

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President  
(Detroit, Michigan)

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PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
PLAZA ROOM, 2ND FLOOR  
PONCHARTRAIN HOTEL  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

AT 4:23 P.M. EDT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, Marv, I am always glad to be with members of the Senate, whether present or future. So as your presiding officer for the moment, it is a pleasure for me to be back in Michigan, be in Detroit and to be here with one of the most dynamic and attractive senatorial candidates.

Marv Esch has had a record in Congress that shows his independence, his deep understanding of the political problems we face in the Nation, the human problems and the economic problems. That is the combination that counts. He is a man who believes in the system that has made this country what it is and who believes that the creativity, the genius of America lies with the people and that the opportunity for people should be given to them by government creating a framework of laws within which they can operate and not government doing everything.

Of course, to be here with your Lieutenant Governor is always a pleasure. I have always said that you have the best-looking Governor and Lieutenant Governor of any State in the country, and I still feel that. It is true.

So, Jim, I thank you for being with me.

And Bill McLaughlin, your State Chairman, is someone I have worked with for a long time, for whom I have a great admiration.

I think the role your Governor is playing in leading the progressive forces of the Republican Party at this crucial moment is a very important one.

And Ranny Reiker and Elly Peterson -- Elly, I have got to say in my opinion, what she has done for the President, what she has done for the country is really outstanding. She is one of those people who really cares about this country, who loves this country and is willing to do something about it and give of her own time and energy so that I have great admiration for her.

Now, maybe I will develop some thoughts out of the questions, so instead of saying anything further right now, I will go to the questions. I would like to talk about employment and crime.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, before we get to employment and crime, you have indicated on this trip and before that you feel that the Democrats in the White House and a sweep in Congress would be the end of the two-party

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system. Does that mean the demise of the Republican Party?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I put it the other way around. I said I believe very strongly in the two-party system, and we have, in effect, a one-party Congress right now, because we have got a two-to-one Democrat control. So I think it is important, vitally important, for President Ford, when he is reelected, that he have a strong Republican contingency in the Congress so that his measures can be given consideration.

For instance, Mr. Carter says that the President hasn't given leadership in these key areas, and crime was one of them. But the truth of the matter is, he sent an extremely important measure to Congress, calling for mandatory sentences which Congress hasn't paid attention to because this is an issue which they wanted to have in the campaign.

So they blamed the President for crime, although crime control is not a Federal responsibility. It is a local one. But the Federal Government can pass legislation, and the President recommended to the Congress that they pass legislation for mandatory sentences of key categories of crime.

Now, the same is true in energy, which is another important field.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, do you consider President Ford a strong leader?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do. I worked for him for two years. And, you know, it is very interesting, because this is what the opposition tries to picture, that he is not giving the leadership. And Mr. Carter keeps emphasizing this question of leadership. I just mentioned on crime his program and the fact that the Congress wouldn't pay any attention to it.

He has done the same thing in energy. He spent a tremendous amount of time when he first came in office on the subject of energy, had these conferences and so forth, had the best people in terms of knowledge and experience, and he came up with a program of legislation for the Congress, a basic objective of which was energy independence, including conservation of energy, with incentives and actual payments for those who insulate their houses and so forth who couldn't afford to do it, tax exemptions for those who could, et cetera, and also the Energy Independence Authority, which would have financed private enterprise in taking the high-risk areas where we could become independent.

Now, we are spending \$35 billion, \$36 billion this year on importing energy. If we could take that \$36 billion and spend that here in the United States producing energy from new sources and new methods, that would produce about 1,300,000 jobs right there, and that money could be spent here at home. And Congress has refused to even have hearings.

I happened to be active in one of these programs, the Energy Independence Authority, and I was one who worked for the President in trying to get the Congress to hold hearings on it. The Senate held hearings -- I'll say that -- but they never made a report. The House never even got

around to holding hearings, and they spent almost six months trying to decide which committee it should come under.

So when Mr. Carter says, for instance, he is going to take 1800 agencies and departments of government and make them into 300, he has got to be kidding or he doesn't understand how the government works. Because the Reorganization Act has expired. There are committees, both main committees and subcommittees, in Congress for all of these departments and agencies. They have got vested interest in this, and each committee chairman gets more salary, more staff. So Congress is not about to abolish all of these agencies and departments. They have got a vested interest, and their staff has got a vested interest. What he says shows a total lack of understanding of how the Federal Government works.

