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Connor

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

Themes

The President's record, simply explained, can make one of the most effective campaign themes. To date, however, we have not done a good job in laying out the record in a way which advocates can use it. This paper suggests one approach to the task.

I. The situation confronting the President when he took office.

1. Massive national trauma of Watergate and dissillusion with Vietnman.

a. The honesty, decency and even the legitimacy of government being questions.

b. Allies and adversaries unsure of America's will and intentions

2. Economy on the verge of collapse.

a. decade of overspending leads to ever widening gyrations of inflation and recession.

b. loss of confidence that the government has the political will to take the unpopular steps necessary to bring inflation under control.

c. fear that the demands for stimulus will set off another round of double digit plus inflation leading eventually to even sharper recession.

3. Public sector growth out of control

-- - government expenditures consuming an ever larger share of the GNP. Proliferation of grant and entitlement programs creates a bureaucratic nightmare and an uncontrollable budget. These trends worsen the already serious economic problems by limiting the government's ability to take necessary corrective measures.

4. A very liberal Congress elected in Nov. 1974 threatens to compound the problems by further increasing expenditures and inventing a whole new generation of grant programs.
5. Ten year trend toward reducing real defense expenditures combined with rapidly growing Soviet effort during the same period threatens to create a dangerous imbalance in the world political/military balance.
  - a. 94th Congress appears eager to continue and even accelerate the trend toward less real defense expenditures.

II. The Tasks of the President were:

1. Reestablish the legitimacy of government and begin to restore the bond of trust between the people and their President.
2. Reassure allies and adversaries that the U. S. retains the strength and the will to meet its commitments.
3. Restore economic vitality without igniting a new inflationary spiral.
4. Restore a sense of confidence that the economy will behave in a sensible fashion and will not be subjected to short term political manipulation.
5. Reverse the trend toward an even greater share of the GNP going to government expenditures.
6. Emphasize the private sector as the basis for healthy economic growth rather than public expenditures.
7. Begin to gain control over the budget, particularly those items called uncontrollables without causing major economic or social dislocations.
8. Prevent the 94th Congress from worsening the situation by adding new programs and increasing expenditures indiscriminately.
9. Prevent the 94th Congress from further slashing real defense expenditures and reverse the ten year declining trend to ensure U.S. security.

III. The President's Record:

1. He has restored the nation's sense that their President is an honest man with an open Administration. He tells the truth.
2. He has convinced allies and adversaries that the U.S. under his leadership intends to meet its commitments. But given the Congressional record on Vietnam and Angola, he has not yet convinced the Congress.
3. He has by the use of the veto and in his budgets demonstrated the will to get government spending under control. He avoided economic quick fixes and permitted the economy to recover in a healthy way without the threat of a new inflation/recession spiral.
4. He has reversed the trend toward growing governmental share of the GNP. This year federal government expenditures will grow \_\_\_\_\_% while the GNP will grow \_\_\_\_\_%.
5. He has forced the Congress to begin to put some limits on the so-called "uncontrollables." Last year federal employee raises were limited to 5% as opposed to the 8.6% uncontrollable figure. This step saved \$\_\_\_\_\_. This year the Congress has again indicated that it will cap federal salaries at the 5% level. For the first time the Food Stamp program which grew from \_\_\_\_\_ million in 196\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ billion in 1975 has been curtailed.
6. He has reduced his own White House staff by 10%. The 1977 White House budget is smaller than the 1976 budget. Federal government employment has stopped growing and has begun to decline.
7. He has vetoed 48 bills passed by the 94th Congress which would have swelled the number of federal program and increased government spending by \$13 billion.
8. He has stuck to his commitment that there will be no new spending programs. There were none in 1975 and it is doubtful that there will be any in 1976.
9. He has reversed the ten year trend toward reducing real defense expenditures. The FY 1977 budget will show an increase of 11% for defense spending.
10. He has blocked Congressional attempts to eliminate critical defense programs such as the B-1 bomber and the Trident submarine.