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House Republican Policy Committee
John J. Rhodes, Chairman
140 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Phone: 225-6160

May 26, 1966
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Republican Policy Committee Statement on Election Reform and Deductions for Political Contributions

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the immediate review and reform of the federal laws that pertain to campaign contribution expenditures.

Political campaigns are becoming so expensive that soon this country will be faced with a situation wherein only the rich, or a person with substantial financial backing, will be able to run for public office. There is a growing danger that, in many instances, a person with unlimited financial means, but fewer qualifications, may be able to overwhelm a better qualified, but less affluent, opponent through the maximum use of radio, TV, and other methods of communication and advertising. The federal election laws should be changed so that absolute but reasonable limits are placed on general election and primary campaign expenditures for the various federal offices.

Strict and accurate accounting should be required so that expenditures remain within established limits, and the use of spurious campaign committees to avoid the reporting of total expenditures should be prohibited. Also, a central repository under the direction of the General Accounting Office should be established so that all reports would be received, examined, tabulated, summarized and publicized in a uniform manner.

By its terms, the existing law prohibits contributions by both corporations and unions to campaigns for federal office. Unfortunately, through court interpretation and lack of enforcement, this provision has become almost meaningless. Today, thousands and thousands of dollars of union and corporation funds are channeled, either directly or indirectly, into various political activities. Reform in this area is long overdue. Legislation that will correct the defects in the law and permit vigorous enforcement must be enacted.

In order that there may be maximum participation in the election process by the American public, a \$100 tax deduction should be provided for campaign contributions to an appropriate committee of a qualified political party. This deduction should be available whether or not the taxpayer elects to take the standard deduction. A tax deduction of this type would encourage individuals in all walks of life to contribute. Moreover, it would prevent candidates from becoming too dependent upon a few large contributors.

(over)

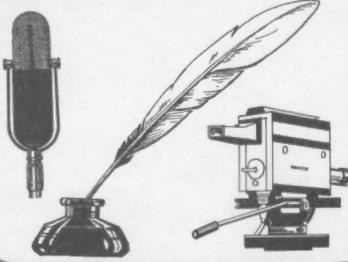


The 1962 Report of the President's Commission on Campaign Costs recommended certain reforms, including tax allowances. These suggestions, which were limited to Presidential and Vice Presidential campaigns, were favorably received and implementing legislation was recommended by the President. Unfortunately, this legislation did not receive serious consideration by either the 87th or the 88th Congresses. In order that a first step toward the solution of this serious problem may be taken during the 89th Congress, we urge that the appropriate Congressional committee give prompt and careful consideration to legislation that will provide a \$100 tax deduction for campaign contributions.

That there is a growing interest in elections, and a willingness to participate through campaign contributions, is illustrated by the fact that in the 1964 campaign, a large percent of the total funds collected by the Republican Party was in contributions of \$100 or less. Significantly, for 800,000 Republican contributors, the average contribution was \$11. On the other hand, a recent report by the Citizen's Research Foundation of Princeton, N.J., reflects that in 1964, of the total Democratic contributions from individuals, 70 percent were received in sums of \$500 or more.

Certainly, small contributions must be encouraged. Providing a \$100 tax deduction is, we believe, a logical and fair way to achieve this result.

(over)



CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE FRIDAY P.M., MAY 27, 1966

STATEMENT BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICHIGAN.

It is interesting that President Johnson's election reform bill should be sent to Congress immediately after news stories appeared concerning Republican proposals in this field. I find the President's recommendations a good starting point. I am sure they can be improved upon, and House Republicans aim to do just that. We will be putting ~~in a~~ a bill of our own, with next Wednesday as the target date for introducing it. I cannot discuss the content at this time, except to say it will be more comprehensive than the Administration measure.

In the light of Mr. Johnson's interest in disclosure of gifts and income by members of Congress, it appears to me the President might well see to it that the President's Club reports filed with the Clerk of the House for the years 1964, 1965 and the first quarter of 1966 are revised. These reports indicate the Club spent \$459,228.75 more than it took in during the period covered. There is obviously a discrepancy here, and it should be straightened out.

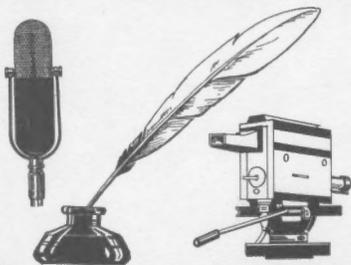
It is also interesting to note that the Democratic National Committee, reporting on its activities for the first quarter of this year, stated that it spent \$155,005 more than it received. The committee placed its total spending for the period at \$401,122. At the same time, Democratic officials told newsmen they paid off \$800,000 of 1964 campaign debts. How do they explain that?

These reports of income and outgo appear irreconcilable. I can only conclude that they are completely phoney.

Maybe the President, with his great interest in election reform, can set these matters right.

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CONGRESSMAN
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HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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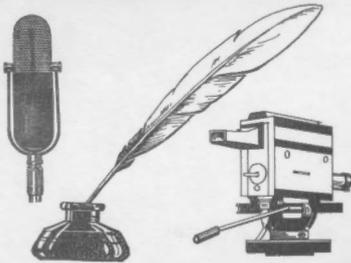
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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE ON RECEIPT
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 1966

STATEMENT BY HOUSE MINORITY LEADER GERALD R. FORD, R-MICHIGAN.

Last January 17, in our Republican Appraisal of the State of the Union, I said we of the minority were "surprised and pleased that the President touched on the subject of political campaigns and elections" in his message to the Congress. I also said, "His recommendations do not go far enough."

This turned out to be equally true of the legislative proposals which President Johnson sent up to us at the end of May. Republicans promised then to give the Administration's suggestions serious study, and we have, as my colleagues will explain in greater detail.

It would seem that when the Democrat in the White House and the Republican leaders in the Senate and House agree in January on the need for an election reform bill, the public might be entitled to expect one before the elections in November. This may still be possible if the Administration and the Democratic Majority in Congress really mean business.

Here I might read you the opinion of The Detroit News in my home State of Michigan. In a May 31, 1966, editorial headed: LBJ's Reform Campaign Financing-- Too Little and Too Late, The News said:

"Let us remember first that Lyndon B. Johnson had it within his power for many years to do something meaningful about reforming congressional campaign spending. But when he was majority leader of the Senate (and his 'good right arm,' Robert G. 'Bobby' Baker, staffed the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee), exactly nothing was done.

"And let us remember further there is virtually no chance Congress will take the time to work on the complex and touchy problem of campaign spending reform in the few months remaining in this session. Had not Capitol Hill Republicans made their own proposals earlier last week and goaded the President to send up his bill, there's no telling when he would have gotten around to, as he said, 'urge its prompt enactment.'"

