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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED TO
STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

THE EAST ROOM

I want to welcome you all to what I hope will be a very informative and productive session.

I also want to personally let you know that I understand -- and sympathize with -- the enormous problems you are wrestling with in trying to revitalize State government, especially in the legislative branch.

As a former legislative leader myself -- for twenty-five years in the United States Congress -- I have the scars to prove it.

Actually, they were wonderful years, despite the occasional frustrations and the sure knowledge that -- no matter how long and hard you worked -- there would always be more problems than there were solutions.

I am sure you must have found this similarity at the State level. And I am sure you agree that -- despite the frustrations -- it's worth it.

There is nothing more satisfying than the knowledge that -- even in a small way -- you may have made life a little better for the people you were elected to serve. But I don't need to tell you that. You wouldn't be here if you didn't feel exactly the same way.

The purpose of this meeting today is to let you know some of the things we are trying to do at the Federal level to help you make State government as vital and responsive as possible. I hope it will also serve to keep up the close, personal relationship I have tried to develop with State legislative leaders since I became President.

Some of you here today met with me last year. It was one of my first meetings as President -- just twenty days after moving into the White House.

Since then I have sought to keep our dialogue alive. I have met with members of State legislative bodies both in Washington and around the country and I expect to meet with many more.

But I am interested in more than dialogue. Actions are just as important as words. For too long power, expertise, initiative and -- most important of all -- revenues, have been drained away from your State capitals to the national capital in Washington.

With this in mind, I have an announcement to make. Immediately before meeting with you, I signed the transmittal letters for a Message to Congress and a draft bill to extend and revise General Revenue Sharing.

(MORE)

In brief, this legislation will:

- Retain the present revenue sharing formula;
- Authorize funds for five and three-quarters years;
- Increase some cities' share by easing per capital restraints;
- Improves the protection of individual rights;
- Increase citizen participation;
- Permit a more flexible system of reports, and;
- Require renewal consideration two years prior to expiration.

I am convinced that this legislation is in the best interests not only of State governments, but of the American people. It takes a good concept -- Revenue Sharing -- and extends it, at the same time including some important improvements and refinements.

In proposing this legislation, I am doing my part for State and local government. I hope I can count on you, on State legislative leaders, on governors, mayors and county officials, to do your part -- to get behind this program and make your voices heard in the Congress.

As I said, I understand the importance of State government and I know the problems you face. I am doing everything I can to help. But I will need your help to succeed. Together, we can get the job done.

Thank you very much.

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