

THE JOINT SENATE-HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

SENATOR DIRKSEN - REPRESENTATIVE FORD

March 18, 1965

STATEMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE FORD: In a series of messages to Congress that are almost encyclopedic in the listing of problems purportedly to be solved by the Federal government, President Johnson proposes enactment of laws and the appropriation of funds that will place the Federal foot in the door of every important function now reserved to the states and local communities.

The formula is ingenious. The future needs of every locality for the next 10 to 20 years are fed, computer-like, into the Federal maw to arrive at a gigantic nationwide figure calculated to stagger the imagination and reduce the citizen to a feeling of utter helplessness. The heroic answer is, of course, the one now being set forth almost daily by the Johnson Administration, which is: Only the Federal government can handle the problem.

Had our founding fathers examined the problems confronting them on the same basis, this country probably would have remained a British colony with the Crown handling everything. The fact that the states and local communities have been meeting these problems in their relatively simple locales for nearly two centuries of unequalled progress is ignored.

Federalized schools, text books, and teachers, Federalized zoning, building codes, health centers, and transportation, Federalized libraries, laboratories, auditoriums and theaters - - all these and much more are now in prospect for our states and local communities. In time our state and local governments can only be reduced to resident agents for the huge central authority in Washington.

Perhaps the American people want to abandon a proven system that has worked as no other on earth. We don't believe it. The Johnson program has been so disguised by platitudes and Madison Avenue adjectives that its real aim has not been recognized. We are told we are approaching the "Great Society."

We deem it our obligation to provide our citizens with full knowledge of the direction in which their Federal administration is heading our nation. The end of the road is complete Federal control.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DIRKSEN: May I say by way of prelude that both of these statements are somewhat general in character, but it is done for a purpose. It is by way of establishing a predicate for statements to follow that will be more specific. We've done a good deal of research work and developed background data and now, from time to time, it will follow almost the format that is used when the President, for instance, sends down his State of the Union Message and then follows up with specific messages on a great many fields of activity.

The unveiling of President Johnson's "Great Society" makes it starkly clear that the Federal government has only begun to grow in size and in power and in cost.

The central thesis of the "Great Society" is that bigger and bigger government means better and better health, better and better education, better and better transportation, and better and better environment. It resembles political "perpetual motion."

How big is government today? The answer is simply: It's enormous.

Here are some samples of the combined impact of Federal, state, and local governments: Taxes and other government levies now consume 35 percent of total national income. One out of every six workers in the United States is a government employee. One out of every five dollars spent in the United States for goods and services is spent by government. One dollar out of every four dollars and a half of personal income in the United States is accounted for by direct government payments.

The impact of the Federal government alone is startling: Federal aid to State and local governments has risen from \$3.8 billion in 1956 to... I re-emphasize the amount... \$3.8 billion... to \$13.6 billion for 1966 - - and that's only a space of 10 years, but it's an increase of 260 percent. Federal funds now amount to 14 percent of the total state-local revenue.

These figures give some idea of the size of government today. Right now the Federal government has more civilian employees in 30 of the 50 states than do the states themselves, and that includes the five biggest in the Union - - California, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Ohio.

To all this we are now going to add President Johnson's "Great Society." There is no conceivable way to estimate the future cost. The sky's the limit.

The President has already told us that balancing the budget "too quickly" can be "self-defeating." Thus the President and the nation, or the Congress and the nation, have been put on notice that the "Great Society" will be financed by ever-increasing Federal deficits and, although not predicted by the President, these deficits could break all records in wartime or in peacetime if the "Great Society" expands as projected. It is time ALL Americans took a hard look at the hard facts.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, not state employees... it was a question of residence...

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I thought so - and my staff thought so - and it must have been an inadvertance, although there are others who felt it was deleted. But when you have 15 or 20 people around the table and you're talking in groups and talking in concert, sometimes those little slips happen. But, in any event, it can be easily cured...

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, no... Oh, no... not for one moment, and I hope you make that perfectly clear.

