBURG  
IN COLONIAL TIMES.

I COMMEND THE INSTRUCTIVE CREED OF THE COLONIAL  
WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION: "THAT THE FUTURE MAY LEARN  
FROM THE PAST."

WE VENERATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE  
FOUNDING FATHERS WITH TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE WORDS  
OF TRIBUTE. TO KEEP FAITH, WE MUST STRIVE FOR THE  
RESPONSIBLE SELF-GOVERNMENT THEY SOUGHT.

PATRICK HENRY, ADVOCATING NATIONAL UNITY

IN PHILADELPHIA, SAID "I AM NOT A VIRGINIAN, BUT

AN AMERICAN." I BELIEVE THAT PATRICK HENRY WOULD

TAKE ONE LOOK AT TODAY'S AMERICA AND PROCLAIM:

"I AM NOT ONLY AN AMERICAN ~~/~~ BUT ALSO A VIRGINIAN WHO

BELIEVES IN LOCAL CONTROL OVER THE FATE OF LOCAL

PEOPLE."

GEORGE WASHINGTON WARNED AGAINST THE DANGER

OF THE CENTRALIZED POWER OF GOVERNMENT. YET WE FIND

OURSELVES IN A BICENTENNIAL YEAR WHEN WE LOOK BACK,

WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN PLEASURE, AT THE EROSION

OF STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY.

INDEED, AMERICA HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE  
THE FEDERAL ESTABLISHMENT EMPLOYS OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE.

THIS IS MORE THAN THE COMBINED POPULATIONS OF ALL THE  
13 ORIGINAL STATES / WHEN THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION RESERVED  
TO YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT / ALL POWER  
NOT BESTOWED UPON THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.



THE FOUNDING FATHERS UNDERSTOOD THAT

A SELF-GOVERNING REPUBLIC COULD NOT EXIST IF PEOPLE DID NOT

POSSESS THE TRADITIONAL VIRTUES OF SELF-DISCIPLINE,

SELF-RELIANCE, AND A PATRIOTIC CONCERN FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

"REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT," SAID JAMES MADISON,

"PRESUPPOSES THE EXISTENCE OF THESE QUALITIES IN A HIGHER

DEGREE THAN ANY OTHER FORM."

IN EARLIER YEARS, THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

WORKED SO WELL THAT WE ACCEPTED IT AS A TRADITION.

WE DID NOT QUESTION WHY IT WORKED. WE ASSUMED ONLY

THAT ITS MAGICAL PROVIDENCE WOULD CONTINUE FOREVER.

IN THE 18TH CENTURY, JEFFERSON AND ADAMS  
AGREED THAT SELF-GOVERNMENT, AS THEY UNDERSTOOD IT,  
INVOLVED A LIFESTYLE DEPENDENT UPON QUALITIES THEY  
CALLED "REPUBLICAN VIRTUES" -- ATTRIBUTES THAT WOULD  
MAKE DEMOCRACY POSSIBLE.

WHEN OUR STATE CONSTITUTIONS WERE ADOPTED,  
GREAT CARE WAS TAKEN TO PRESERVE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES  
OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. THE STATES DEMONSTRATED  
THAT THE REAL STRENGTH OF AMERICAN SELF-RULE IS THAT  
TRULY FREE PEOPLE DO NOT MAKE A CONTRACT WITH A CENTRALIZED  
GOVERNMENT BUT ONLY AMONG THEMSELVES.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS FAVORED WHAT THEY  
CALLED "MILD GOVERNMENT." THEIR PREMISE WAS THAT  
YOU CAN ONLY ACHIEVE "MILD GOVERNMENT" IF YOU  
MAINTAIN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SO RESPONSIVE THAT  
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS LIMITED IN SCOPE. THEY  
BELIEVED IN THE ABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO GOVERN  
THEMSELVES.

IN RECENT YEARS, DURING AN ERA OF RAPID CHANGE,

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE LOOKED TO WASHINGTON TO SOLVE

LOCAL PROBLEMS. THE VIEW OF TOO MANY WAS THAT THE

WORLD'S RICHEST AND MOST POWERFUL NATION COULD DO ANYTHING --

AND DO IT INSTANTLY. TOO MUCH WAS EXPECTED --

AND TOO MUCH WAS PROMISED.

CAN YOU REALLY EXPECT A HUGE GOVERNMENT TO  
GIVE YOU EVERYTHING -- BUT TO TAKE AWAY NOTHING?  
CAN WE AFFORD MASSIVE TAXES TO FINANCE / NOT ONLY RISING  
EXPECTATIONS / BUT ALSO RISING ENTITLEMENTS? I REFER TO  
THE ESCALATION OF MATERIAL THINGS SOME CITIZENS FEEL  
AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO, WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR OWN  
EFFORTS / OR TO THEIR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY.

