

The Republican Leadership
of the Congress
Press Conference
September 22, 1966

MR. FORD: Mr. President, our question-of-the-Week: Can we afford your automatic-Democratic Congress?

This may be, in some respects, a push-button world. It may be, in some respects, a computer civilization. It may be, here and there, that the rubber stamp has its proper place and function. But, the push-button, the computer and the rubber stamp wielded in the White House have not yet won the approval of the American people where their Representatives and Senators in the Congress are concerned.

Does the Johnson-Humphrey Administration want not only a blank check but push-button, computerized, rubber stamp voting in the Senate and in the House? This the American people will no longer tolerate.

Proof positive of this Administration's push-button psychology is the voting record of those 45 freshmen Democrats elected in 1964 from districts formerly Republican, whose automatic responses to the wishes of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration are recorded for all to hear and to see.

Item: On reducing foreign aid, 1965. This was defeated by 41 votes; 38 of these were automatic-Democratic freshmen votes.

Item: On reducing foreign aid, 1966. This failed by 2 votes; 36 of the automatic-Democratic freshmen voted against recemittal.

Item: On anti-poverty expansion. Recommitment was defeated by 49 votes; 39 of these were automatic-Democratic freshmen votes.

Item: On the repeal of L4B (the right to work). The bill passed by 18 votes; 41 votes for it were automatic-Democratic freshmen votes.

Item: Rent subsidies. The margin was 3 votes; 36 automatic-Democratic freshmen voted to keep this bill alive.

Says Fortune Magazine (September, 1966): "... those 45 provided the saving margin for a number of the more expansive and expensive Administration programs ..."

This automatic-Democratic response by new members of the House was echoed by that of the rest of the top-heavy Democratic majority in the House. The push-button, the computer, the rubber stamp wielded by the Johnson-Humphrey Administration were in full force in every instance. The result: a travesty of the legislative process, a gross disservice to the will and the wishes of the American people.

No free society can long survive dominance by an unthinking computer, nor dominance by an unthinking, unrestrained, top-heavy legislative majority. This Democratic Congress, with its 294 to 139 majority in the House and its 67 to 33 majority in the Senate has lost its independence. It is the tool of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration. The Administration and this Democratic Congress must bear full and joint responsibility for the failures and the

continuing problems we face in the nation. This fact cannot be contradicted. Its simple arithmetic cannot be argued.

In our great tradition, the will of the majority must prevail, yet the will of the minority must be respected and remain vital. Otherwise, as has often happened in world history, an overwhelming majority seeking unreasoning power will silence, subdue and then suffocate the essential minority.

We cannot believe for a moment that the American people will any longer accept a push-button Congress or consensus by computer. We believe they agree increasingly that only in a healthy balance of numbers and opinions can this free land survive and prevail.

Therefore, Mr. President, Our-Question-of-the-Week: Can we afford your automatic-Democratic Congress?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, ladies and gentlemen, if you're ready. Mr. President, our Question-of-the-week: Can we afford your automatic-Democratic Congress?

Seldom has the hypocrisy of numbers been better illustrated than in the voting during this past week on the Civil Rights bill. The Republican minority and its Leadership in the Senate have been indicted and damned by the Johnson-Murphy Administration and its Democratic majority as well for having killed the Civil Rights bill. How can men of intelligence and good-will so overlook that same simple arithmetic to which Mr. Ford has just made reference?

There are 67 Democrats in the Senate. There are 33 Republicans. This being so, how under Heaven, can it be concluded that the Republicans defeated the Civil Rights bill? Had the Johnson-Humphrey Administration truly wished it, had the Democrats in the Senate truly sought it, the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1966 would, without doubt, be on the statute books at this very moment and be the law of the land. As one writer put it in comment on the classic question of "who killed Cock Robin?" it had to be a Democratic arrow; not that of the Republican minority.

Happily for the nation's best interest and fortunately for the freedom of the individual, the Republican minority, outnumbered as it was, reflected the will of our people to a great degree that made converts of regular Democrats and resulted in a vote that assured the right of every American to preserve the integrity of his own judgment and to determine the future of his own home.

The will of the people in this instance prevailed, but it could never have done so if a determined minority had not made clear the issues involved and in so doing won the respect and the response of many others.

It is unwise, it is dangerous and it can be disastrous, when an overwhelming majority is permitted to prevail without question or hindrance. Only as a majority is repeatedly questioned and checked by a strong minority can the foundations of this Republic be preserved. That we, a present minority, would welcome

majority status is of course undeniable, but until that inevitable day we believe it all important to the American people that our numbers and our hand be strengthened sufficiently to outlaw forever from Capitol Hill the push-button, the computer and the soulless rubber stamp.

Therefore, Mr. President, our Question-of-the-Week (to repeat):
Can we afford your automatic-Democratic Congress?

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, shortly before the House voted on the Civil Rights bill, at one of these press conferences, you suggested that some parts of the bill were acceptable to the Republicans. Do you think at this late date the Republicans will favor passage of some kind of Civil Rights bill this year?

