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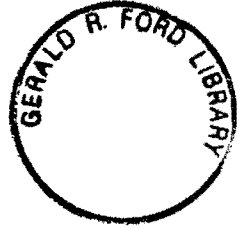
SEPTEMBER 28, 1971

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE
OF

SENATOR HUGH SCOTT; CONGRESSMAN GERALD FORD;
SENATOR LESLIE C. ARENDS AND
CONGRESSMAN ROBERT P. GRIFFIN



THE BRIEFING ROOM

AT 5:30 P.M. EDT

MR. ZIEGLER: The President met with the Leaders for an hour and 20 minutes this afternoon. They are here to give you a general rundown on what the discussion was.

I would also like to tell you that the President signed the draft legislation, H.R. 6531. We will have a statement from the President on that signing which we will hand out to you.

Q When did he sign it, Ron?

MR. ZIEGLER: At about 3:40 this afternoon.

Q Is that why Secretary Laird was here?

MR. ZIEGLER: Yes. Secretary Laird was here for that.

Senator Scott.

SENATOR SCOTT: Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, the President has signed the draft bill granting substantial increases in pay, particularly in the lower grades and illustrates, for example, that a married man without children just completing basic training and living off the military base only gets \$255 a month and under the new bill will receive \$450 and a single man living on base, who now receives \$149, will receive \$299 under the new law.

As I understand it, that part of the draft law, including the pay raise, will take effect at the end of the 90-day freeze, November 13. Other provisions of the bill are structured to allow for comparability and the comparability effect will take place July 1, 1972, and then in October there will be still another comparability schedule and in the second one in October, there will be ample opportunity to take care of any inequities or gaps which may have been revealed during the early months of the operation of the law.

Congressman Ford will talk to you about the agenda we discussed today.

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CONGRESSMAN FORD: We also discussed the Congressional agenda and the things that were mandatory from a legislative point of view before adjournment.

The first priority, of course, is the President's tax package, which has now been approved by the Committee on Ways and Means, which will be programmed on the floor of the House next week and hopefully in the Senate within the next month.

The second major item that the President wants Congress to act on before we adjourn is welfare reform. This the House has already passed. I am told that hearings will be scheduled in the Senate Committee on Finance sometime after the committee takes up the tax bill.

The third major piece of legislation which the President reiterated for action this year, not only in Detroit last week, but today with us, is revenue sharing. And even though the House hasn't passed revenue sharing yet, the committee, I think, can report out something. I believe the House will pass it and with that action I would hope the Senate would respond.

But these three measures, the President's tax reduction proposal, the President's welfare reform, the President's revenue sharing proposal are mandatory from the Administration's point of view before adjournment in 1971



SENATOR SCOTT: Another priority of course will be the confirmation of two new Justices of the Supreme Court and when those nominations come up, it is the President's hope that confirmation can be expedited so that the court can function at full strength.

On the tax bill, we understand that the Senate Finance Committee will start hearings October 7, approximately, and hopes to dispose of it on the floor of the Senate by the end of October.

Q Did he indicate when the Supreme Court Justices would come up and whether it would be in a package?

SENATOR SCOTT: He indicated that there is an active consideration going on and that he will send them up in just as short a time as he can, subject to the surveys that are being conducted.

Q Did he indicate who they would be?

SENATOR SCOTT: No.

Q Senator Scott, is a woman in the picture?

SENATOR SCOTT: We talked about women. We said persons and not men.

Q Senator Scott, if the Senate Finance Committee has to get through with and report to the floor before adjournment, first the tax bill, then welfare, then revenue sharing, how long might it be until Congress can adjourn? Easter?

SENATOR SCOTT: I think we should stay here until we get those done. I hate to say it. It condemns us all to further servitude on Jenkins Hill, but I think we might well be here quite a while. Possibly after the end of November.

Q Was there any discussion of the heavy rate of Democratic absenteeism in the Senate?

SENATOR SCOTT: Oh, the President inquired how many we had and we told him we hoped we had enough for these various amendments coming up. I think some people are necessarily absent on various occasions.

Senator Pastore said the other day some are unnecessary absences and you could include the various Presidential candidates in the latter category perhaps.

Q Was there any discussion of the future of the campaign reform bill, particularly in the House, maybe that is a question for Mr. Ford.

SENATOR SCOTT: That is up to Congressman Ford.

CONGRESSMAN FORD: We held a discussion today, Don, and the consensus among the House Members from both House Administration and the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee was that the Senate-passed version of the campaign reform legislation is the best proposal we have seen. And that unless we are satisfied with changes in the bill before the House Administration Committee, and unless we are satisfied with changes that might be made in the proposal before the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, we will actively push as Republicans for the substitution of the Senate-passed version of the campaign reform bill.

We think this is a good compromise. We think it is a step forward in campaign reform legislation and as Republicans we will do all we can to see that the Senate version gets an opportunity for exposure in committee and on the floor as well.

Q Was there any reaction here to that?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: We didn't talk about that with the President this afternoon.

Q Other than talking about that with him this afternoon, is it your understanding that the White House position is as you have stated your position to be?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Well, I hesitate at this point to say this has been given the White House imprimatur, but I believe there are many positions in that bill that coincide with the specific views or recommendations of the White House.

But in our looking at the proposal, and comparing what the House Administration Committee has already put together and what may be in the Interstate and Foreign Commerce bill, we think this is a good vehicle. We may have to change it to a minor degree, but basically, we think it has a great many advantages and it is by far preferable to anything else we have seen.



Q Could I ask one more question on this?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Surely.