FREEDOM IS NOW MISINTERPRETED BY TOO  
MANY TO MEAN THE INSTANTANEOUS REFORM OF ALL SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES, AT THE PUBLIC EXPENSE,  
THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.



IN PURSUIT OF THAT QUEST, THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY

WAS EXPANDED, POWER WAS DRAINED AWAY FROM THE

TOWNS, FROM THE CITIES, AND FROM THE STATES TO AN

INCREASINGLY CENTRALIZED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT/ALWAYS

BIGGER AND MORE POWERFUL -- THOUGH NOT ALWAYS

MORE EFFICIENT.

IF THIS COURSE IS PURSUED, IT WILL MEAN MUCH  
*and jobs*  
LESS INCENTIVE TO CREATE CAPITAL AND MUCH MORE INFLATION.●

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, MEN OF VISION UNDERSTOOD

THAT POVERTY IS ABOLISHED BY ECONOMIC GROWTH, NOT  
BY ECONOMIC REDISTRIBUTION.●

THEY KNEW THAT ONLY A SELF-DISCIPLINED PEOPLE CAN  
CREATE A SOCIETY IN WHICH ORDERED LIBERTY WILL  
PROMOTE BOTH ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION AT EVERY LEVEL.

THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA WAS MORE THAN A  
POLITICAL EVENT. IT WAS AN ACT OF POLITICAL FAITH +  
A PROMISE TO AMERICANS AND TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.

INHERENT IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS THE

MESSAGE: \ PEOPLE CAN GOVERN THEMSELVES. THEY CAN LIVE

IN FREEDOM WITH EQUAL RIGHTS. THEY CAN ALSO ACT IN

ACCORD WITH REASON, \ AND RESTRAINT, \ AND RESPECT FOR THE

RIGHTS OF OTHERS AND THE TOTAL COMMUNITY.

AS WE CELEBRATE THIS BICENTENNIAL, SOME  
CITIZENS CONTINUE TO GLORIFY INSTANT GRATIFICATION OVER  
EVERYTHING ELSE, SOME SEEK CHANGE MERELY FOR THE SAKE  
OF CHANGE, AND SOME HEED <sup>emotional</sup> ~~IMPETUOUS~~ DESIRE, RATHER  
THAN COMMON SENSE.

OUR NATION'S FOUNDERS BELIEVED THAT CIVIC VIRTUE

WAS A WILLINGNESS TO SUSPEND THE PURSUIT OF IMMEDIATE

PERSONAL INTEREST AND PERSONAL GAINS FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

AN EXCELLENT THEME FOR THIS BICENTENNIAL WOULD BE

THE REVIVAL OF CIVIC VIRTUE.

AMERICAN SELF-GOVERNMENT IS THE MOST STIRRING --

AND SUCCESSFUL -- POLITICAL EXPERIMENT IN HISTORY.

BUT ITS ULTIMATE SUCCESS REQUIRES NEW CONCENTRATION

ON DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES / AS WELL AS DEMANDS AND DESIRES.



WE MUST REGAIN THE SAME WILLINGNESS TO WORK

AS THOSE WHO BUILT A COLONIAL CAPITAL ON THIS SITE,

THE SAME OPEN MIND AS THOSE WHO ENVISIONED OUR FREEDOM,

THE SAME SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AS THOSE WHO PRESERVED IT.

WE MUST ENSHRINE OUR RIGHTS, BUT CARRY OUT OUR DUTIES.

LET US EVALUATE WHAT IS POSSIBLE WITH THE

COMMON SENSE BALANCE OF WHAT IS PRACTICAL.

AS A YOUNG CONGRESSMAN, I LISTENED IN THE 1950'S  
TO THE WARNINGS OF PRESIDENT EISENHOWER. HE SAID THAT  
UNLESS WE PRESERVED THE TRADITIONAL POWER AND BASIC  
RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD NOT RETAIN  
THE KIND OF AMERICA PREVIOUSLY KNOWN. WE WOULD HAVE,  
INSTEAD, QUITE ANOTHER KIND OF AMERICA.

THE PENDULUM HAS SINCE SWUNG VERY FAR IN THE DIRECTION

THAT PRESIDENT EISENHOWER FEARED. BUT I AM TODAY

CONFIDENT THAT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, VOICED HERE AND

ALL ACROSS AMERICA, IS BEGINNING TO BRING THE PENDULUM

OF POWER BACK TO A BALANCED CENTER.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE 50 STATES AS

VIGOROUS UNITS OF GOVERNMENT IS VITAL TO INDIVIDUAL

FREEDOM AND TO THE GROWTH OF REAL NATIONAL STRENGTH

AND CHARACTER. YET IT IS USELESS TO ADVOCATE

STATES' RIGHTS / WITHOUT SIMULTANEOUSLY HONORING THE

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATES. ●

AN OBJECTIVE REASSESSMENT OF STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

CAN REDUCE CENTRAL AUTHORITY WHILE STRENGTHENING STATE AND

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

THE STATES CAN REGAIN AND REASSERT

TRADITIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES / IF WE REMOVE

FEDERAL BARRIERS TO RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT, / RESTORE

RESPONSIBLE TAXING AND FISCAL SYSTEMS, / AND ENCOURAGE

LOCAL INITIATIVE.

