

The original documents are located in Box D16, folder “Election Results of 1962, 1963” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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E X E R P T S - from talk by Rep. Gerald R. Ford (R-Mich)

1963

On the election results of 1962 --

The Republicans had hoped to elect eight new Republican Governors, but had a ^{net} gain of only one. In the Senate we had hoped to hold our own, but lost four seats. In the House we had visualized a gain of 20 seats, but gained only three. It was a poor showing, caused mostly by a combination of redistricting and gerrymandering--a term originated in Boston (the home of some well known Democratic politicians).

There were some bright spots, however, When you total the votes in all the races for Governors, Senate and House members, you find that the Republican candidates won 49 percent of the total vote. And when you couple this with the skin-of-the-teeth victory by the Democrats in 1960, you cannot escape the conclusion that there is no overwhelming mandate for the radical programs sponsored by the Whiz Kids in the White House.

Our Michigan experience was one of these bright spots. After 14 long, barren years in which the Democratic administration led the state into bankruptcy, unemployment and national ridicule, the Republicans finally put their bickering aside and rallied behind George Romney. We learned that as a party, if you carry your grudges along with you very long, you carry them all the way to the grave. We had more prima donnas in the Republican party in Michigan than we had voters, and the Democratic victories were largely due to our own refusal to compromise and unite. As a measure of what a Republican victory has meant, Governor Romney is the first Governor in 14 years who has proposed a balanced budget without any increase in taxes.

About the prospects for 1964 --

The Republicans can win. We have found that the Kennedy policies are not adequate for the challenges of this complicated, turbulent and controversial world. Our job is to get out and tell the truth, tell it often and tell it with conviction. It is beginning to get through to the American people that you can manage the news just so long. The folks at home are beginning to realize that there is very little substance to the fog of publicity put out by the White House corps of mimeograph operators. By the time the 1964 election comes around, if we do our job, Americans will know there is a mighty shaky foundation under the House that Jack Built.

We have a good stable of candidates, and these men have a responsibility to themselves, to the party and to the nation to get out and spread the Republican message. They should dramatize the vast differences which exist between the two parties and do all they can to build party organization. No candidate worth his salt can afford to linger in the wings or sit on the bench. They must get into the game and fight for Republican principles now.

About Cuba --

Between October 14th and about November 1st last year, the Kennedy Administration acted with confidence and in a manner which I certainly applaud. But before that time, especially from the middle of September to the middle of October, the Administration had solid evidence which should have, but did not, prompt them to step up surveillance of the island. Had they done what the evidence would have prompted alert and reasonable men to do, we would not have been caught by surprise on October 14th. And since the first of November, the Kennedy Administration has been doing almost the same thing: they have been publicly downgrading the threat which the Russian forces so obviously pose and have not taken all the action they can to isolate and neutralize the threat. I believe we should reimpose the quarantine which we maintained around Cuba during the October crisis, so that we can determine with precision what is going in and out of that Communist-infested island. Then, further, I believe we should resume our low-level reconnaissance flights with a view toward keeping the closest possible eye on the military potential of the Cuban forces.

If this Administration had continued to use the proven principles of foreign policy which the Eisenhower Administration framed, we would not today be surrounded by the shambles and confusion which we call American prestige.

On the Kennedy Tax program --

The Democratic theories of economy have, over the last 30 years, taken us so deeply and consistently into debt that the motto of our coins should be changed to "In Debt We Trust." In his short tenure in office, if we accept his own figures, Mr. Kennedy will have amassed some \$27-billion debt. This is more than the entire cost of government for the first 127 years of the Republic - from President Washington through President Wilson.

We Republicans agree that tax rates are too high and that the system needs reform. But we insist that the government should not reduce its rates, increase spending and bring on even higher deficits.

I have strenuous objection to the so-called five percent floor on charitable deductions. This Kennedy proposal would favor the person who does not own his own home and who does not pay real estate taxes, or support his church, or give to the Community Chest or do all the other things necessary to support our society.

On What Republicans must do to win --

We Republicans must start walking across America block by block, stopping at every home and farm and factory and dockside along the way, pointing out the failure of the Democrats and selling these basic Republican principles I have been talking about.

If we do this, we will retire those Kennedys from the White House to Glen Ora, or Newport, or Hyannis Port, or Palm Beach, or wherever else they may have homes by that time.

The people who are going to put the wheels under the Kennedy rocking chair and push him out of the White House are right here in this room. You have an important state. You have the enthusiasm and the desire. You can get the money. You have the independent spirit of the Abe Lincolns and Teddy Roosevelts and Dwight Eisenhowers and other greats of our Republican Party. You have all the ingredients so that you can bring victory to us and to the nation in 1964. The question is -- will you accept the challenge ??

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