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President Ford Committee Records, Series J: Delegate Office Files, 1976

Collection Type

Personal Papers

Extent

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Record Type

Textual

Scope and Content Note

The Delegate Office coordinated efforts to solicit support for President Ford among uncommitted delegates selected to attend the Republican National Convention. Since the race for the Republican nomination between Ford and Ronald Reagan remained close at the end of the primary season, this effort proved crucial in providing the President with enough votes to receive the nomination.

President Ford's long-time friend and congressional campaign manager John R. "Jack" Stiles, who had served as the field coordinator for the 1960 Nixon presidential campaign, initially headed this effort. Stiles, working as part of the PFC Political Office headed by Stuart Spencer, completed some work in this area prior to his death in an automobile crash in April 1976.

Undersecretary of Commerce James A. Baker assumed the newly created position of PFC Deputy Chairman for Delegate Operations soon after Stiles' death and continued to coordinate this work through the convention. In August 1976, President Ford promoted him to Chairman of the PFC.

Baker's headquarters staff included Jackie Fernald, Pete Roussel, and Pete McPherson. He also recruited eleven regional chairmen, mostly state Republican chairmen or long-time party workers. The regional assignments were:

- Region I - John McKernan - Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts
- Region II - Dick Rosenbaum - New York, New Jersey, Delaware
- Region III - Drew Lewis - Pennsylvania
- Region IV - Harry Dent & Edgar Welden - North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas
- Region V - Tom Wyman - West Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico
- Region VI - Kent McGough - Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky
- Region VII - Tom Milligan - Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana
- Region VIII - Bill Goodrich - Missouri, Iowa, Tennessee, Kansas, Nebraska
- Region IX - Bob Forsythe - Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota
- Region X - Paul & Nola Haerle - Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Hawaii, Alaska, Guam, New Mexico, Utah

- Region XI - Tom Stroock - Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, Texas, Oklahoma

In addition to the regional chairmen, Baker made use of PFC staff (especially Political Office regional coordinators), members of Congress, and party officials as sources of information. Where it seemed useful he requested telephone calls to delegates from the President, First Lady, Cabinet members, and members of Congress. Baker also called some delegates himself and solicited their support.

The Delegate Office files provide useful compilations of delegates totals at various points in the campaign, background information on individual delegates, assessments of their convention voting intentions, and reports on telephone calls made to them. They cover the period from May to August 1976, but contain little reflecting the work of Baker or his staff at the Republican National Convention or even from the last week before the convention opened.

The most significant materials are memoranda and correspondence received from various politicians and Republican officials assessing the status of delegations or individual delegates. These assessments were often given confidentially and are quite candid about what tools might be used to sway specific delegates.

Frequently the files contain reports on telephone calls on behalf of the President. Included are records of calls made to delegates by such individuals as Secretary of Commerce Elliot Richardson, Secretary of the Treasury William Simon, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, Secretary of the Interior Thomas Kleppe, Senators John Tower and Barry Goldwater, Vice President Rockefeller, John Connally, and PFC Deputy Chairman Elly Peterson.

Baker sent biographical forms to each convention delegate and requested that they fill them out. While most delegates returned the biographical forms, for most states several delegates did not. In addition, the PFC obtained copies of Republican Women's Task Force questionnaires completed by female delegates.

Related Materials (August 1990):

The White House Central Files Subject File includes material on convention delegates in categories PL/Ford and PL 1-1 (Delegates). An important file on earlier aspects of the delegate hunt is the records of the PFC Political Office.

The files of White House Chief of Staff Richard Cheney contain material on delegations visiting the White House and presidential telephone calls to delegates. His assistants Foster Chanock, James Field, and James Reichley also have small amounts of material on delegates in their files, as do Michael Raoul-Duval and Rogers Morton. The Maria Downs Files contain information on the receptions and luncheons for delegations visiting the White House.

Last Modified Date

2025-04-01

Delegate Office: Subject File, 1976.

(Boxes J1-J2, 0.8 linear feet)

Memoranda, reports, logs, and newspaper clippings. The materials concern efforts to solicit support for President Ford among uncommitted delegates to the Republican National Convention. Although the James Baker memoranda and some of the status reports are significant, the series also contains such routine materials as newspaper clippings and blank forms.

Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Box J1 - Delegate Office: Subject File

Status	Title
OPEN	Baker, James - Memoranda
OPEN	Convention
OPEN	Convention Committees - Membership Reports
OPEN	Delegate Biographical Sketches - Status Reports
OPEN	Delegate Book Sign-Out Sheets
OPEN	Delegate Calls and Letters
OPEN	Delegate Counts
OPEN	Delegate Operation Status
OPEN	Delegate/Alternate Matchups
OPEN	Delegates/Alternates Who Were Delegates at Previous Conventions
OPEN	Forms for Weekly Status Reports (1)-(5)

Status	Title
OPEN	Kansas City Hotel List
Box J2 - Delegate Office: Subject File	
Status	Title
OPEN	Lists of Delegates Sent Out
OPEN	Miscellaneous
OPEN	News Clippings - Campaign Issues
OPEN	News Clippings - Carter Campaign (1)-(2)
OPEN	News Clippings - Ford/Reagan Delegate Contest (1)-(2)
OPEN	Republican National Committee Meeting, 6/23/76
OPEN	Schweiker, Richard - Selection by Reagan
OPEN	Stiles, Jack - Western States Delegate Notebook

Delegate Office: State File, 1976.

(Boxes J3-J14, 5.2 linear feet)

Correspondence between the White House or PFC and individual delegates; reports from Cabinet members, Senators, and others making calls to delegates on behalf of the President; memoranda and status reports from PFC field staff or local Republicans; biographical forms filled out by delegates; and caucus team briefing materials prepared for use at state caucuses at the convention. The materials concern efforts to solicit support for President Ford among uncommitted delegates to the Republican National Convention. The Ford Library received this material in several different sequences, all arranged by state, and combined them into one series. Although there are files on each state delegation, the largest and most significant files concern states with uncommitted delegates. The files on states which held primaries and bound delegates to follow the results are smaller and less valuable. In a late shipment received from the Ford office in California in December 1991, the Ford Library obtained the notebooks containing delegate biographies and status reports for New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Arranged alphabetically by state, except for the accretion received in 1991 which can be found at the end of the series.

Box J3 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Alabama (1)-(2)
OPEN	Alaska (1)-(3)
OPEN	Arizona (1)-(2)
OPEN	Arkansas (1)-(2)
OPEN	California (1)-(3)
OPEN	Colorado (1)-(3)

Box J4 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Connecticut (1)-(2)
OPEN	Delaware (1)-(3)
OPEN	District of Columbia (1)-(2)
OPEN	Florida (1)-(4)

Box J5 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Georgia (1)-(2)
OPEN	Guam
OPEN	Hawaii (1)-(3)
OPEN	Idaho
OPEN	Illinois (1)-(5)

Box J6 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Illinois (6)-(8)
OPEN	Indiana (1)-(3)
OPEN	Iowa (1)-(2)
OPEN	Kansas (1)-(3)

Box J7 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Kentucky (1)-(2)
OPEN	Louisiana (1)-(3)
OPEN	Maine (1)-(3)
OPEN	Maryland (1)-(3)

Box J8 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Massachusetts (1)-(3)
OPEN	Michigan (1)-(4)
OPEN	Minnesota (1)-(3)

Box J9 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Mississippi (1)-(5)
OPEN	Missouri (1)-(3)
OPEN	Montana
OPEN	Nebraska (1)-(3)
OPEN	Nevada (1)-(2)

Box J10 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	New Hampshire (1)-(3)
OPEN	New Jersey (1)-(2) [See also Box J15]
OPEN	New Mexico
OPEN	New York (1)-(7)

Box J11 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	New York (8)-(9)
OPEN	North Carolina (1)-(3)
OPEN	North Dakota (1)-(2)
OPEN	Ohio (1)-(5)

Box J12 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Ohio (6)-(7)
OPEN	Oklahoma (1)-(2)
OPEN	Oregon (1)-(2)
OPEN	Pennsylvania (1)-(7)

Box J13 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
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OPEN	Pennsylvania (8)-(10)
OPEN	Puerto Rico
OPEN	Rhode Island (1)-(2)
OPEN	South Carolina (1)-(3)
OPEN	South Dakota
OPEN	Tennessee [See also box J15]
OPEN	Texas [See also box J15]
OPEN	Utah

Box J14 - Delegate Office: State File

Status	Title
OPEN	Vermont (1)-(2)
OPEN	Virgin Islands
OPEN	Virginia (1)-(4)
OPEN	Washington [See also box J15]
OPEN	West Virginia (1)-(2) [See also box J15]
OPEN	Wisconsin [See also box J15]
OPEN	Wyoming (1)-(2)