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JANUARY 17, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

THE CABINET ROOM

12:43 P.M. EST

Jerry Leonard, Steve Grady and distinguished awardees:

Let me, at the outset, congratulate the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures and the awardees -- one from Texas, one from Louisiana, and one from Wisconsin -- plus the State legislature of Iowa and John Gardener of Common Cause.

I think there is a greater awareness today, much more so than when I started my legislative career, that State legislatures perform an invaluable function, more and more important functions today than ever before.

There is an old saying that a house is as strong as its foundation. It seems to me that our Government today -- and I use it in the broadest sense -- is strengthened by the firm foundation that State legislatures give to Government throughout the whole United States.

I think if we look at history we find that some of our basic freedoms originated in our earliest days from actions taken in the respective States. The Virginia action in 1776 set forth the basic freedoms that were subsequently incorporated in our own Constitution.

I, of course, in 25 years, had the opportunity of working in a legislative body and, as a result of that experience, had literally hundreds of opportunities to work with State legislators as well as legislatures, and it is my impression that the greater emphasis today on the important, the essentiality of affirmative action at the State level is going to grow and grow and grow.

I congratulate not only the awardees but the people who are working to make the State legislatures a more vital part of our system of Government, and I wish them well in the days and months and years ahead.

So, staff, and Jerry, I look forward to the participation in recognizing the individuals, in recognizing the State legislature of Iowa for these commendations on this occasion.

END (AT 12:46 P.M. EST)