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OCTOBER 13, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
(Yonkers, New York)

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
YONKERS CITY HALL

9:36 A.M. EDT

Dick, Senator Javits, Senator Buckley, distinguished Members of the Congress, Governor Wilson, Mayor Martinelli, Monsignor Ed, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Today marks a major milestone in our continuing effort to make Government work better for the American taxpayer. In just a moment, I will sign into law a bill extending what we call general revenue sharing for another 3-3/4 years.

Many of you here in this group this morning played a very leading part in the passage of the original revenue sharing bill back in 1972. No one had a more significant role than two former Governors of the great State of New York -- Vice President Rockefeller and your own hometown friend Malcolm Wilson. Malcolm, congratulations.

In 1972, as the Republican leader of the House of Representatives at that time, I led the fight in the House of Representatives for the revenue sharing concept. In 1976, as President, I led the fight for the renewal of the general revenue sharing legislation. In 1980, as President of the United States, I will still lead the fight for continuation of general revenue sharing.

My strong support for revenue sharing stems from one very simple but very important fact. Revenue sharing is a people's program that works very well for all our people -- 215 million of them throughout the length and breadth of this land.

By the end of this year, 39,000 State and local units of Government will have received more than \$30 billion in general revenue sharing funds from the Federal Treasury. Here in Yonkers almost \$8 million in revenue sharing funds have been used for major transportation improvements, better fire and police protection, and other essential public services.

Throughout America, as many of the mayors that I see here this morning well know, revenue sharing has beefed up, enforced law enforcement efforts, made health services much more accessible, expanded parks and recreational facilities, held local property taxes in check and helped promote economic growth in literally thousands of communities. It is a good program, and we are lucky to have it.

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Revenue sharing success goes well beyond these excellent services. This program has reversed a dangerous trend toward centralization, unaccountable power in Washington, D. C. For decades, the Federal Government piled programs of narrow categorical aid, one on top of another. By 1972, there were more than 1,000 separate Federal grant programs, each equipped with its own Federal bureaucracy, its own set of rules and regulators.

With revenue sharing, we have begun to restore the necessary balance among Federal, State and local units of Government to restore local control over local concerns. That means you in Yonkers, you in Westchester will be making the decisions rather than some bureaucrat on the banks of the Potomac, and I have a lot more faith in you than I do in them.

The general revenue sharing program for the \$30 billion that in five years will be distributed has only 100 Federal employees. For every \$800 in the revenue sharing budget, its own budget, only \$1 goes for administrative costs or overhead, the best record in the Federal Government.

Now despite the obvious success of general revenue sharing, it has faced some very strong opposition from within the majority party in the House as well as in the Senate. The reasons for this opposition from the many Democratic Congressmen in Washington are clear and very simple.

Democrats in Washington don't trust local Government. Democrats in Washington want to tell you how to run your State and local affairs. Over the years Democrats in Washington created big Government. They have a stake in preserving it. They are firmly committed to it and, without a President who is willing to say no, they would make it even bigger, more powerful and more expensive.

I am willing to say no, not only by exercising the Presidential veto but by calling for positive imaginative alternatives to Government by Washington decree, alternatives like general revenue sharing.

Governor Carter has stated his opposition to revenue sharing in its present form, calling it a big hoax and a mistake. He says he opposes general revenue sharing with State Governments but he apparently had no trouble whatsoever in finding uses for the \$140 million in general revenue sharing funds that came to Georgia during his one term as Governor of that State. As far as I know, he didn't send a single penny of that big hoax revenue sharing back to Washington during those four years.

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He knew in his heart, as most Governors know, that revenue sharing is vitally important. It is a vitally important resource of State governments as well as local units of government. We know that revenue sharing has been a major success at every level of Government.

The legislation that I will be signing into law will make the program an even greater success. It will extend revenue sharing for another 3-3/4 years. It will provide \$25 billion 600 million to State and local units of government.

But, most importantly, it will give to you here in Yonkers, in Westchester and in the State an even greater voice in deciding how your tax dollars that go to Washington and come back to you will be spent at the local level.

The City of Yonkers is particularly appropriate for the signing of this bill. This city has 204,000 residents and its distinguished Government officials are committed to solving your own problems in your own way with your own imagination, and with your own hard work.

I congratulate each and every one of you for your very recent breakthrough in selling many millions of dollars in Yonkers bonds on the public market. This is an encouraging sign of health in which thousands of cities and towns throughout America proudly share because of the success of the revenue sharing program.

With confidence that this legislation will make a good program even better, I will very shortly right down there sign into law the General Revenue Sharing Extension Act of 1976.

Congratulations to you, to those who worked on it, and good luck and God bless you.

END (AT 9:46 A.M. EDT)