(MORE)



ELECTION REFORM STATEMENT

"Finally, the President cannot avoid the responsibility for leading a national political party which, by its dedicated exploitation of loopholes in existing law, has seriously undermined public confidence in the integrity of government."

That was The Detroit News speaking. Personally, I prefer to think the President is sincere about campaign and election reforms and full disclosure of contributions. Here is a story in the Washington Post about Mr. Johnson's appearance at one of his President's Club \$1,000-a-plate dinners in New York last month--"The President Shakes the Hands That Write Big Checks for the Party." I'm sure he feels the public has a right to know who wrote those checks. Although the affair was closed to reporters, the Associated Press reported that portions of his Waldorf-Astoria remarks were overheard, and quoted them as follows:

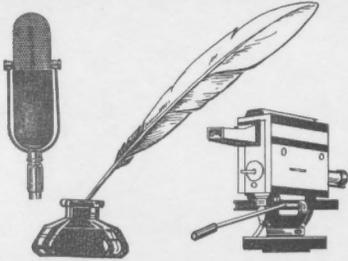
"The Democratic Party was \$4 million in debt when I took office," the President said. "Since I took office the debt has been reduced to about \$1.5 million so far, and a few more dinners like this should put the Democratic Party in the black."

When President Johnson sent his election reform proposals to the Congress last May, I commented that he could demonstrate his interest in full disclosure by having his President's Club explain how, according to the reports then on file with the Clerk of the House, it had apparently managed to spend nearly half a million dollars more than it took in since 1963.

I am happy to report that this has been done, and that the President's Club listed contributions of \$917,253.57 during the second reporting period of this calendar year, bringing the President's Club's total receipts for 1966 to \$1,042,853.57 thus far reported. So at least one Democratic deficit appears to have been eliminated.

We Republicans are serious about campaign reforms. In this Congress we're only Number Two, but we try harder. Some observers (like The Detroit News) don't think Number One is really trying at all, but if the majority wants reforms before November, we're ready to cooperate. This bill, which we are introducing today, is proof of our serious purpose.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

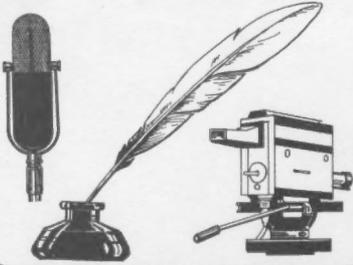
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JULY 14, 1966

In view of the urgent need for reform in the field of political finance, I am deeply disappointed at the sudden and unexplained cancellation of hearings on this subject which were scheduled to begin before the Elections Subcommittee of the House Administration Committee. Less than an hour and a half before the time set for the opening of hearings today, Committee members and witnesses were notified of the cancellation.

It is hard to understand this show of reluctance to come to grips with issues so important to the institutions of popular government. Several bills have been introduced looking toward reforms which leaders of both parties have stated are long overdue. The problems to which these bills address themselves require early attention by the Congress. Recent revelations of the activities of the President's Club give added reason for speedy action.

All who are interested in the integrity of the election process will be grieved that Congress is dragging its feet on the matter of election reform. I trust that the cancelled hearings will be rescheduled as soon as possible and that a serious and penetrating study of the subject will be undertaken without further delay.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 1966

STATEMENT BY HOUSE MINORITY LEADER GERALD R. FORD, R-MICHIGAN.

It is most reassuring to have the White House announce that President Johnson "is disappointed that the election reform proposal he sent to Congress has not, at this date, received thorough consideration and adequate hearings."

When Mr. Johnson wants the two-to-one majority he commands in this Congress to take action, it usually does so, following either his renowned "reasoning together" or his Texas-style arm twisting.

I am gratified the House Administration elections subcommittee will continue the one day of hearings previously given the President's proposal and the various Republican bills, including my own, which substantially improve upon it. These hearings are scheduled to reopen August 17.

The public wants action on campaign reforms by this Congress. Republicans in the House are happy to join President Johnson in pressing for a prompt and exhaustive public airing of the subject.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 1966

Six weeks ago, at a press conference called to acquaint you with details of our Republican-sponsored election reform bill, I reported having heard disturbing rumors about The President's Club and political favors for its members. I suggested that the press, as well as we of the minority, had an obligation to look into this and see if there were any connection between such things as lucrative government contracts, anti-trust actions or important executive decisions and large contributions to the President's Club.

I may have made a mistake. In the excitement that followed, Mr. Goodell's disclosure of the Anheuser-Busch affair, in which the Justice Department dropped its suit against the company after \$10,000 had been contributed by its executives -- following which the Vice President and everybody concerned flew out to the ballgame in the Anheuser-Busch company plane -- our election reform legislation got very little attention. But, on the other hand, the need for such legislation -- right now, at this session, to police the remaining days of the 1966 campaign and, even more urgently, the 1968 Presidential contest -- has been convincingly demonstrated in the past six weeks.

First, we had the Anheuser-Busch case, \$10,000.

Next, a million dollar poverty contract won by a President's Club executive's firm over more qualified contenders.

Then, Mr. Rumsfeld revealed the curious combination of \$25,000 from a big contractor's family and the White House's unusual interest in Project Mohole -- all of which the Johnson-Humphrey Administration brushed off as coincidences and partisan politics.

I believe that where there is smoke, there must be fire. And I think the smoke is getting so thick in the inner sanctum of the President's Club that it must be quite uncomfortable for many members.

Now Mr. Goodell and Mr. Rumsfeld have reported to the House additional evidence of political favoritism and skullduggery involving heavy donors to the President's Club and the virtually unaudited spending of billions -- not millions but billions -- of the people's money. I have also received scores of communications from citizens, many of whom frankly say they are good Democrats, who are shocked and sickened by what they know has been going on.

In baseball you get three strikes. The President's Club doesn't deserve more than four. It was a mistake from the outset, as I am sure President Johnson now realizes, to mix money and honor under the symbol of the White House, which belongs to all the people.

I agree with the editorial in last Monday's New York Times which stated that President Johnson's press conference denials won't do. "The concern is not narrowly partisan," The Times said. "Basically, it derives from respect for Mr. Johnson's name and office. Both are placed in needless jeopardy by a political fund-raising operation that provides a nexus for influence seekers and carries the constant risk of scandal."

I therefore respectfully call upon President Johnson to suspend the operation of The President's Club without further delay. He should declare plainly and publicly that no more contributions will be accepted by the President's Club and that any received will be returned. The accounts of the President's Club should be frozen. Its books should be thrown open to the press without further transfers of funds in or out, until such time as a thorough and impecably independent audit can be conducted and its findings fully disclosed.

This step, if undertaken promptly and in good faith, will spare both President Johnson and those who support him politically and financially from further embarrassment. There are ample opportunities for citizens to make political contributions through the traditional national, state and local committees of their chosen party. We certainly are not discouraging this, the lifeblood of our two-party system. But the Presidency, whoever may occupy this high office, should stand at least an arm's length from the counting table.