QUESTION: ... the intention is they should be state residents -

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Tony, the logic from my point of view is simply this: That if you took an examiner from one state and sent him to another state under Civil Service auspices where the problem really was... how easy it would be to accuse you of carpetbagging, and that's just one of those things that I, for one, do not like to inherit.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, it could be. Now, it goes back to just a little misunderstanding, but I shall try to cure it, of course, in the Committee itself when we take up the bill.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Dick, that whole matter was pretty thoroughly discussed and, of course, I think you can cite the scripture

inorder to establish the point... but to what extent that takes place, I don't know. But that would have been notably true if, for instance, we had let that provision stand... that among others he could appoint, or the Civil Service Commission could finger and add an additional duty to Federal Employees. And I cited the fact you might ask a rural mail carrier in a small community.... Well, he's got so many patrons. Suppose they met him out in front at the box when he came by and said if this is what you're going to do, so far as I'm concerned you're just off of my list and if I were you I'd just get right with the Lord and I would resign as an Examiner... so, you see, that element CAN come into the picture.

QUESTION: Senator, can you say what it is you plan to do in Committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have suggested that we hold hearings in the full Committee - rather than in Sub-committee. And I earnestly hope that view will prevail. That will shorten the time somewhat, it will give every member of the Committee who wishes to attend a chance to hear ALL of the testimony.

QUESTION: Senator, I'm sorry... I mean with regard to the state residency requirement. You said it can be easily cured -

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh! Well, it can be easily cured provided that is the will of a majority of the Committee.

QUESTION: Can I ask Mr. Ford if he supports the bill that Senator Dirksen has -

REP. FORD: I think it's appropriate to say first that we all know the President, when he spoke to us Monday night, said he was

sending up a law... if that were the case, it wouldn't make any difference whether I introduced a bill or not.

I'm not introducing a bill... on the other hand, I think my record and the record of the Republicans in the House is clear... we believe there MUST be legislation, effective legislation, passed early, so that we can get the target of the Republican Party, which is all people registered to vote in all 50 states by 1966.

Now, the Republicans in the House - early in the Session - introduced some 20 bills to ensure the right of all citizens of all states to register and vote. We have appointed a Republican Task Force in the House that has been working on legislation. I have been in consultation with Senator Dirksen almost daily and Congressman McCulloch, the Senior Republican on the Committee on the Judiciary, has likewise been consulting constantly with Senator Dirksen.

We believe that we can develop a bill within the framework of this legislation and we think the House ought to work its will on whatever legislation we can come up with to achieve the purpose that we believe in.

QUESTION: ... there have been some rumbles that some House Republicans don't agree with this approach... 50 percent is too high...

REP. FORD: There is no substantial disagreement with the bill, although we think we ought to work our OWN will along with the members of the Democratic Party in the House and, as you know, hearings started today... the Republicans urged that hearings be held early... and we didn't object to their not being held when the House was sitting. So we're in favor of immediate action for an effective bill.

QUESTION: ... you have reservations... will you be a little more specific...

REP. FORD: At this point I think it's better that I don't pinpoint any areas where there might be disagreement. The members of the Committee on the Judiciary on our side will work their will in the Committee hearings and we on the floor.

I think the most important thing is that Senator Dirksen and I - along with the House Republicans and the Senate Republicans - are urging immediate action on legislation which will attack the problem effectively in every state of the Union.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Let me amplify... You should remember that they do not have dual sponsorship in the House as we do in the Senate. So there is no particular point in introducing a great quantity of bills that are identic in text... when one bill is introduced, that is enough.

In the Senate, however, you can get as many co-sponsors as are willing to go on a bill and that puts it in a considerably different frame.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, wouldn't it help speed immediate action if you had a specific proposal from the Republican side?

REP. FORD: I don't think so. They do have the bill that was sent up by the President and Attorney General Katzenbach... this is the vehicle upon which hearings are being held. After they've had testimony from the proponents... opponents... then the Committee will work its will and they have "a" vehicle plus some 20 Republican proposals that have been in the mill since January 4th. I think there's ample basis

upon which a good piece of legislation can evolve.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, are you concerned with all this bipartisanship the Republicans may lose some of the political threat for this legislation?