MR. FORD: I can only speak for the Republicans in the House, but I believe that if Title 4 were deleted there would be a substantial Republican vote for the remainder of the legislation.

QUESTION: The Republican White Paper on Vietnam has given some people the idea that the Republicans supported the President but now have dissolved that support. Would you say that most Republicans in Congress support most of what the Administration is doing in Vietnam?

MR. FORD: I would say that if we know what the policy is and are given the cost and the commitment and all of the other problems that are involved, as long as it's a policy of strength against Communist aggression in South Vietnam or anyplace else, the

Republicans will support the policy.

QUESTION: Wednesday Representative Ware (?) said that the Democratic split is prolonging the war in Vietnam. Do you agree with that?

MR. FORD: Yes, I do. I have said the same thing a number of times in the past myself. I do believe that the disunity in the Democratic Party, particularly in the United States Senate, over what our policy should be in Vietnam has tended to encourage the enemy, undermine the morale of American troops in Vietnam and to a degree prolonged the war in Vietnam. As a matter of fact, I have heard the President of the United States say virtually the same thing himself. He is disturbed about it and I think he is having a great deal of trouble trying to get any unity in the Democratic Party, particularly in the Senate, over what this country's policy should be in Vietnam.

SEN. DENYSEN: Let me amplify that a little. It ought to be understood by our people that virtually everything that's said in the Senate on the subject of Vietnam is carried on the short wave out there and gets to the people, so that if there's a committee meeting before any committee or if a Senator speaks on the floor, you can find those speeches, word for word in the International Monitor that monitors all these broadcasts. Now, if they are to assume that as the enemy, and particularly the enemy leaders, hear this they say well just hold on a little while longer and the United States will cave in. That's the most natural inference that

one could deduct from that kind of a situation. That's the basis for that opinion that it does prolong the conflict.

QUESTION: Senator, a 2-part question. What do you think of the appointment of Nick Katzenbach to the State Department and does this mean a change in any policy issues?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, on the latter part of that question I can't tell you, but I can tell you that Nicholas Katzenbach is, in my judgment, one of the ablest men in Government today. He has a tremendous background and often and often I've referred to him as "the brain." I regard him as a close personal friend and I have the highest regard for his ability in his capacity. I cannot speak with authority upon his background in the foreign affairs field because I do not know what it is although I have been advised that he years ago did some work in that field and that in a way it's rather his first love rather than to be the chief law enforcement officer of the United States.

QUESTION: Do you recommend him to the President?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, I don't know that it took any recommendation, but the President of the United States knows of my high esteem and affection for Nicholas Katzenbach.

QUESTION: Would you like to see a new Attorney General who is somewhat less militant than Mr. Katzenbach has been on Civil Rights and open housing?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Oh, I don't know. Notwithstanding all that we've gotten along famously. I don't know how many times he's been in my office in an endeavor to persuade me that I was persisting in the course of error, and he didn't quite succeed. But that does not diminish my esteem for him one bit. I'll always welcome him to the office. Now he was a great law enforcement officer and in that job you have to have some militancy.

QUESTION: Gentlemen, the major auto producers have all announced price increases. Do you think there is anything the Federal Government can or should do to meet this?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, I can't conceive at a time like this when inflation is a threat that a motor manufacturer would increase his prices unless his cost sheets indicate that he's got to do so in order to come out and maintain a rather reasonable profit for his stock holders and also take care of the wage increases that come from time to time. Now it should be remembered that they have to buy steel, they have to buy leather, they have to buy rubber, everything that's a component in an automobile. In proportion if those go up, their own cost sheets go up. Obviously their cost department has got to make that determination.

MR. FORD: I think the price increases that the automotive manufacturers have announced clearly illustrate the real serious problem this country faces with the inflationary policies of the

Johnson-Humphrey Administration. Senator Dirksen and myself have been warning for months that we were in a rising price cycle, that the inflationary policies of this Administration were the prime responsibility for the increasing costs across all segments of our society. Unfortunately the Administration did virtually nothing to go to the root of the problem, to cut back on nonmilitary, nonessential spending. In contrast, they persisted in increasing expenditures in the nonmilitary field and of course the error of the White House was compounded by the Democrats in the Congress even going beyond the President's budget in too many instances. The net result is that we've got increases in prices for automobiles and a multitude of other items in the economy. I suspect that when the next Bureau of Labor statistic price increase or cost of living announcement is made (I think it's within a few days) you will see a very substantial increase and this can be pinned right on the Democratic Congress and the White House.

QUESTION: Are you happy with the ceilings the Administration has put on interest rates. Is this an effective anti-inflation method?

MR. FORB: I hope it will be. I think it's only attacking the symptom and not the cause. The Administration just a few days ago had to pay the highest interest rate in the sale of some of

its Government securities in over 45 years. This ceiling that was imposed as a result of legislation passed by the Congress I hope will help, but until the Administration does something about the basic cause, the stopping of some of the spending out of the Federal treasury, you're going to have one complication after another.

