

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 16, 1975

Office of the Vice President
Washington, D.C.

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING TO GOVERNORS AND MAYORS
EAST ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

This is like Old Home Week for many of us here. I am delighted to greet so many old friends and to meet so many new friends from the vineyards in which I had the pleasure of toiling for 15 years -- our state governments and their localities.

Your being here today speaks volumes about the value President Ford places on those who lead at the state and local levels. In the very first week of his Presidency, Gerald Ford brought to the White House, on a bi-partisan basis, the leadership of the governors', the mayors' and county officers' associations, because he recognized that what he wanted to achieve for this country could not be done, unless all three Federal partners were pulling together.

The only reason that the state legislators did not come in until the second week was because they had their own convention already scheduled the first week of the Ford Presidency. And now, on the first day after delivery of his State of the Union Message, the first people whom the President has brought into the White House -- again, on a bi-partisan basis -- are the Nation's governors, state legislators, mayors, county officials and their representatives.

This is just the first of a series of follow-up briefings on his State of the Union Message that the President will be holding. The President invited you first, because he cares about what our economic and energy problems mean to your governments; because he is determined to do something about it; and because he knows that we are not going to find their solution in the White House alone, but we have to look to the state houses, the city halls and county seats as well.

The President's message of yesterday was, in my judgment, marked by courage and strong leadership. He came forth with bold, imaginative solutions, the kind of solutions that can turn our problems into opportunities leading to a better, more secure life for people both at home and abroad.

Also, in that message, he gave solid proof that state and local leaders have a firm ally in the White House. There are only two places in which the President's message spoke of expanded spending, once for energy programs and the other for greater financial aid for the governments you serve and lead. I refer, of course, to the President's call for an additional \$2 billion to help state and local governments offset their increased energy costs.

And, early in yesterday's message, the President also told us that he will be sending a more detailed message on General Revenue Sharing to the Congress later on. So we are talking about national leadership that values state and local government, with the Federal commitment to state and local government today amounting to \$1.00 out of every \$6.00 which the Federal Government spends.

One more point, if I may be permitted a personal note. In weighing the qualifications of the Vice President whom he chose, I would like to think that the President may have included knowledge of an experience in state and local governments. I have worked with our presidents and cabinets going back to 1940 and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's time. I have now had the pleasure of that participation in the Ford Administration. And I have not found any more serious, comprehensive well-thought through answers to the Nation's problems than what we are getting from President Ford and his team today. I think your later briefings by Secretary Simon on the economy, Secretary Morton on energy, and the President's later remarks will bear that statement out.

The President has held out the hand of partnership to all of you. He needs your involvement and commitment to help turn this economy around. He needs your help to make the public service employment programs succeed; and to make energy conservation succeed; and to help eliminate regulatory actions at all government levels which may be stifling competition and feeding inflation; and to help meet all the demands for overcoming our economic and energy problems.

The President needs you. He recognizes it. That is why we are here today. And -- as a former Governor -- I am delighted that we have a President who has the worth of state and local governments firmly fixed in his scale of values.

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