

The original documents are located in Box D30, folder “Arthur H. Vandenberg Republican Business and Professional Women's Club, Grand Rapids, MI, January 26, 1971” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE ARTHUR H. VANDENBERG
REPUBLICAN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB
AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
6:30 P.M. TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1971

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

Lyndon Johnson once told me I had done an excellent job of picking a wife but a poor job of picking a political party. He was, of course, only half right.

Let me today, first of all, assure you that you are in the right party, as I am--and then go on to prove it. Having done that, I hope to give you some pointers on what you, as women, can do for the Republican Party.

All of you are, of course, women first and Republicans second. That is why I feel sure that what I am about to tell you will have great appeal for you.

The initial point I want to make is that it is the Republican Party which deserves the credit for the national enfranchisement of women.

That's right. It was the Republican Party which pioneered the right of women to vote and consistently supported the enfranchisement of women during the long campaign for acceptance of it.

The Republican Party also was the first major party to advocate Equal Rights for women and the principle of equal pay for equal work regardless of sex.

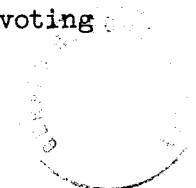
I might mention at this point that it was a Democratic-controlled Senate which sat on the Equal Rights Amendment last year after the House had passed it. And it was a Democratic-controlled House Committee which had to be forced to give up the Equal Rights Amendment so that a vote could be had on it on the House floor. And it was the Republicans who supplied the last dozen signatures providing a majority on a House discharge petition taking the Equal Rights Amendment away from the Democratic-controlled House Judiciary Committee.

Going back to the right to vote, let me point out that it was Democrats in control of the House and Senate who on five occasions--from 1913 to 1919--defeated proposals to enfranchise women.

And in May 1919 it was a newly elected Republican Congress which met in special session and made passage of the Equal Suffrage Amendment its first act.

When the Amendment was submitted to the states, 26 of the 36 states ratifying the amendment had Republican legislatures. Of the nine states voting

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against ratification, eight were Democratic-controlled.

So, with that historical background in mind, aren't you glad you are a Republican? Don't you think all American women should be?

There are two principal ways in which you can help the Republican Party. One is to get involved in local programs which promote the cause of equity and justice for all Americans. The other is to vigorously support the Republican Party by preaching its virtues--and they are many.

My guess is there are few Republicans who would not become more fervent backers of their party if they would only take the time to review its accomplishments.

The roll of Republican Party achievements is very lengthy, so let me just recite a few.

It was a Republican Administration which:

Preserved the Union;

Freed the slaves;

Protected the rights and privileges of Negroes by the 14th Amendment and granted Negro suffrage by the 15th Amendment;

Started the Homestead program in 1862, giving land to those who would develop it, and thus opened up the West;

Started the conservation of natural resources program, establishing the Fisheries Service, most of the national parks, the geological survey, the national forests, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Mines;

Established the merit system for Federal employes with the Civil Service Act of 1883 and improved it with the Classification Act of 1923;

Prohibited trusts and monopolies in restraint of trade with the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890;

Started Federal reclamation and irrigation projects with the Reclamation Act of 1902;

Built the Panama Canal, starting in 1903;

Achieved the first important voluntary agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments at the Washington Naval Conference of 1922;

Enacted the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 to protect the rights of individual workers, management and the public by assuring fair labor practices on the part of both employers and unions;

Ended the Korean War in July 1953;

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Achieved the greatest peacetime strength of U.S. military forces in our history;

Launched 14 earth satellites into orbit, created the first civilian outer space agency, and put Americans on the moon--an epic first;

Thwarted a Red offensive on the free world, blocking Communist attacks on Formosa, helping end Red control of Guatemala and Iran, closing gaps in the Free World's defenses around the Communist bloc of states, and standing firm on threatened West Berlin;

Extended Social Security protection to 12 million more workers and liberalized benefits;

Created the Department of Health, Education and Welfare;

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Achieved statehood for Hawaii and Alaska;

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These are accomplishments of which we can all be proud. Republican women should arm themselves with the knowledge of these accomplishments and spread the word. They should become preachers of the Republican gospel.

Don't let the Democrats get away with their favorite propaganda trick--the flood of compassion. They would like the voters to believe that it is only the Democratic Party which cares about people. That, of course, is a blatant falsehood. The Republican Party has done as much or more for the American people over the years. And what we have done we have done responsibly--not by writing blank checks or launching wild experimental programs.

Where Democratic administrations are prone to spend taxpayer's money as though it came from a bottomless well, Republican administrations administer--and spend wisely.

Where Democratic administrations proceed on the basis that Washington is the fount of all wisdom, Republicans seek to help the State House, the County Courthouse and City Hall solve their problems in ways they know best.

Where Democratic administrations have wallowed in waste, the present Republican administration is seeking to reform the entire bureaucracy.

You want to help the Republican Party? Become a competitor. Compete with your Democratic friends in the marketplace of public opinion. You have plenty of ammunition. If you need more just ask the National Republican Committee or the National Federation of Republican Women. They'll be glad to oblige.

Be a debater, but be positive in the points you make.

I engaged in numerous debates with my Democratic opponent last fall.

There are those who say an incumbent should ignore debate challenges issued by his opponent. For my part, I am glad to accept such invitations. I figure that the facts are on my side.

The reason I feel that way is that the Republican Party is a party of responsibility and the American people are people with common sense.

And so I just talk to the people. I talk the language of the Republican Party. I talk common sense. And that is what I would like you to do. Join the society of Republican lay preachers and lay it on.

How you do is up to you but I personally have great confidence in you. I don't know any woman who is not basically, inherently, a good talker.

Churchill once said that no one can guarantee success in a given effort--but he can conduct himself so as to deserve it. And that is all I ask of you.

Conduct yourselves so that you deserve success, and I confidently predict that you will have it. Thank you.

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