Unfortunately, the 2-to-1 Democratic majorities in this Congress seem extremely reluctant even to proceed with fullscale hearings on the election reform bill President Johnson himself proposes. It isn't very realistic to think that the kind of thorough investigation which the scandals surround^{ing} the President's Club demand will be conducted by any of its standing committees. I therefore call upon the Congress, and will introduce appropriate legislation as soon as it can be carefully drafted, to create a select committee, completely bipartisan in character, to explore all of the evidence and allegations of favoritism and possible corruption clouding the President's Club to date. They will continue to unfold unless President Johnson, and President Johnson alone, finally decides that what's a good thing for the Democrats isn't good for the country.

If the President and this Democratic-controlled Congress fail to act, the American people have one other choice -- electing a Republican majority to the House of Representatives this November. Then we can really start cleaning things up.



U. S. HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 140 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

10

8 February 1967

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the immediate consideration and enactment of the Election Reform Act of 1967 which has been sponsored and introduced by the Republican Members.

With each new disclosure at the recent Bobby Baker trial, the need for Election Reform legislation has been reemphasized and underlined. There is today a crisis of confidence with respect to campaign contributions. Election Reform legislation must be enacted well in advance of the 1968 election.

In the last Congress, the Republican Policy Committee adopted a statement urging the enactment of this legislation. The Republican Leadership introduced a bill that would modify and improve the Administration measure, and the Republican Members of the House Administration Committee did everything in their power to get a meaningful and workable bill reported. As a result of their efforts, a bill that incorporate the major provisions of the Republican measure was reported by a Subcommittee. At the following meeting of the full committee, all Republican Members were present and ready to vote to report the bill for immediate Floor consideration. Unfortunately, the Democratic members would not join the Republicans so for that session of Congress, this important measure died.

The Election Reform Act of 1967 includes the following Republican proposals:

1. A five-member bipartisan Federal Elections Commission is established to receive reports and statements regarding campaign contributions and expenditures.
2. The Commission has been granted full and complete authority to enforce the provisions of the Act through appropriate investigation and audit. It is also authorized to make reports and statements available for public inspection and to prepare and publish summaries and reports.
3. Every candidate, and every political committee that accepts contributions or make expenditures of \$1,000 or more in any calendar year, is required to report all contributions and expenditures.
4. Donations of more than \$5,000 to any one candidate or committee in any single year are prohibited.
5. The present meaningless ceiling on total contributions to and expenditures by political committees is removed.
6. Campaign contributions by organizations or associations financially supported by a corporation, trade association or labor organization are prohibited.
7. Conventions, primaries and party caucuses have been placed under the reporting and disclosure provisions of the bill.
8. The disclosure of gifts or honorariums is required of candidates for the House and Senate as well as incumbents.

The appropriate studies regarding election reform have been completed. Detailed hearings have been held. The need for the legislation has been established. A good bill was reported in the last Congress. The time for legislative action has arrived. We urge the Democratic Leadership to schedule the Election Reform Act as one of the first pieces of legislation to receive Floor consideration.



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REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 140 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

8 February 1967

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the immediate establishment of a select Committee on Standards and Conduct.

This Committee should be composed of twelve Members divided evenly between the Majority and Minority parties. It should be empowered to recommend rules and regulations that it deems necessary to ensure proper standards of conduct by Members and by officers and employees of the House. It should have the authority to investigate alleged breaches of conduct, recommend appropriate action and report violations of law to the proper Federal and State authorities.

In the closing hours of the 89th Congress, a select Committee on Standards and Conduct was established. This was an important first step. Now, without further delay, this Committee should be reestablished.

Over the past few years, a handful of highly publicized allegations of misconduct against a few Members of Congress and a few employees have cast a dark cloud over the entire Congress. As long as this House does not have an effective body that can investigate and resolve allegations of misconduct, the American people will continue to have serious questions regarding the integrity of the Members and their ability or willingness to ferret out those who are guilty of misconduct. Moreover, until such time as a Committee on Standards and Conduct is created and a code of ethics and standards of conduct are established, proceedings that are brought against an individual or a Member may be subject to attack on the basis that they are "witch hunts" or politically inspired.

Justice for those accused as well as the ever mounting public demand for the highest standards of personal conduct makes imperative the immediate establishment of an effective Committee on Standards and Conduct. We urge the Democratic Leadership to schedule this legislation without further delay.



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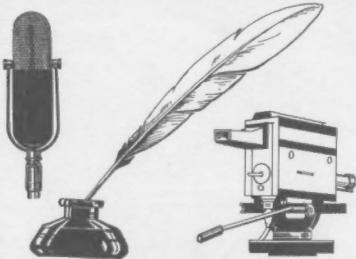
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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--
MAY 10, 1967

STATEMENT BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., HOUSE MINORITY LEADER

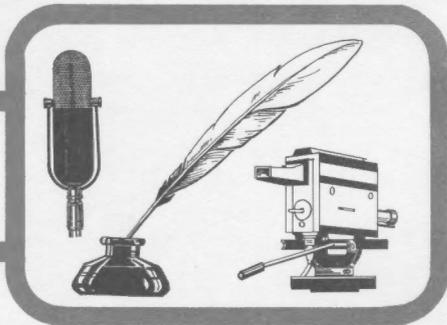
Since there is no present opportunity to repeal the presidential campaign subsidy law, I hope the Conference Committee agrees as a minimum to stay the effect of the Act until safeguards can be written into it.

I have not for a moment given up the idea that the law be repealed, but certainly the Senate insistence on guidelines is a major improvement.

I think the presidential campaign subsidy law is a bad mistake. Congress should reverse itself and wipe this law off the books before it ever begins operating. We should instead write into law an income tax deduction for political contributions up to \$100 as an incentive to small contributors. The dangers in the campaign subsidy law are so great as to threaten the destruction of the American political system. Instead of moving toward clean elections, we might well accomplish the opposite.

It should be noted that the White House lobbied against repeal of the campaign subsidy law and thus helped to delay passage of the investment tax credit bill by the Senate. Yet the President and the Secretary of the Treasury stressed the need for swift action on the investment tax credit bill when it was before the House. The House passed the tax credit bill March 16, nearly two months ago. The White House must share the blame for the delay in Senate action on it.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
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--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--
MAY 10, 1967

STATEMENT BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., HOUSE MINORITY LEADER

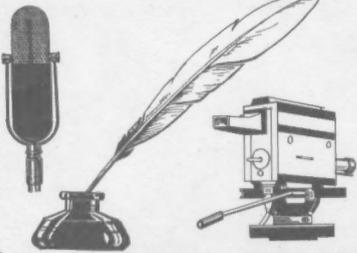
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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--
Friday, May 26, 1967

STATEMENT BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., HOUSE MINORITY LEADER

I have grave reservations about the wisdom of direct congressional appropriations for the financing of presidential election campaigns.

