National Association of Retail Druggists
Washington, D.C. October 12, 1965
Washington Hilton

When Willard Simmons, the executive secretary of your organisation,
invited me to be with you today, his letter went something like this:

"Dear Congressman Ford:

The National Association of Retail Druggists by tradition
have outstanding convention speakers."

He listed several illustrious orators.

His letter concluded: "I hope you will accept. Up until
now our programs have been outstanding!"

Since my election as House Republican Leader, speech-making is
among my added duties. By the end of this year I will have made 350
speeches in more than 35 states, which, unless I make an effort,
be 10 ft. worse, let me assure you I no longer have
cooky-experienced orator.

However, appearing here today is a somewhat rugged experience.

Following glamorous singer Marguerite Piazza isn't easy! (more)
However, I do have one advantage, I don't have to follow
Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

I've been in Congress more than 16 years. But, football is my
first love. I'm a politician only because of job security!

Following graduation from the University of Wisconsin, I attended
full time school and coached football at the local high school. My
brother, Donald, was a student in the same school.

Many times through the years I have wondered which direction my
life would have taken had I accepted an offer to play professional
football with the Green Bay Packers—perhaps on the Supreme
Court bench!

Today in speaking with you, I will try to follow the advice
of my wife Betty. (KISS STORY)

I notice that the topic of a panel discussion on your program is "Blueprint
for Success." Right after I finish here, I'll call Ray Bliss and recommend
that he attend the session——and take detailed notes!
In my substantive remarks today, I will discuss "balance in government", a topic of vital concern at this crucial time in our history.

The past clearly indicates that imbalance in government results in loss of liberty and a slow-down of true progress.

Three cornerstones are important in our American political society.

Two of them are constitutionally ordained. They are the relationship between the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial branches of our Federal government... and the establishment of the Federal, State and local government relationships. The third cornerstone of our Democracy is the two-party system.

The first cornerstone was built by the wise drafters of our Constitution. Fortunately, they made an important decision to give specific responsibilities to each branch of government... to give each of them strength, but not superiority over the other branches.

This provision was designed to be a lasting bulwark against the concentration of power in the hands of one man, one group of persons, or one segment of our government. (more)
In my judgment, today we find an erosion of the Legislative branch's power, a change of intended direction in the Judiciary, and a build-up of strength in the Executive arm.

The Legislative branch represented by the Congress is being squeezed. We have 535 elected officials representing Americans and about 9,000 employees. We have a rather small budget compared to the Executive branch. We are shorthanded in the kind of people who can help provide the tools needed by the Legislative branch.

In contrast, the Executive branch has possibly five million employees with a total payroll of nearly $29 billion a year and the right to spend out of the Federal treasury approximately $127 billion every twelve months. The payroll total includes nearly three million military personnel with a payroll of something more than $14 billion annually.

In many respects, the Congress is like David while the Executive is like Goliath. Those in the Legislative branch rightfully put their records on the line every two years in the House and every six years in the Senate.

The vast group of employees who work for our Federal government are never challenged by the voters.
I was pleased and encouraged to see that 37 governors have joined together to object and to fight this bypassing action.

There are signs that if the present trend continues, states will lose their autonomy and in effect become a mere adjunct to the Federal Government.

The third cornerstone is not Constitutionally ordained, but early in America's history our forefathers decided that the two-party system was for the best interest of all the people. As a result we have avoided the loss of freedom that exists in one-party governments throughout the world. We have avoided the chaos and confusion that results from multi-party government.

Yes, I believe a strong two-party political system is an important cornerstone in the American society.
Today I am sorry to say that for more reasons than one, we don't have a strong two-party system, particularly in the Congress.

When I sit on our side of the aisle in the House with a small band of 141 members and look at the mass of humanity on the other side, I am a little jealous and at times have been discouraged.

I have been particularly discouraged when I saw those messages come from the White House and watched many of my Democrat friends not knowing whether to clap their hands or click their heels! When that is awesome power in the Executive branch and a complete imbalance in the House and Senate, I believe some of the ideals we know are important are in jeopardy.

A question to be answered under the current circumstances is——

does the Congress operate merely as a limp arm of government, bending like a weed in the wind when the President has a two to one majority in the House and Senate?
What are the practical applications of this situation?

Without commenting on the merits, or lack of merits of legislative proposals, I think you will be interested in the mechanics used too often to adopt vital public laws.

In too many instances, the Congress adopted legislation supported by the White House without conducting extensive, responsible debate. Dissent was muffled. No opportunity was given to expose proposed legislation to searching questions.

In my judgment these were issues that should have been given complete and open debate. The waning of dialogue falls far short of serving the best interests of the American people.

Now, I have talked as though I am fearful, apprehensive, and pessimistic. I am but to a very limited extent. On the other hand, I am optimistic and let me tell you why.

--more--
I have a strong abiding faith in the good judgment of the American people and in those who are giving leadership to our country.

I am convinced that Congress will take steps to improve its image, to improve its day-to-day working habits.

And, I believe most Americans are realising that they have to help the Congress become a stronger partner in the relationship of the Executive and Judicial branches of government.

I believe our governors in many states now realise that if their units of government are to be a strong partner, their constitutions must be modernised. More governors must espouse their desire to assume responsibilities and not pass them off to the federal establishment.

I am optimistic for another reason.

There is a growing realisation that our system is the finest in the history of mankind. We believe in our Constitution. Those wise men who put it together almost 200 years ago created an historic document.
I emphasise at this point......it is politics and politicians that have put the breath of life and the blood in the veins of the still bones of a constitutional system.

In closing, I refer to the 13th objective included in the National Association of Retail Druggists list of goals adopted by your executive committee. It urges pharmacists to participate in civic affairs and to become active in local, state and national political—and other agencies.

I echo this recommendation and I conclude with these observations.

Each of you in your own way must be a politician or in politics—as voters, as active members of a political party, as candidates, or yes, as office-holders.

For you Nation, for your State, for your community—you must participate, and I am certain you will. Thank you.

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