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5PM - Postcard Legislation
President Oval office
Cong. Wiggins, Dickinson, Frenzel,
Hartmann, Cannon, Attorney General
Wednesday, April 16 Cabinet Room

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 15, 1975

MEETING WITH

THREE GOP MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 16, 1975

5:00 p.m. (20 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Jim Cannon

I. PURPOSE

Representatives Dickinson, Wiggins and Frenzel have requested this meeting to give you their views on the various postcard registration bills before the House Administration Subcommittee on Elections (H. R. 1688 by Chairman Dent and similar bills) and, presumably, to request a strong statement from the Administration in opposition to such legislation.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

A. Background

1. H. R. 1686 would establish within the General Accounting Office a Voter Registration Administration for the purpose of administering a postcard voter registration program through the Postal Service. Under the bill, persons would be permitted to register by mail for eligibility to vote in Federal elections. The Voter Registration Administration would be generally empowered to assist the States in carrying out this program and would be required to reimburse the States for expenditures incurred on account of the program. The bill establishes a budgetary limit of \$50 million.
2. The Administration fought hard against similar legislation last year and successfully defeated the rule in the House.
3. Although postcard registration has been a key objective of organized labor, it is strongly opposed by the National Association of Secretaries of State, who regard it as an administrative nightmare, and the American Civil Liberties Union, which believes that postcard registration will increase the opportunities and possibilities for fraud.

4. Two days of Subcommittee hearings have been held on the bill. Chairman Dent has declined to schedule another hearing, indicating he wants the bill to move fast. The votes appear to be there to get the bill out of House Administration and probably to pass it in both Houses. Senator McGee has more than 50 cosponsors for a similar Senate bill.

- B. Participants :
- The President
 - The Attorney General
 - Rep. William Dickinson (R-Ala.)
 - Rep. Charles E. Wiggins (R-Calif.)
 - Rep. Bill Frenzel (R-Minn.)
 - Counsellor Robert Hartmann
 - Jim Cannon (Domestic Council)
 - Vern Loen (Staff)
 - Dick Parsons (Staff)
- C. Press Plan:
- Announce to press as a meeting to discuss pending legislation -- White House photographers only.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. We are here today to discuss the various postcard registration bills currently before the House Administration Subcommittee on Elections.
2. Last year, the Administration opposed the enactment of such legislation for a number of reasons.
3. I remain unalterably opposed to the Voter Registration Act because, in my judgment, it will not significantly increase either voter registration or voter turn-out for Federal elections, it will be an administrative nightmare for State and local officials, and it will increase significantly the potential of and opportunity for fraud.
4. Moreover, at a time when all levels of government are attempting to restrain levels of spending, the establishment of a new Federal bureaucracy, with almost unlimited authority to spend huge sums of taxpayers' money, would be most imprudent.
5. Finally, I am concerned that this proposal, if enacted, could drastically change the structure of political parties and allow the Federal government to dictate internal party regulations.

Tabled

58-38