It is questionable, first of all, whether this is a legitimate use of the taxpayers' dollars. There is reason to wonder, too, whether such a system would not "blow the lid off" presidential campaign spending. The politicians could well have a vested interest in federal spending for campaign purposes.

I find merit, however, in some of the other provisions of the President's campaign financing proposal.

I strongly favor the provision which would preserve the voting privilege in presidential elections for those citizens who have moved from one state to another between elections and would otherwise be deprived of their right to vote.

I also believe the President's proposal of a tax credit for small voluntary contributions is constructive but the ceiling is unrealistic.

This, I think, is the nub of the matter. Congress should greatly encourage small voluntary contributions instead of going directly to the Treasury for campaign financing.

On balance, I think the House Republican Election Reform Act of 1967 is superior to either the President's bill or Russell Long's tax checkoff idea which Congress has shelved.

The Republican bill, along with other moves to assure clean elections, would provide for tax deduction up to \$100 for voluntary political contributions.

This is basically the best route toward clean elections for America.

If the President really wants election reform, he might well look at a bipartisan bill which was reported out by the Elections Subcommittee of the House Administration Committee last year. This legislation is reflected in the Election Reform Act of 1967 introduced by House Republicans.

We must have action in this area. If this legislation is not enacted this session, it should be adopted early next year in time for the 1968 election.

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8 November 1967



U. S. HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN I. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 140 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE URGES PROMPT CONSIDERATION OF CLEAN ELECTIONS LEGISLATION

10

Clean Elections legislation must not be sidetracked for another year. On June 27, 1967, a bipartisan Election Reform Bill, H.R. 11233, was reported by a Subcommittee of the House Administration Committee. This legislation contains the basic reforms advocated and supported by President Johnson and the Republican Congressional Leadership. It is similar in content to the legislation that died in Committee after it was favorably reported by the Subcommittee in the closing weeks of the last Congress. The next Presidential and Congressional elections are less than one year away. Congressional action cannot be delayed if this legislation is to be in effect and operative during the 1968 campaigns.

For some time, there has been general agreement that the laws dealing with election campaigns should be revised and updated. The Federal Corrupt Practices Act was enacted in 1925. The Hatch Act was passed 27 years ago. Recent studies such as the 1962 Report of President Kennedy's Commission on Campaign Costs reveal that present laws invite evasion and are filled with loopholes. There is grave concern that unless there is basic reform, public confidence in the election process will be impaired.

In response to mounting public demand for election reform legislation, President Johnson pledged in his 1966 State of the Union Message:

"I will submit legislation to revise the present unrealistic restrictions on contributions--to prohibit the endless proliferation of committees, bringing local and state committees under the act, and to attach strong teeth and severe penalties to the requirement of full disclosure of contributions."

In May of 1966, both the President and the House Republican Policy Committee urged the enactment of Election Reform legislation and specific proposals were introduced. In calling for this legislation, the Republican Policy Committee noted:

"Reform in this area is long overdue. Legislation that will correct the defects in the law and permit vigorous enforcement must be enacted."

(over)

The 1967 Republican State of the Union Appraisal stated:

"Congress must also move ahead on the President's year-old pledge for a Clean Election law. Such a law must be on the books before 1968."

At the start of the 90th Congress, the Policy Committee urged the House Leadership "to schedule the Election Reform Act as one of the first pieces of legislation to receive Floor consideration."

And in May of this year, President Johnson stated:

"A sweeping overhaul of the laws governing election campaigns should no longer be delayed."

The bipartisan Election Reform Bill, H.R. 11233, that has been reported by the Subcommittee of the House Administration Committee is sound legislation. Through the incorporation of the following major Republican provisions, honest reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures and streamlined enforcement procedures would be ensured.

1. A five-member bipartisan Federal Elections Commission is established to receive reports and statements regarding campaign contributions and expenditures.
2. The Commission has been granted full and complete authority to enforce the provisions of the Act. It is also authorized to make reports and statements available for public inspection and to prepare and publish summaries and reports.
3. Candidates for Federal office and political committees supporting such candidates that accept contributions or make expenditures exceeding \$1,000 in any calendar year, are required to report contributions and expenditures.
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7. The disclosure of gifts or honorariums of more than \$100 is required of candidates for the House and Senate as well as incumbents.

In view of the urgency of this legislation and the President's early support, we are surprised and dismayed that the Election Reform Bill does not now appear on the Administration's list of MUST legislation. To be enacted this year, the Election Reform Bill must have the continued and enthusiastic support of President Johnson. The American public demands and deserves an election process that commands respect and confidence. Moreover, clean elections must be practiced at home as well as preached abroad.



8 November 1967



U. S. HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN I. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 140 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE URGES PROMPT CONSIDERATION OF CLEAN ELECTIONS LEGISLATION

10

Clean Elections legislation must not be sidetracked for another year. On June 27, 1967, a bipartisan Election Reform Bill, H.R. 11233, was reported by a Subcommittee of the House Administration Committee. This legislation contains the basic reforms advocated and supported by President Johnson and the Republican Congressional Leadership. It is similar in content to the legislation that died in Committee after it was favorably reported by the Subcommittee in the closing weeks of the last Congress. The next Presidential and Congressional elections are less than one year away. Congressional action cannot be delayed if this legislation is to be in effect and operative during the 1968 campaigns.

For some time, there has been general agreement that the laws dealing with election campaigns should be revised and updated. The Federal Corrupt Practices Act was enacted in 1925. The Hatch Act was passed 27 years ago. Recent studies such as the 1962 Report of President Kennedy's Commission on Campaign Costs reveal that present laws invite evasion and are filled with loopholes. There is grave concern that unless there is basic reform, public confidence in the election process will be impaired.

In response to mounting public demand for election reform legislation, President Johnson pledged in his 1966 State of the Union Message:

"I will submit legislation to revise the present unrealistic restrictions on contributions--to prohibit the endless proliferation of committees, bringing local and state committees under the act--and to attach strong teeth and severe penalties to the requirement of full disclosure of contributions."

In May of 1966, both the President and the House Republican Policy Committee urged the enactment of Election Reform legislation and specific proposals were introduced. In calling for this legislation, the Republican Policy Committee noted:

"Reform in this area is long overdue. Legislation that will correct the defects in the law and permit vigorous enforcement must be enacted."

