



CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

Excerpts from a Speech by Rep. Gerald R. Ford before the Grand Rapids Roundtable, 12 Noon Friday, Nov. 3, 1972.

The record of the 92nd Congress was a spotty one, a mixed bag of outstanding achievements and miserable failures.

On the deficit side one must count Congress' tragic failure to reform the present scandalous welfare system.

Critics seeking political advantage have pointed to the tremendous expansion in welfare rolls in charges leveled against the Administration. The irony is that it is these critics who refused to enact the Administration's welfare reform plan.

Of course, welfare rolls have swelled. Under the existing program, enrollment increased 147 per cent and total Federal, state and local costs tripled during the Sixties. There was another 28 per cent increase in the rolls between April 1970 and April 1971, bringing the total number of recipients to more than 10 million. This cost more than half a billion dollars a month.

Now let me emphasize this: President Nixon's welfare reform plan would have reduced total welfare outlays by \$700 million in its first year of operation, and those savings would have grown greater in future years.

The President's program would have drastically curtailed the growing food stamp program, would have enabled states to save money by cutting their own welfare benefit levels, and would have imposed strict Federal safeguards against welfare fraud.

Now the President's welfare reform program is dead. And whatever else happens to welfare costs, you can be sure that the Federal government will be stuck with most of the bill, and the taxpayer will be stuck with all of it.

The President's welfare reform strategy was designed to get people off welfare rolls and onto payrolls. It was a program of workfare in place of welfare. It would have provided the poor with what they need most to get out of poverty--money. It would have helped to hold families together, not drive them apart as the present welfare system does.

The House passed welfare reform legislation twice. It died in the Senate. That was tragic--for those on welfare and for all of the American people.

Let me also set the record straight in another respect--that of Federal outlays for education and my own voting record on education bills.



In the eyes of the big spenders, my voting record on education is poor. ~~What are the facts?~~

I voted against the original Health-Education-and-Welfare Department bill passed by the House ~~because~~ because it was \$1.7 billion over the President's budget. And I later voted against a revised H.E.W. appropriation bill because it was still \$835.8 million over the budget.

Is this unreasonable? Is this ~~being~~ being hard-hearted with education?

The President's budget request for the education items in the H.E.W. money bill was 25 per cent over the comparable 1969 level, and this does not include higher education or a request this year for a billion-dollar program of emergency school assistance for elementary and secondary education.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act funds have grown by about one-third since 1969.

Vocational and adult education funds have nearly doubled. And the appropriation for education for the handicapped has increased nearly 50 per cent.

Programs carried under the heading, "Educational Renewal," have grown more than 100 per cent since 1969.

There was no justification for the huge increases tacked onto the H.E.W. appropriation bill in the House and in the Senate. So I voted against the bill, and I support the President's veto of this legislation.

In the nearly four years that President Nixon has been in office, the Administration's budgets for the Office of Education have totalled \$19.6 billion--a 32 per cent increase over the \$14.9 billion requested in the preceding four Presidential budgets.

Office of Education appropriations during the past three years come to \$13.5 billion, or a 17 per cent increase over the \$11.5 billion appropriated during the last three years of the Johnson Administration.

One of the blotches on the record of the 92nd Congress was its penchant for excessive Federal spending. I opposed irresponsible spending measures. I am determined that we must curb inflation and try to stave off a tax increase.

The H.E.W. money bill was a perfect example of the kind of Federal spending that cannot be carried out without more taxes or inflation. This kind of spending ultimately means a cut in the purchasing power of every American family--and in my book there is no higher priority than continued expansion of our purchasing power.

I am opposed to higher taxes, and I am opposed to higher prices. I favor expanded funding for education, but in the scale of my priorities the fight against higher prices and higher taxes comes first.

#####