SEN. DIRKSEN: I think you ought to remember the purpose of this interest rate limitation when it's imposed. Actually the problem was the siphoning of money out of savings and loan and other thrift institutions because of the increasing use of certificates of deposit, particularly for large sums. Now the only way that that can be cured ultimately is by managing that interest rate and letting that money dribble back for the purpose of making home mortgages. I think the end result you can see very clearly in the diminution of the number of starts in the housing field.

QUESTION: To open the Senate on your amendment, do you now have a prayer? (LAUGHTER)

SEN. DIRKSEN: A prayer? Why, my friend, we've just begun. We may modify that language just a little but it'll be in the hopper so help me, on the third day of January if that's the day we convene. And then the effort will be made and I indicated on the floor yesterday we'll be far better organized when we get this national committee group consisting of Dan Felling,

Cray Churchman, Billy Graham and we'll have one outstanding Catholic prelate to join that trinity and they'll do the organizational job and we'll be right there.

QUESTION: Senator, I talked to Dr. Polling last night and he said he didn't know anything about this national organization.

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, probably he wasn't disclosing it at the moment until it's completed. You don't think I'd go on the Senate floor and say out of a clear sky I received a call from Dr. Polling if he hadn't called me.

QUESTION: I just thought maybe he wasn't thinking along the lines of a national organization...

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well maybe not, but I consider it as national. Because it has one and only one purpose and that is to reach into the whole country in order to bring this thing to a real head.

QUESTION: Will you take a part in this organization?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, I will if they want me to, but I can do a better part here in the United States Senate. Somebody has got to drag that out of the Judiciary Committee and get it on the floor. I don't think Dr. Polling would undertake to tell anyone that he knows the rules of the Senate better than the Minority Leader. I think I do know the rules and I will avail myself of the rules.

QUESTION: Mr. Ford, you said earlier that the President has frequently said that the split in the Democratic Party in the Senate has prolonged the war. Could you for clarification give us some circumstances in which he said this?

MR. FORD: I'll let my statement that he virtually has said the same thing stand. The instances where I heard that were in conversations with him on a personal basis.

QUESTION: Can you give us an assessment of Mr. Nixon's travelings on behalf of the Party. Is he helping candidates or helping himself?

SEN. BIRKSEN: Well, he's helping candidates and he's very energetic about it, and he's helping to energize the Party organization in every part of the country.

MR. FORD: He's traveling under the auspices of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee. He's going into marginal Republican Democratic Districts where we hope to defeat an incumbent Democrat. I might add that the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee has asked Governor Romney, Governor Scranton and several other leading Republicans to do the same thing. I believe we're going to have this added cooperation from them as well as from Dick Nixon. We think that all of them will be good spokesmen for the Republican Party, particularly in the marginal Congressional Districts that we hope to pick up.

QUESTION: If he brings in some new House members, would you hope that they'd be Republican on some of these votes?

MR. FORD: We'll take Republicans who'll vote Republican and who will independently exercise their own judgment. We want them from all 50 states.

QUESTION: I didn't hear the name Coldwater mentioned.

MR. FORD: He's making some speeches throughout the country. I think he's helping in those areas where he can best assist our candidates.

QUESTION: Human Events said this week that the Office of Education is trying to rewrite textbooks of the country. I believe they referred to a hearing that has been held for that purpose to convey a little bit the viewpoint through textbooks to the children. I wonder if you wish to comment on that?

MR. FORD: I'm not familiar with any such effort. I think I've heard about it, but I haven't seen the specifics of it. I am familiar with this document that was in the process of being prepared in the Office of the Commissioner of Education which would have called for a six billion dollar expenditure and very tough rules and regulations concerning neighborhood schools. Now Mr. Howe, I understand, has denied the existence of it, but I think the facts are that there was such a bill in the process of preparation and there was an effort aimed at trying to get this legislation to the Congress for its approval.

QUESTION: Inaudible.

MR. FORD: Knowing what I think I know about the Department, I wouldn't doubt it at all.

SEN. DIRKSEN: Let me raise this question, now that you raise it. Can you escape the conviction that you won't go right straight into Federal control of education when a Federal agency dictates

what the children shall read and learn at the local level.

QUESTION: Then the new program would put the library books in the schools?

SEN. DIRKSEN: Why certainly; that's the purpose of it.

QUESTION: In other words you'd have a Federal program...

SEN. DIRKSEN: In other words a textbook will not be acceptable unless it has the approval of the Office of Education. If that isn't control of education, then I don't know what you call it.

QUESTION: Senator, who's going to approve it. I know down in Virginia the history books say the reason Virginia entered the Civil War was because foreign troops invaded her soil.

SEN. DIRKSEN: Well, have we ever had any trouble with the textbooks in this country? Don't you think that the state authorities, the local authorities, and the people who are interested in the preparation of school books can do that job just as well and not give it an oblique slant. That's the trouble with letting the Office of Education do it because they'll take one point of view, that's it for the whole country, and that's control with a vengeance.

Thank you gentlemen.