(over)

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of California

Bourke B. Hickenlooper
of Iowa

Margaret Chase Smith
of Maine

George Murphy
of California

Milton R. Young
of North Dakota

Hugh Scott
of Pennsylvania

**THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP
OF THE CONGRESS**

Press Release

PRESIDING:

The National Chairman
Ray C. Bliss

**FOR THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

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of Michigan

Leslie C. Arends
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Melvin R. Laird
of Wisconsin

John J. Rhodes
of Arizona

H. Allen Smith
of California

Bob Wilson
of California

Charles E. Goodell
of New York

Richard H. Poff
of Virginia

William C. Cramer
of Florida

Issued following a
Leadership Meeting

November 16, 1967

MR. FORD.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In the course of our Appraisal of the State of the Union last January, Senator Dirksen and I said: "Congress must also move ahead on the President's year-old pledge for a Clean Election Law. Such a law must be on the books before 1968."

Recently, the House Republican Policy Committee in a strong, clear statement also urged prompt consideration of clean elections legislation.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for passage of legislation of this kind. Immediate action is required of Congress if such reforms are to take effect and be operative during the 1968 campaigns.

It should be emphasized that this effort is genuinely bi-partisan. The several reforms spelled out have been advocated and supported by both the Johnson-Humphrey Administration and the Republican Leadership of the Congress.

It should be emphasized equally that public confidence in the electoral process will suffer seriously if this reform legislation is not enacted into public law.

The bill as originally proposed contained an encouraging number of desirable features. To these, the Republicans in Congress added major provisions of importance and practical value. It is for these reasons that, as the House Republican Policy Committee put it, "... we are surprised and dismayed that the Election Reform Bill does not now appear on the Administration's list of MUST legislation."

We hope - very much - that the Johnson-Humphrey Administration and the Democratic majorities in the Congress have lost neither their wish nor their will that clean elections shall become a standard "to which the wise and honest can repair."

Therefore, Mr. President, our Question of the Week:

"Why the delay in assuring clean elections?"

Republicans in the Senate stand firmly beside those in the House of Representatives in their unqualified support of election reform.

Time, as never before, is of the essence if a measure of this kind is to be enacted into law and if its provisions are to be effective in the course of the campaign months just ahead.

Congress cannot ask of other Americans what it is not prepared itself to observe. Unless this Congress is prepared to take this necessary action in campaign reform, it cannot require of others that they toe-the-line in other regards. We must, in short, practice what we preach. We cannot, fairly, urge upon others the conduct of clean elections unless we make very certain that our own house is in order, unless we assure the American people that we are fully and willingly prepared to set rules of conduct for ourselves before we attempt to reform others.

As public office is a public trust, so anything that causes a loss of confidence in the seeking of public office and the conduct of it thereafter produces a steady erosion of faith in our free society.

Needless to say, morality cannot be legislated, ethics cannot be established by law. Political campaigning and political office holding can win public confidence and achieve the people's respect only as the individuals involved set a worthy example to all others.

Periodically, however, circumstances and the questionable practices of a few require review by the many. At such times, helpful legislation can often produce genuine improvement in the campaigning for office and the conduct of public affairs.

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30 January 1968



U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 1616 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE URGES T.V. DEBATES BETWEEN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND ENACTMENT OF CLEAN ELECTIONS LEGISLATION

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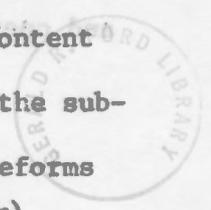
The 1968 Election is of critical importance. Errors in judgment, problems evaded, hard decisions too long postponed demand attention. Administration policies relating to the war, to the deterioration of the dollar, crime, riots, spending, taxes and inflation have proven inadequate and in some cases seriously in error. The "Great Society's" slickly packaged programs and widely heralded theories have not proven out in practice.

This Country is adrift on a sea of unkept promises. As John W. Gardner observed before he resigned as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, there is bitterness and anger toward our institutions that wells up when high hopes turn sour. No observer of the modern scene has failed to note the prevalent cynicism concerning all leaders, all officials, all social institutions. That cynicism is continually fed and renewed by the rage of people who expected too much and got too little."

This Country cannot afford the luxury of a Presidential Campaign that is marked by broad campaign oratory and a paucity of meaningful debate. In order that there may be an indepth discussion and a penetrating examination of the major issues, Congress must enact legislation that will suspend Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934 as it applies to Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. This legislation would permit the T.V. networks to present to the American people in 1968, as they did in 1960, a debate between the leading candidates.

Also, without further delay, Clean Elections legislation must be enacted into law. On June 27, 1967, a bipartisan Election Reform Bill, H.R. 11233, was reported by a subcommittee of the House Administration Committee. It was similar in content to the legislation that died in committee after it was favorably reported by the subcommittee in the closing weeks of the 89th Congress. It contains the basic reforms

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advocated and supported by the Republican Congressional Leadership.

H.R. 11233 is sound legislation. Through the incorporation of the following major Republican provisions, honest reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures and streamlined enforcement procedures would be ensured.

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6. Conventions, primaries and party caucuses are placed under the reporting and disclosure provisions of the bill.

7. The disclosure of gifts or honorariums of more than \$100 is required of candidates for the House and Senate as well as incumbents.

The American people must be provided with an election process that commands respect and confidence. Promises, details of past performance, hopes for the future that are hammered out on the anvil of debate will provide the American people with a meaningful record upon which an enlightened choice can be made. Thereafter, this choice must be registered accurately in an election process that is above reproach.

For two years, the Republican Members of the House Administration Committee have done everything that they can to get the Clean Elections legislation reported from Committee. There is no more time to be lost. This absolutely essential legislation, together with legislation that suspends Section 315 of the Communications Act, must be scheduled for immediate Floor consideration if it is to be in effect and operative during the 1968 campaign.



18 September 1968



U. S. HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 1616 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168

10

HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON ELECTORAL COLLEGE REFORM

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the prompt consideration of electoral college reform legislation. Due to the defects in the present electoral system, the American people are confronted with a potentially dangerous situation every four years. The final selection of the President is subject to numerous uncertainties. A stalemate in that selection or a protracted period of doubt and confusion are alarming possibilities.

Under our present system, the President is elected by ballot in the Electoral College. Every State is represented by electors equal in number to the State's representation in the House and Senate. These electors are selected in the manner determined by the individual state legislatures. In addition, the District of Columbia is granted three electors by operation of the 23rd Amendment. A candidate for President must receive a majority of the 538 ballots cast, or 270 votes, to be elected. The Electoral College never assembles in one place, but rather meets separately in fifty-one jurisdictions. There is only one round of balloting. If no candidate receives a majority, then the House of Representatives elects the President and the Senate elects the Vice President.

The present electoral college system is dangerously inadequate. For example:

1. It has permitted a candidate with fewer popular votes than another candidate to be elected President.
2. It has allowed electors to disregard the mandate of their election in casting an electoral ballot.
3. The winner of the plurality of the popular vote in a state wins all of the electoral votes in that state regardless of the vote received by the other candidates.
4. It has required the House of Representatives to decide elections when no candidate received a majority of electoral votes. In this process, each state, regardless of population, is given one vote.

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5. Under the present system, the President and Vice President that are finally chosen can be from different political parties.
6. There is no provision made in the present law for the selection of a successor in the event of the death of a presidential or vice presidential candidate in the forty-one-day period between election day in November and the meeting of the electors in December. Similarly, the situation that would be presented by the death of a presidential or vice presidential candidate after the meeting of the electors but before the counting of the votes is not specifically covered by law.

There have been a number of plans proposed to correct the deficiencies in the present system. One plan retains the electoral votes of the states, abolishes the office of elector and automatically awards the electoral votes of a State to the popular winner in that State. A second, the "district" plan continues both the office of elector and a State's electoral votes but provides that the electoral votes are to be spread among equipopulous districts (equal in number to the number of Representatives in the House) plus two at-large districts. The winner of each district automatically receives its electoral vote. A third plan abolishes the office of elector but retains the state's electoral votes which are divided among the candidates in proportion to their shares of the total popular vote within the state. And a fourth plan proposes that the President be elected by direct vote of the people. Under this plan, the present electoral college system would be abolished.

The fundamental and serious defects in the present system require the immediate analysis of proposed reforms and the prompt Congressional consideration of appropriate constitutional amendments. This nation's method of selecting its chief executive must be responsive to the demands of the space age and consistent with our cherished principles of self-government.

Certainly, one of the first things the next Congress must do is solve this serious problem and then, without further delay, present to the American people a workable plan.



18 September 1968



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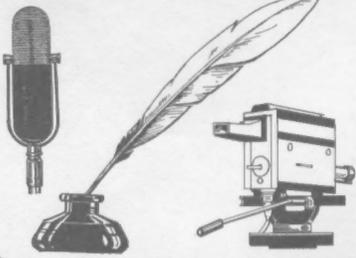
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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--
October 9, 1968

Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, House Minority Leader

In a last ditch effort to get the dominant Democratic Majority to schedule the Clean Elections and Congressional Reform legislation for Floor consideration during this 90th Congress, the Republican Members have kept the House of Representatives in continuous session for over twenty-four hours. During this historic session, there have been some 36 quorum roll calls and six roll call votes.

In order that the record may be absolutely clear with respect to this important matter, the following pertinent information must be noted.

During this Congress the House Republican Members, Leadership and Policy Committee have done everything that they can to get the Congressional Reorganization and Clean Elections legislation to the House Floor. In the 89th Congress and again in this Congress, the Republican Policy Committee repeatedly urged prompt action on both Clean Elections and Congressional Reorganization legislation. The very first action of the House Republican Policy Committee this year on July 30, 1968, was to adopt a statement demanding prompt consideration of the Election Reform Bill and legislation that would permit television debates between presidential candidates.

Significantly, it was only after a great deal of prodding by the Republican Members of the House Administration Committee that the Election Reform Act of 1968, H.R. 11233, was finally reported from Committee. And prior to being reported, the weak Election Reform proposal recommended by the Johnson-Humphrey Administration was shelved in favor of the strong measure that was initially developed by the Republican Members. It was only through the incorporation of a number of Republican provisions that honest reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures and streamlined enforcement procedures were ensured.

Despite the continuing efforts of Republican Members, the House Democratic Leadership refused to schedule this vital legislation for Floor action. The Congressional Reform Bill and the Clean Elections Bill were left to languish in the Rules Committee. The prospects of legislative action prior to the 1968 election were very dim indeed.

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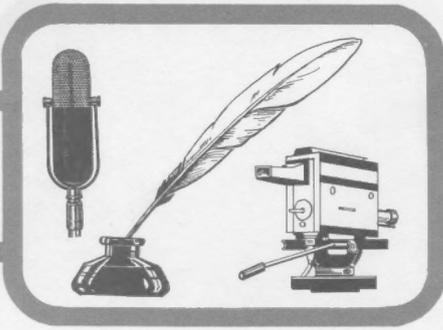
This sorry situation was described in an October 3, 1968 Washington Post Editorial entitled, "Obsolescence on the Hill." This editorial stated:

"It is deeply ironical that the Congress which has so signally failed to meet its obligations, has also smothered the legislation designed to modernize some of its procedures...Though it is a mild reform bill, the reactionary forces in the House seem determined to kill it. Along with it in limbo is the constructive election reform bill."

This then is the reason that in what appears to be the last week of the 90th Congress, the Republican Leadership has used an extraordinary, parliamentary device in an attempt to break this essential legislation loose. And we promise that when the American voters in the November election elect a Republican Majority in the House of Representatives, the "straitjacket of obsolescence" will be unstrapped and these bills will have a high priority in a Republican Agenda for the 91st Congress.

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Office Copy



CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE IN TUESDAY PM'S--
January 7, 1969

Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives.

On Monday the Congress in effect upheld the right of a presidential elector to cast his vote for any candidate of his choice, regardless of the wishes of the voters in his state.

This action dramatizes the urgent need for reforming the electoral college system or abolishing it in favor of direct popular election of the President.

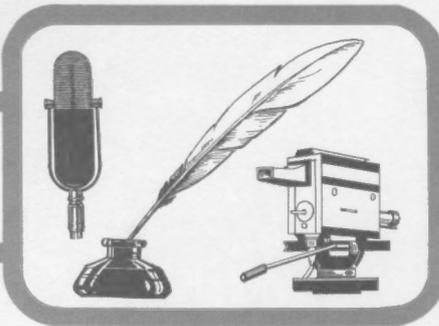
I would like to see Congress quickly set in motion the steps necessary to modify or replace the electoral college system. Since this involves amending the U.S. Constitution, a long time-consuming process, it is important that the Congress act soon in order to allow sufficient time for ratification by the states of the proposed constitutional change.

I personally have not decided what action should be taken but there is no doubt in my mind that Congress and the states should overhaul or replace the electoral college system before the 1972 Presidential election. To that end, congressional hearings on the matter should proceed expeditiously so that the Congress may act soon on the basis of committee recommendations.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--

February 21, 1969

Statement by Rep. Gerald R. Ford, Republican Leader, U. S. House of Representatives

I hope Congress will be as realistic about Electoral College Reform as President Nixon has been in his Message on the subject.

I think the President has taken exactly the right approach to the problem. It is unrealistic to expect that a Constitutional Amendment proposing direct popular election of the President will receive two-thirds approval in the Congress and approval by three-fourths of the states. Therefore the most sensible way to proceed is to draft an alternate plan which abides by the original concept of federalism and will attract the broadest possible support.

While I personally have leaned toward direct popular election of the President, I have consistently contended that inability to achieve that change should not stand in the way of improving the manner in which the American people elect a President.