Also, I watched this same approach take place in New York City where they put everything into single departments. Then the problem was that the individuals who were the operators, who were responsible for major programs, couldn't get to the mayor, where the political authority is. They had to go through these layers, and, therefore, they couldn't get the authority, and the thing went to pieces. Now they are trying to unwind it.

QUESTION: Considering your commitment to civil rights, which has been a dominant issue in this campaign, are you satisfied with the Republican commitment to the question of the last eight years, the national --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think more progress has been made in the last eight years than has at any time in the history of the country on civil rights. I think this country is making major strides now. We can't stop. We can't let up. But the progress is being made on the basis of equal opportunity, not only civil rights, in relation to race, creed or color, but in relation to sex. Women are having greater opportunity today than they have ever had before. Forty-five percent of the labor force in the United States is now women.

Two months ago, when the figures showed there had been an increase in unemployment in this country, in actual fact that month there were 400,000 new jobs but 700,000 people entered the labor market. Of those, the largest proportion was women. And I think it is because their confidence is coming back in the economy.

There is a question over here.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, the President is leading in this state, although nationally the polls show six percent difference. Why do you think Mr. Ford is going to win the election?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Very simply -- because when Mr. Carter came out of the Democratic Convention in New York City, he was 30-something points ahead, and he has been on a steady decline, and I think that trend is going to take him right down to defeat. The reason is, I think, the more he talks about issues, the more it is clear he doesn't understand them. And he makes the mistake -- if you don't know about something, it is better not to say anything.

But to take positions on issues and then to change a position the next time you talk about it -- to come back as he did in the case of taxes and say, "Maybe after a year's study I would be able to recommend a new code," --

I was asked earlier today up in Grand Rapids about his statement which he made in which he said he is now going to make a 35 percent across-the-board cut in taxes. That is an impossibility if he is going to do all the things that he says he is going to do, including the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, or he is going to have to do it out of inflation just by printing the money, in which case you are going to have the worst form of tax increase, because that is inflation which hurts those who can afford it the least.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, you said crime control is not a Federal responsibility; it is a local one. Could you elaborate, and could you say whether or not you would be in favor of Federal funds to upgrade police departments?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Of course, Federal funds are coming into local police departments, State departments, county departments and so forth, so the Federal Government has supported it. But on the actual operations, we have in this country as a heritage that we don't have a national police force. We have city police forces, town, village, county, the State police, county sheriffs, and so forth. But we don't have a centralized police state, and we can thank God for it. And the American people and the two-party system is going to preserve freedom. That is why I am so keen about the two-party system.

But I think the President's proposal for mandatory sentences for certain crimes is not taking over the administration of the law. It is simply setting certain standards, and I think this is the best way to get at it.

QUESTION: Mr. Rockefeller, do you expect Congress, even though they may well be a Democratic Congress, -- do you expect Congress to work more with the President if he should be elected than they have in recent months once the election is over?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, if Marv Esch is there in the Senate, I am sure he is going to get better cooperation there.

QUESTION: Let's say the makeup is about the same as it is now. Would you expect them to be able to work with the President more than --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is a question of whether they want to work. They are able to work if they want to, but they want the issues for this election rather than be willing to take the steps to solve them. In many cases I think that is a tragedy.

Now, after election what their attitude will be on some of these subjects, I think the American people are concerned enough about them that they want action, so they may force the Congress. The Congress responds to people, let's face it. If the people want, they will get it out of Congress, if they understand the issues. I think the

most important thing is to understand what the alternative substitutions are.

QUESTION: You are, among other things, campaigning for Mr. Esch in this State.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: You can say that again.

QUESTION: In your seasoned political experience, do revelations about his opponent, Mr. Riegle, and his extramarital affairs mean victory for Mr. Esch?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think Mr. Esch is going to want to win on personal questions relating to individuals lives. I think he wants to win on the basis of the issues and the merits, and I think that that is the basis on which he is going to win.

QUESTION: But in this day and age is that enough to beat a candidate, in your judgment?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I always ran on the issues, and I ran in a State where we were a minority party by a million registered voters, and I think we have a tremendous record. For instance, on revenue sharing, which the Congress didn't want to pass in the beginning and the President pushed them into it, Marv has supported that. He understands the relationship between Federal, State and local government, that if we are going to have local government closest to people, which I think is the best government, which the Republican Party believes -- responsive and responsible to their constituents -- then you can't have 1,007 categorical grants which tie up local governments in all of this red tape. So he supported that.

Now, you take what he did on this employment program that brought 175,000 jobs here to Michigan. He is a man who has got a proven record of understanding and of experience, and I think he is going to get elected on that.

QUESTION: My question was the reverse of that, really. In your political judgment, do revelations about Mr. Riegle -- are they enough to beat him in this day and age?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Let's put it this way: I don't think it will help him.

QUESTION: You don't think it will help Mr. Riegle?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No.

QUESTION: Do you think it should be brought up during the campaign?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I happen to believe in freedom of the press. In New York State I recommended and signed a shield law to protect members of the press on sources of information, because even though I've got a lot of scars from the press over a long period of years, I think our society as a free society is better off, no matter what it costs any of us who are in public life. We are

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better off to have things come out and let the public make the decisions rather than have a controlled press who would make it easier.

QUESTION: Mr. Esch has raised a question of Mr. Riegle's stability. Would this seem to have anything to do with a man's stability, in your judgment?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I don't pass judgment, to tell you the truth. I believe in the Bible saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." I think that's not a bad one.

MR. ESCH: I don't want to misdirect a statement. I didn't ever talk about his lack of stability. I talked about his inconsistency in his voting record. And since the first day of this election, what I want the people of Michigan to do is look at the record of Marvin Esch and the record of my opponent and to be very careful to note the inconsistency on that.

QUESTION: Does his private life have anything at all to do with his ability to be a Senator?

MR. ESCH: I don't think you can separate out personal integrity from public trust. But my campaign is based on having the people look at the record of his voting pattern and my record and make a decision.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think the answer to your question on whether it is going to have any effect is that it is going to be determined by the individual voters when they are in the booth. And that is the great thing about democracy, that individuals have the right to appraise the candidates in all aspects -- their positions, their standing on issues, everything -- and they balance it out and come up with the decision.

QUESTION: And their personal life is in fact the personal life of the candidate?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That is up to the individual. I'm not going to try to tell any voter how to vote. I say each voter is going to decide himself or herself when they get in that booth. I think that is what they are going to decide about President Ford. They just trust President Ford. They have confidence in him. He has got proven experience. And when they get there, regardless of their party affiliation, I think the majority of the voters are going to say, "We want Gerald R. Ford of the great State of Michigan to continue as our President, this time elected."

QUESTION: Getting back to revenue sharing --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Now you're talking.

QUESTION: Wasn't that indeed a Johnson idea?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, sir, it was not President Johnson's idea; it was mine. Only it wasn't mine; it was my Lieutenant Governor's. These lieutenant governors are really the ones who are creative.

QUESTION: When was that, sir?

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: This was pushed by the Governors' Conference. We have been voting for this throughout, oh, I don't know how long.

QUESTION: Before Lyndon Johnson took over? Because he proposed it in 1965 or '64.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I was very fond of President Lyndon Johnson, so I don't want to take anything away from him. If he did propose it, I tell you, I am supporting his idea, if he had it first. I didn't know it was. I was very glad to be an active proponent of that idea because I think it is fundamentally sound. And it is a bipartisan thing. It's not a partisan thing.

QUESTION: You criticized the Democratic Congress for not wanting to support this measure, and I just -- I'm not protecting the Democratic Congress by any means, but I'm saying the record will show that Johnson proposed this in 1964 or '65.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: If he did, he didn't get it through.

QUESTION: That's true.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The record shows that. But I don't want to take anything away from him, see.

QUESTION: You are precisely right. He didn't get it through.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The Governors' Conference has been proposing it right along, because we don't want these grants with all these strings tied to them. You get so tied up in red tape that you lose your ability to be responsive.

We had 35 grants in primary and secondary school education. This is in New York State. We had to have Statewide plans, see. And I want to tell you, when we got all through, we got five percent of our primary-secondary education. Now, was it worth it was the real question.

QUESTION: This is going to be a very close election, obviously. It could be decided by the electoral votes rather than popular votes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I think that is a possibility.

QUESTION: What is that going to do with the President's mandate for the next four years.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This business of mandate, if you will forgive me, I never was big on people feeling they had a mandate. If you are elected by one vote more than is necessary, you are elected. You are then the President or the Governor or whatever you may be. And this word "mandate," to me, you are the public servant, see, and you have to try and do the best job you can for the public -- all of the public, not just those who voted for you, but all of them. I think that is the great strength of democracy.

Thank you.