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June 13, 1975

INFORMATION CONCERNING MEETING WITH GEORGIA REPUBLICAN
PARTY

Meeting

The meeting will be with the members of the Executive Committee of the Georgia Republican Party. Twenty-six are expected to attend (list attached).

Bob Hartman

Conduct of the Meeting

State Party Chairman, Mack Mattingly, will be in charge of the meeting. He anticipates a very friendly session and presently intends to have Matthew Patton and Bobby Hydrick (both widely respected) to begin with friendly questions. It's his idea to open the meeting then to general questions and answers to the extent that time permits.

Issues

The key issue in Georgia, as everywhere else, is the economy. Is it really turning up? Will interest rates stay down? Will unemployment decrease, etc.? On other issues, there's 100% agreement with the firm action on Mayaguez? Rockefeller is unpopular, but this is not a deep-seated feeling with most Republicans. Republicans feel that the Administration is doing nothing for them in the way of patronage and that the National Committee is not responsive. While race is not the issue it once was, there's a deeply felt feeling that the South is doing a better job than the rest of the country in handling the problems of integration, and yet it is still being penalized by punitive legislation such as the Voting Rights Bill, which applies only to the South and is based on a formula that never was fair and is growing even more unfair as it continues to be based on election results for an election that took place more than 10 years ago.

Ford versus Reagan

Ronald Reagan is the only Republican opposition anticipated at this time. Reagan has always been extremely popular in Georgia.

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He appeared before the State Convention two weeks ago and was enthusiastically received. However, a resolution introduced at the height of this enthusiasm, seeking endorsement for Reagan, was tabled. The party leadership now wants to keep its options open and not make a commitment. Mattingly himself has openly stated that as State Chairman, he intends to support the President fully, at least until such time as there is another active candidate in the race. It is too early to anticipate the results of a Ford-Reagan primary now. Most informed politicians feel that Republicans would be more likely to support Ford. Democratic voting in the Republican primary would be more likely to support Reagan. The primary could well be close if Reagan should run an active campaign.

76 Election

The President's personal popularity has increased enormously since Mayaguez. There is now general consensus that President Ford will carry Georgia against any Democrat likely to get the nomination. Wallace is viewed as the only possible exception, and his nomination is considered unlikely, and his charm appears to be lessening.

Party Philosophy

There's no substantial liberal element in the Georgia Republican Party. Almost all of the leaders of the Party came in in 1964 as strong supporters of Goldwater, or have joined with a strong conservative bent since that time.

Party Unity

The Party is probably more unified now than it has been in a long time. It is going through a love feast with the new Chairman. Bob Shaw, while tremendously hurt because he feels the Party turned on him after he gave so much time and effort to it, is being outwardly supportive. On the whole, enthusiasm is extremely high and there is no discord.

Party Problems

The principal party problem facing the organization is lack of funding. The party is about \$7,500 in debt, and having a hard time meeting cash flow problems.

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Congressional

Georgia has no Republican Congressmen since Ben Blackburn was defeated last fall. It is unknown whether Blackburn will run again. His chances for retaking the seat are considered less than 50-50. The two strongest contenders in the 76 elections are thought to be Quincy Collins, who ran a close race in the 7th District with newly elected Larry McDonald (McDonald defeated John Davis in the primary), and Newt Gingrich who ran a close race in the 6th District with Congressman Jack Flynt. Collins and Gingrich are expected to run again and both given a good chance of winning.

State Elections

The Republicans now have 24 out of 180 members of the Georgia House and 5 out of 56 state senators. This number has remained relatively stable for the past 10 years. Increasing the number of state legislators is the number one priority of the Georgia Republican Party established by Mack Mattingly.

Presidential Preferential Primary

Georgia has never before had a Presidential Primary. Primary legislation was drawn immediately after the Democratic Kansas City mini convention in order to conform with National Democratic Party rules. There is speculation that current legislation will be amended at the next session of the General Assembly which convenes in January 1976. The legislature will be dominated by Democrats who, in this area, normally act partisanly. At the present time, the legislation calls for an expression of preference for the Presidential candidate and does not operate through a slate of ~~candidates~~ ^{delegates}. Somehow the law calls for Republican delegates to be pledged for two ballots (district delegates pledged by the district vote, state at large by the state vote), but does not call for Democratic candidates to be pledged at all. The Republican Party is making a good bit of political mileage by claiming that the Democrats are spending state money for a sham that has no meaning, whereas the Republican Primary means something.

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There is no party registration in Georgia, and the current law calls for choosing between a Republican or Democratic ballot at the time of voting. The degree of participation in the Republican Primary will depend on the heat of the contest in each of the primaries. In the past, Republican Primaries for State elections draw less than 100,000 votes whereas Democratic primaries draw around 800,000.

The date of the primary is still to be set by a committee dominated by Democrats -- best estimate is between March 1 and June 1.

It is anticipated that there will be no other issue on the ballot at the time of the Presidential Primary.

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Members of Georgia Republican Party Executive Committee
Expected to Attend:

Mack Mattingly, State Chairman
Bob Shaw, Former State Chairman
Nolan Murrah, National Committeeman
Nora Allen, National Committeewoman
Marty Layfield, First Vice Chairman
Lucy Taylor, First Vice Chairwoman
Rowena Mosely, Vice Chairwoman
Dennis Whitfield, Vice Chairman
Dr. Hollis Tanksley, Vice Chairman
Annette McKutchin, Secretary
Paul Womack, Treasurer
Jeanette Longley, Assistant Secretary
Lil McAfee, President, Women's Federation
Paul Coverdale, Senate Minority Leader
Gary Cason, Muscogee County Chairman
Richard McBride, Executive Director

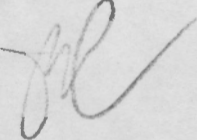
District Chairmen:

Dr. Lloyd Darby, First District
Ellie Roseen, Second District
Bobby Hydrick, Third District
Shorty Lorensen, Fourth District
Matt Patton, Fifth District
Bob Simpkins, Sixth District
Truitt Moss, Seventh District
Carolyn Smalley, Eighth District
David Ralston, Ninth District
LeRoy Simpkins, Tenth District

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROBERT T. HARTMANN
FROM: JAMES CONNOR 

The President asked that the attached material be sent to you for your use and information.

cc: Don Rumsfeld