BUT IF THE STATES FAIL TO ACT, FEDERAL POWER WILL MOVE  
EVEN MORE DEEPLY INTO A NEW VACUUM CREATED BY POLITICAL  
EXPEDIENCIES AND PRESSURES•

WE MUST, ABOVE ALL, SEE THAT GOVERNMENT  
REMAINS RESPONSIVE TO THE REAL AND LEGITIMATE NEEDS  
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. AND WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT,  
IN MEETING THOSE NEEDS, EACH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMS  
ITS PROPER FUNCTION -- NO MORE AND NO LESS.



THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE OUR SYSTEM AND  
TO DRAW NEW ENERGY FROM THE SOURCE OF ALL GOVERNMENTAL  
POWER -- THE PEOPLE•

BEFORE THE KING'S AGENTS DISSOLVED THE  
HOUSE OF BURGESSES, PRIOR TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,  
MEMBERS OF BURGESSES OFTEN DISAGREED. BUT THEY  
SHARED A COMMON FAITH THAT LED TO A COMMON GLORY.  
IT DID NOT MATTER WHETHER THEY MET IN RALEIGH'S TAVERN  
OR IN THE DESIGNATED CHAMBER.

THEY TRUSTED ONE ANOTHER AND WORKED TOGETHER IN THE COMMON

INTEREST. THEY SHARED THEIR CONFIDENCE WITH LIKE-MINDED

PEOPLE IN EVERY OTHER COLONY.

THIS TRUST IS MANIFEST IN OUR FLAG WITH ITS

ALTERNATE STRIPES AND STARS WHICH SHARE THE SAME GALAXY.

IT IS INHERENT IN EVERY PRESUMPTION ON WHICH OUR FREE SYSTEM

IS BASED. / MUCH HAS CHANGED IN AMERICAN LIFE.

YET THE BICENTENNIAL CAN REMIND US OF THOSE VALUES

WE MUST PRESERVE, AND THE MUTUAL COOPERATION AND CONFIDENCE

WE MUST RESTORE.

ANY REAL BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE DEMANDS

THE CAPTURE OF A NEW SPIRIT FROM THE OLD•

IT IS THE REDEMPTION, \ IN A NEW REALITY, \ OF THE ESSENCE

OF THE VIRGINIA DECLARATION OF RIGHTS -- \ OF THE DECLARATION

OF INDEPENDENCE -- \ AND OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION•

THESE DOCUMENTS ARE SOMETHING MORE THAN COMPACTS

OF GOVERNMENT. THEY WERE, AND STILL ARE, EXPRESSIONS

OF THE WILL AND THE SPIRIT OF A PEOPLE.

IF THE BICENTENNIAL IS TO BE MORE THAN A COLORFUL  
HISTORICAL PAGEANT, WE MUST RESTORE ON A LOCAL AND STATE  
LEVEL THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUALS TO HAVE MORE SAY IN HOW  
THEIR TAXES ARE SPENT, IN HOW THEY LIVE, HOW THEY WORK,  
HOW THEY FIGHT CRIME, AND HOW THEY GO TO SCHOOL.

SHOULD THE BICENTENNIAL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING

ELSE, THIS ALONE WOULD BE A RESOUNDING TRIUMPH --

A FITTING TRIBUTE TO OUR HERITAGE.



I BELIEVE IN AMERICA. I REAFFIRM MY FAITH

IN THE UNIQUE VALUE OF A GOVERNMENT OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.

I BELIEVE IN OUR CAPACITY TO FOSTER DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY,

TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY / BOTH PRIVATELY

AND PUBLICLY, / AND TO ACHIEVE A PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN

THE NATIONAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS.

THE VISION OF THIS HOUSE OF BURGESSES,  
FIRST EXPRESSED 357 YEARS AGO IN COLONIAL VIRGINIA,  
REMAINS VIVID. IT IS A VISION OF A STATE AND A NATION  
WHERE THE GOVERNMENT SERVES AND THE PEOPLE RULE.

*It is a vision of the supremacy of God  
and the dedication of man*

AS GEORGE MASON, AUTHOR OF THE IMMORTAL

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, SAID OF THIS HISTORIC PLACE

WHERE WE MEET TODAY: "WE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TREADING

ON ENCHANTED GROUND."

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SHARE THIS ENCHANTED

GROUND WITH YOU / IN THIS ENCHANTED YEAR.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT