

HEARINGS ON THE NOMINATION OF  
GERALD R. FORD TO BE VICE PRESIDENT  
HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Pursuant to Section 2 of the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, Gerald R. Ford has been nominated to be Vice President of the United States. The Committee on the Judiciary is holding hearings to perfect a record on which the Members of the House may responsibly vote on confirmation. To that end Gerald R. Ford has been subjected to the most intensive examination of any appointee to high office in my memory. Certainly, the kind of inquiry already conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and by the staff of this committee is unprecedented in the annals of recounting how we have heretofore chose our Vice Presidents.

It is always hazardous to predict how History will look back upon the present. But I will risk saying that History will ~~rule~~ favorably on our action. It will say that Congress treated one of its own with objectivity and without favoritism. It will say that Congress ~~fully~~ met its constitutional responsibility. And it will say that at a time when people began to doubt whether any public figure could withstand scrutiny, the Minority Leader of the House withstood the severest test.

Thus, lest anyone read the lateness of these hearings as delay, let him understand that the American people deserved no less than the most thorough of investigations. And let it not go unnoticed that such an investigation could not have been successfully conducted without the open

and candid cooperation which the nominee has offered to the committee.

Although this is the first time that the Congress has been sent a Vice-Presidential nomination, our history has shown that it is likely that vacancies in the office are likely to re-occur. Before this year there were 16 vacancies which spanned a total of 37 years. The observer of our current proceedings can't help but notice the contrast between the cautious and deliberative Congressional confirmation under the 25th Amendment and the speedy, often hasty, political-convention confirmation under present practice. I hope that in our proceedings we can continue to set a precedent for excellence that will prompt our major political parties to take heed.

~~Finally, Mr. Chairman,~~ I would hope that during the conduct of the hearings we would - one and all - resist whatever temptation there may be to abuse our role and instead stay within the limitations that the 25th Amendment imposes on us. The legislative history is clear. The committee reports of both Houses explicitly recognized the President's right to nominate as Vice President a person who shared his philosophy and his politics and who could work in harmony with the President. Thus the role of this committee is not to determine whether Gerald R. Ford's views on domestic and foreign policy are consonant with those of its Members but rather to determine whether he <sup>is qualified</sup> ~~has the mental and physical ability~~ to assume the tensions and troubles of the Presidency if that office should for any reason devolve upon him, as well as to determine whether he ~~is~~ the kind of person in whom the people can place their trust.

QUESTIONS BY MR. HUTCHINSON

Mr. Ford, the following series of questions is prompted by constitutional requirements pertaining to the Vice Presidency. Under the 12th Amendment, "no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice President of the United States." Under section 1 of Article II to be eligible to the office of President a person must fulfill three requirements.

- 1) Mr. Ford, are you a natural born citizen of the United States?
- 2) Have you attained the age of 35 years?

Could you provide written verification of the above answers?

- 3) For the past 14 years, where have you legally resided?

Under section 6 of Article I no Representative may be appointed to an office the emoluments whereof have been increased during the time for which he was elected. Has the Congress increased the emoluments of the office of Vice President since January 3, 1973?

Finally, under section 2 of the 25th Amendment as interpreted in the legislative history, the nominee to the office of Vice President is to be a person who shares the President's political affiliation. Mr. Ford, are you a Republican? Additionally, the nominee is to be one who can work in harmony with the President. Mr. Ford, do you believe that you can work in harmony? What is the basis for your belief?