Q What did you do about that in your meeting? Was this by way of making a party position on this in the House or how do you characterize what you came out with?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Well, it was a meeting with the people in the House Administration Committee and the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee that are struggling with the problem now and the House Republican Leadership and it was our consensus this was the best approach and it will be the procedure, because we think the Senate bill is an affirmative proposition to basically improve the existing Corrupt Practice Act.

We can't say it is a Republican position in the House, because the House Policy Committee hadn't acted on it, but John Rhodes was there and his view coincided with mine and the others who were there.

I think it may be but it wasn't that final step this afternoon.

Q I take it you did not take up the campaign reform bill in the discussions with the President?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: That was not discussed.

Q Does that indicate where the campaign reform bill stands on the White House priority list?

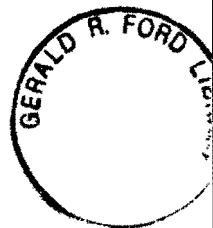
CONGRESSMAN FORD: There were other things that the President indicated ought to also be included in action before we adjourned. But we didn't discuss the three or four other things in detail. He took those three measures, the tax reduction proposal, welfare reform and the revenue sharing because those are very, very vital things that ought to be implemented in 1972. But he did say there were other things that we would discuss at the next meeting of this group of four.

Q Do you anticipate any problems in Congress on the President's decision in signing the draft bill to not give the military pay increases until after the current freeze?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Of course the military pay increase that was signed today doesn't go into effect until October 1, and under the President's freeze the military would only be deprived of an increase in this area between October 1 and November 13.

I believe that the military personnel who are as anxious as anybody to combat the problems of inflation and to make equal sacrifices with anybody else will accept and understand that five-week delay in the pay increase.

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Q Did Mr. Hebert accept it and understand it?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I wasn't there at the meeting. Maybe Mr. Arends can answer that.

CONGRESSMAN ARENDS: I don't know whether you based that on the report that was in the "Star" today or not, but I immediately checked with Ed Hebert and he said this is quite contrary to any discussion he had with Udall.

Q What do you mean, that he is not for this?

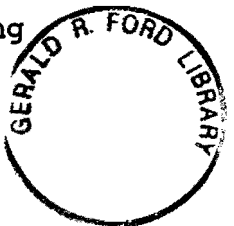
CONGRESSMAN ARENDS: He said he was not a part and parcel of any agreement with Mr. Udall.

Q That wasn't my question. Mr. Hebert has expressed himself in the past that in his view the pay increase should take effect regardless of the wage-price freeze and I wondered if he changed his mind on that.

CONGRESSMAN ARENDS: I am rather close to Ed Hebert and I am not of the opinion that he changed his mind, but he feels this should be done just about the way Mr. Ford set it out, yes. He is not too disturbed about it.

Q Was there any discussion this afternoon of the possible need for legislation to implement the second phase of the President's economic plans?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: There was no discussion today at all on that point. At the meeting that was held about 10 days ago -- and there were Democratic leaders, committee chairmen there -- there was some discussion about extending the existing law passed April 30 to next year in order to get the discussion of the extension out of the area of political Presidential campaigns, but there was no discussion today.



Q Is it your understanding that legislation will be needed or not?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I think it would be needed and there seemed to be an almost unanimous feeling 10 days ago it was desirable.

Q You mean just the extension?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Just the simple extension of the existing law for another nine months until February 1, 1973.

Q I would like to ask Senator Scott and Senator Griffin, I believe you are both on the Judiciary Committee, aren't you?

SENATOR GRIFFIN: I used to be.

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Q The other day, Saturday, I believe, the President suggested that Mr. Mitchell is consulting with the committee. Has he suggested some names to you, Senator Scott, and asked your opinion on the likelihood of quick confirmation?

SENATOR SCOTT: I am not free to say anything except that I have had a talk with the Attorney General. But it would be not proper for me to tell you what we talked about. But rather than specify names discussed, there were regions and sections and areas and the advantage of appointing a man or woman, things of that kind. I would anticipate there would be further conversation, but there was nothing very specific at that time.

Q Congressman Ford, you mentioned that regarding extending the Act that expires April 30 that the proposal was made to extend it for another nine months until February 1, 1973. Where did that date come from?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: During the discussions about 10 days ago there were alternatives suggested. Some wanted two months. Some wanted January 1, 1973. And after we took a look at all the alternatives and the possibility of politics getting involved into the extension in 1972, I thought there was a high degree of unanimity, that we ought to have it extended into the next Congress and when the next President would be faced with the problem and there was bipartisan support and I didn't hear any disagreement, Democratic or Republican.

Q Do you see any reason, Congressman Ford, why the military pay increases would not go into effect immediately after the expiration of the present wage-price freeze? Is it your expectation there will be no further delays after November 13th?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: That is my understanding that after the price freeze expires November 13th that the military pay increase that were incorporated in the bill, signed by the President today, would go into effect.



Q In full?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: Yes, that is my understanding.

Q If I could follow that, doesn't that then set a precedent for other wages that have been negotiated to go into effect during the freeze, doesn't this in effect say they can also go into full effect immediately after the freeze?

CONGRESSMAN FORD: I don't think that necessarily follows. This is basic legislation that has the hope of giving us an opportunity for an all volunteer career military program and these pay increases are for that specific purposes and I would assume that that wouldn't necessarily mean that you are going to have comparable wage increases for the private sector after that time.

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For example, the pay increase for a private goes up about 50 percent. But this is for a specific purpose, namely, an all volunteer career military service and I don't think you can go from that to the private sector with private pay increases.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 5:43 P.M. EDT)