REP. FORD: I'm not at all concerned about that as long as we get GOOD legislation. If we have the right kind of legislation, the Republicans AND the Democrats will get appropriate rewards.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen -

SENATOR DIRKSEN: (Interrupts) I want to... let me answer Bill Thais by saying that a similar question was addressed, I think, to Thomas Jefferson and after discussing, he said: "The approbation which may have been long denied will be forthcoming."

So it's not a question of credit, it's a question of getting a job done.

Sam had a question -

QUESTION: ...It has been charged (I think even in such a conservative journal as the WALL STREET JOURNAL) that the Republican alternatives to the "Great Society" are vastly more costly, would take much more money out of the Treasury...

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Who said that? (LAUGHTER)

QUESTION: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL!

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, no, now... you said it was in the WALL STREET JOURNAL ... authoritative publication. Now... (Senator and Questioner talking at once)... Now, whose by-line was it?

QUESTION: ... the schools. (LAUGHTER) ... the school bill will be vastly more expensive than the Administration school bill...

Medicare more expensive than the hospital care... and the Regional Rehabilitation Aid Program promoted by the Republicans will be more expensive. I'm not saying this is so... I say the charge has been made... now, what is the answer?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Sam, I ought to put you on the stand and avail myself of all evidenciary rules and then we would come to grips with this. Because we're just dealing with a lot of figures in thin air, which I do not accept as authoritative at all. After 17 years on the Appropriations Committee of the House and Senate, I can tell you that when you break these figures down they come out rather differently, and so I'm not going to be in the position of generalizing until I see a specific, because it makes all the difference in the world. And I say that without my tongue in my cheek and without forfeiting my high regard for that very eminent newspaper, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

(LAUGHTER)

REP. FORD: Senator, I would like to respond to Sam's comment. If you take the Administration's so-called "Medicare" Bill and provide the same benefits that the Byrnes proposal does, the Administration proposal - with the same benefits - would be at least a third more costly... the Republican Byrnes proposal... because it is not mandatory, it is not compulsory... and because something like 20 percent of the people will avail themselves of the option not to belong, the cost will be substantially less if the Byrnes proposal were enacted into law.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You mean for... well, for enactment of the bill, or for concluding deliberations in the Senate...

QUESTION: Either one -

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, let me just spell out... If we take the full time and from Monday until April 9 - excluding Saturdays and Sundays - is actually 15 working days. Now assume it comes back on the calendar and it will come back because this motion is going to be agreed to by the Senate.

Now you could set it the following Monday - that would be 10, 11, 12. I suppose - and then you reason from there on. And I must be so frank as to confess a slight difficulty, because early in the year - back in January - we agreed upon a recess period for Easter, which begins on the 18th after the close of business and runs, I believe, until the 21st. Now, I'd probably have to fortify myself on the card and see...

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That's right... conclusion of business on April 15 until noon, Wednesday, April 21. Now from the 12th... say, Monday to the 15th... is three days. Can you finish in that time... and having announced this so long ago, are we really at liberty where members have made their plans for speeches and all the other attributes of this business, to cancel out the Easter Recess? I have some grave doubts about it - nor do I believe that Easter period is going to be fateful. Because I appraise the temper of the Senate... I do

not believe there will be a filibuster... I do not believe there will be even what I am pleased to refer to euphemistically as "extended discussion." I think the fever is in the air and they're going to dispose of this matter and it won't take too long. But I'm afraid I'd be a prophet without honor in my own country if I tried to tell you that on a given date we're going to finish action on the bill.

QUESTION: You're apt to be here all summer -

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I'm confident that we're not.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Louder -

QUESTION: Saturday being the first day of spring, do you have any comment on that? (LAUGHTER)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have only one comment. I have discovered that tulip bulbs don't do very well if you have to use a pickaxe to put them in. (LAUGHTER) And so I'm afraid that feeling of nostalgia I get everytime I see a hyacinth pop his bold little head above the soil... is not going to be requited and I shall be a very impatient person.

But I will say to you where all the world can hear... that after these long sessions in my office day after day... getting out sometimes at midnight... that I could use a little rest.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Senator, if by some chance there were a filibuster, how long would it go on?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I'd rather not speculate on it because I do not believe it's going to be necessary, but we'll come to that bridge and cross it when necessary.