I therefore heartily endorse the basic point made by President Nixon--that we should proceed to achieve a solution to the fundamental problems involved rather than get tangled in interminable controversy.

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U. S. HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

REP. JOHN J. RHODES, (R.-ARIZ.) CHAIRMAN • 1616 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • TELEPHONE 225-6168



91st Congress
First Session

February 25, 1969
Statement Number 1

STATEMENT ON CLEAN ELECTIONS LEGISLATION

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the immediate consideration and passage of election reform legislation.

For the past three years the Republican Leadership, the Republican Policy Committee and the Republican Members of the House Administration Committee have unanimously urged the enactment of election reform legislation. Studies have been conducted; detailed hearings have been held; the urgent need for meaningful reform legislation has been clearly established. Action is long overdue.

We urge the prompt enactment of appropriate election reform legislation along the lines recommended in the statements previously issued by the Republican Policy Committee.





U. S. HOUSE
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91st Congress
First Session

September 9, 1969
Statement Number 6

HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY STATEMENT ON ELECTORAL COLLEGE REFORM

The House Republican Policy Committee urges the prompt submission to the States of a Constitutional amendment to improve the Presidential election mechanism.

A Constitutional crisis over the selection of the Chief Executive was narrowly averted in 1968. The will of a substantial majority of our people could well have been thwarted because of the inadequacies of the electoral college method of selection of the President and Vice President. The mechanisms which were provided in the 18th Century are not adequate for the 20th Century.

Our electoral process was conceived at a time when conditions were far different than they are today. In the first place, the framers of the Constitution expected the electoral college to be composed of outstanding citizens of each state, exercising independent judgment in choosing a President. The development of political parties largely ended the concept of elector independence. Even so, the possibility of an elector voting contrary to popular mandate constitutes a threat to the democratic Presidential election processes as we now know them.

Some of the inadequacies of the electoral college system are as follows:

1. It has permitted a candidate with fewer popular votes than another candidate to be elected President.
2. It has allowed electors to disregard the mandate of their election in casting an electoral ballot.
3. The winner of the plurality of the popular vote in a state wins all of the electoral votes in that state regardless of the vote received by the other candidates.

4. It has required the House of Representatives to decide elections when no candidate received a majority of electoral votes. In this process, each state, regardless of population, is given one vote.
5. Under the present system, the President and Vice President who are finally chosen can be from different political parties.
6. There is no provision made in the present law for the selection of a successor in the event of the death of a Presidential or Vice Presidential candidate in the 41-day period between election day in November and the meeting of the electors in December. Similarly, the situation that would be presented by the death of a Presidential or Vice Presidential candidate after the meeting of the electors but before the counting of the votes is not specifically covered by law.

It is essential that these and other weaknesses and failures in our electoral techniques be corrected. Many proposals have been advanced for new systems of election which would be an improvement over the present system.

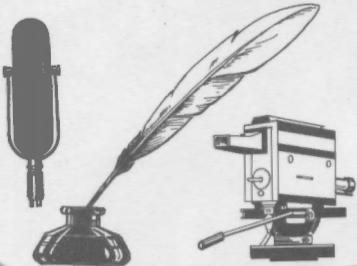
Some of these are:

1. Direct election by popular vote.
2. Proportional distribution of electoral votes within states.
3. Distribution of the electoral vote by results in Congressional districts.

Each of these plans has considerable merit and support. The direct method has received the recommendation of the House Judiciary Committee. The majority of the House Republican Policy Committee recommends as preferable the direct method of election as proposed by the House Judiciary Committee.

The modernization of our Presidential election mechanism is imperative. Reasonable and acceptable improvements to these outdated procedures must be found if our democratic system is to be protected and fostered. Therefore, we urge the immediate consideration and passage of an electoral reform amendment.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Remarks of Rep. Gerald R. Ford (Michigan), House Republican Leader,
during general debate on the Voting Rights Act Extension.

Mr. Chairman, there are several points upon which I hope we can all agree as we begin this debate.

First, we can surely agree with the statement of the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary that "Every American must have an equal right to vote; no duty weighs upon the Congress more heavily than the duty to assure that right."

The gentleman from New York's eloquence was echoed by my friend from Ohio who is the ranking minority member on the committee, who said: "The elective franchise is the cornerstone of our representative Republic."

We must agree with that, also.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted to implement the guarantee of the Constitution that no American's right to vote should be abridged because of his race or color. At the time Congress took this action, it was apparent that the right to vote of many Americans, mainly black Americans, was being abridged on account of color; the remedy was compounded to fit the situation then prevailing. A formula was devised, based upon the registration and voting pattern of the 1964 presidential election. This formula was very carefully fashioned so as to include certain Southern States and exclude others.

Leaping over all the debate of 4 years ago, it was generally accepted then by the Congress that the unprecedented intervention of Federal authority, represented by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, into the constitutional power of States to determine the qualification of voters, would only be temporary. It was felt, quite properly, that the extension of the right to vote would, in time, be self-sustaining for those previously denied the franchise because of racial discrimination. Once they could vote they would, through the power of the ballot box, make certain that they were never disenfranchised again -- this is the theory to which most of us subscribe. Therefore, the key provisions of the 1965 Act were supposed to become unnecessary and to expire in August, 1970 -- although there would still be a probationary period under the law.

It is these key provisions, which single out six Southern States and portions of several others, which the committee bill would have us continue unchanged for another 5 years. We are told we must not even change the existing law so much as to update its triggering formula from 1964 to the 1963 election statistics. Why not?

The answer is incredible, but here it is: The 1964 formula should not be changed because a 1963 formula would permit most, if not all, of those six or seven Southern States to escape further discrimination from the Federal Government. This is because they have now registered or now allow more than half their voting-age citizens to vote -- because they have successfully passed the test Congress set in 1965.

I am highly gratified that 300,000 -- perhaps as many as 1 million black Americans in the seven specially covered States have been registered since the 89th Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act. I believe the 91st Congress should not stop there but should go forward to protect and expand this fundamental right for all citizens, whatever their race, creed, or color, wherever they reside.

But I believe there are other fundamental rights that are equally precious to Americans -- the right of equal justice under law, which surely applies to the 50 States of the Union as well as to individuals -- the presumption of innocence which puts the burden of proof on the accuser -- the principle that there is one law in this land for black and for white, for rich and for poor, for Georgian and for California.

If it is agreed we have a duty to implement the voting rights guaranteed by the 15th amendment and elsewhere in the Constitution, if we agree that substantial



progress has been made under the 1965 Act but that much room for improvement remains, and if we are honest enough to admit that the present law, for all its' commendable results, is discriminatory in spirit and in practice against one part of our country, then let us get on with a nationwide standard in the spirit of 1970 rather than 1964.

To do this, President Nixon and his Administration have proposed, and I have introduced -- with my distinguished colleagues -- H.R.12695, the Nationwide Voting Rights Bill which will be before us as a substitute for the Committee Bill.

Mr. Chairman, I have in my possession a letter dated December 10 from President Nixon which I will not read at this point. I will insert it at this point in the RECORD as a part of my remarks:

Hon. Gerald R. Ford
Minority Leader of the U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Jerry:

I am aware that the House is considering a five-year extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and alternatively, as an amendment, the Administration-proposed nationwide voting rights bill, H.R.12695.

I strongly believe that the nationwide bill is superior because it is more comprehensive and equitable. Therefore, I believe every effort must be made to see that its essence, at least, prevails.

I would stress two critical points:

1. Instead of simply extending until 1975 the present Voting Rights Act, which bans literacy tests in only seven states, as the Committee bill would do, the nationwide bill would apply to all states until January 1, 1974. It would extend protection to millions of citizens not now covered and not covered under the Committee Bill.
2. H.R.12695 assures that otherwise qualified voters would not be denied the right to vote for President merely because they changed their state of residence shortly before a national election.

In short, the nationwide bill would go a long way toward insuring a vote for all our citizens in every state. Under it those millions who have been voteless in the past and thus voiceless in our government would have the legal tools they need to obtain and secure the franchise. Justice requires no less.

For certainly an enlightened national legislature must admit that justice is diminished for any citizen who does not have the right to vote for those who govern him. There is no way for the disenfranchised to consider themselves equal partners in our society.

This is true regardless of state or geographical location.

I urge that this message be brought to your colleagues, and I hope they will join in our efforts to grant equal voting rights to all citizens of the United States.

Sincerely,

RICHARD NIXON

Mr. Chairman, I am motivated not only by the idea of relieving the citizens and authorities of a few States from unjust discrimination, but also by a firm conviction that the laws of the United States, which we write here, ought to be the same for all 50 States; that the benefits of good laws should benefit citizens everywhere; that the penalties for defiance or evasion should be the same North, South, East and West; and that the right to vote may be -- and often is -- abridged in many ways and for many reasons in addition to race or color.

The right to vote for President and Vice President, and for other Federal elective offices, is a nationwide right entitled to nationwide protection. Our Nationwide Voting Rights Bill, to summarize it briefly, is nationwide in all of its parts.

Specifically:

1. It would suspend, nationwide, all literacy tests in all 50 States until January 1, 1974.
2. It would provide, nationwide, a uniform residence requirement for all Americans who want to vote in Presidential elections.
3. It would grant, nationwide, statutory authority to the Attorney General to station voting examiners and observers in any jurisdiction in all 50 States to enforce the right to register and to vote.
4. It would provide, nationwide, statutory authority for the Attorney General to start voting rights lawsuits in Federal Courts to prevent discriminatory practices and suspend discriminatory voting laws in all 50 States
5. It would launch a nationwide study of the use of literacy tests or devices and other corrupt practices which may abridge voting rights in all 50 States. A national voting advisory commission would be created to report its findings prior to the expiring of the nationwide literacy test suspension in 1974.

I cannot see anything among these five nationwide proposals to which any reasonable person could disagree except, perhaps, the temporary ban on all literacy tests for four years. Literacy tests are not wrong or unConstitutional in themselves; what is illegal is their misuse to deny the right to vote not for illiteracy but on account of race or color. Even the present Act does not prohibit literacy tests in some 20 States that have them; it temporarily suspends them in six or seven States under certain conditions.

Our Nationwide Voting Rights Bill says, in effect, if any State is to be temporarily denied the right to have a literacy test of any kind, let's temporarily deny this right to all States; let's see what effect this has on registration of minority groups and upon voting patterns in all 50 States, and then let's decide what to do about such tests and other devices for the nation as a whole. What could be fairer ?

There is one provision of my Nationwide Voting Rights Bill which the proponents of a simple 5-year extension do not, so far as I know, openly oppose; that is the provision nationalizing residency requirements for Presidential elections. This simply recognizes the fact of life in the super-highway and jet age; Americans are the most mobile people in the world; more than 5 1/2 million of them were prevented from voting in 1960 because they had recently moved. They thus lost their vote in their place of previous residence too last to reacquire it in their new home.

With all deference to my Vice President's reservations, the news media keep transient Americans just as well (or just as badly) informed of national issues and national candidates as they do voters who stay in one precinct all their lives. It makes no sense to deny anyone his right to vote because his employer, or his child's health, or whatever, transfers him abruptly to another part of the United States. The main argument against this overdue remedy seems to be that it has nothing to do with race or color -- although population movements in recent years clearly have included both black and white voters in large numbers.

Congress should not be precluded from doing anything in the legislation before us simply because it has no racial or color ramifications. Voting rights are voting rights and I have always believed we should be colorblind -- nondiscriminatory if you will -- about them.

The President is the representative of all the people and all the people should have a reasonable opportunity to vote for him.

Perhaps the most significant change which my Nationwide Voting Rights Bill would effect in comparison with the existing 1965 statute is found in the spirit of it. Today, any State or county which is under the shadow of the 1964 formula cannot make any change in its election laws without coming to Washington for permission. Under the 1965 act it is assumed that any such change is intended to cheat the law and circumvent the Constitution.

The fundamental presumption of innocence is denied these six or seven States, under an arbitrary, outmoded, mathematical formula. They are presumed guilty and prevented -- though 43 other States are not so prevented -- from managing their own electoral affairs until they prove themselves innocent in Federal court -- not their own district courts but in the District of Columbia.

Maybe -- I do not concede it, but maybe -- past sins justified such severity in past legislation. But this is not the Reconstruction Era and neither is this 1965. Four eventful years have passed; evils and errors of another time have yielded. Now, today, it is wrong and it is shameful for this House to perpetuate a punitive and discriminatory provision for another 5 years beyond the point where the original authors of the act intended it to expire.

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My friends, the choices before us here are usually difficult choices.

I do not believe they are at all difficult today.

We have before us two proposals -- one to continue unchanged for five more years a measure intended as strong temporary medicine to cure racial discrimination in one part of the country, which in working a commendable and partial cure has itself discriminated in unnecessary ways. The alternative is my Nationwide Voting Rights Bill which builds upon the lessons of the 1965 Act, continues its Federal oversight but eliminated its serious shortcomings.

This Administration with this bill intends to protect all the gains in voting rights protection which have been made in the past four years. More than that, we intend to extend these gains to all states and all Americans who may still be denied their full franchise. The very fact we have made such spectacular gains rules out any notion of standing still, or of singling out a few scapegoat States. We mean to step up and broaden the Federal concern for voting rights anywhere and everywhere in America.

[12/10/69]

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