

Address by: Robert Morgan  
Attorney General

To: Hertford County Democratic Women  
Ahoskie, North Carolina  
September 24, 1971

POSITIVE GOVERNMENT -

A DEMOCRATIC PARTY TRADITION

*Hert and Count  
Demo. Party Tradition*

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TRADITION

I always welcome the opportunity to talk to a meeting of Democratic women because I believe there is no group more vitally interested in good, positive government than you.

I am glad to see that the male sex has joined you this afternoon because I do not believe in any segregation. I don't believe we ought to eliminate youths, blacks, women or men! We just ought to combine to build a party!

President Franklin Roosevelt made a statement about the Democratic Party on June 8, 1935 which was applicable then and is just as applicable today:  
"... to increase the security and the happiness of a large number of people in all occupations of life and in all parts of the country; to give them more of the good things of life; to give them a greater distribution, not only of wealth in the narrow terms but of wealth in the wider terms; to give them places to go in the summer-time - recreation; to give them assurance that they are

not going to starve in their old age; to give honest business a chance to go ahead and make a reasonable profit; and to give everyone a chance to earn a living."

I believe these goals should still be the goals of the Democratic Party.

You are a group which has the power to correct any of the shortcomings that we may have from these goals. Because of the tremendous respect which your neighbors and associates have for you - because you want to get involved - they listen to your judgment and value your contributions. They will follow your lead and join you in your concern for good government - because you are interested in good government.

The fact that you are here this afternoon as a member of this club indicates to me that you are not willing to settle for the usual or the commonplace; that you are not willing to be the servant of the kitchen stove or the vacuum cleaner; and that you are not willing to settle for the vicarious experiences of the "Edge of Night" or "As the World Turns," (Although you might still get home in time for it)

Your presence indicates that you are aware that positive, effective government demands the interest and participation of every citizen, including the housewife, the mother, the business and the career woman.

You not only have become aware of this fact, but have done something about it - you have taken a positive step - you have joined together in this organization to make your voices heard and your influence felt, to help your community progress, and to assure yourselves that everything possible will be done to provide the highest degree of leadership in local, State and national government.

I commend you for your positive approach. It would be much simpler for you to lose yourselves in the duties of your homes - of raising children and keeping house - to ignore the problems about you, and let your sole contribution be a loud complaint whenever you feel the tone of some news broadcaster's voice demands it.

I have been involved in politics for awhile now. I ran for my first elective office while still a student at Wake Forest Law School in 1950, and I have held some

public office since that time. And, if there is one thing that experience has taught me, it is the value of approaching matters in a positive frame of mind. A lawyer is taught in Law School that he is valuable to his client not when he is able to tell him what he cannot do, but rather when he can tell his client what he can do.

In like manner, we as citizens, and especially those of us who hold public office, are valuable to our communities and to our State when we devote ourselves to finding ways to correct and improve rather than expending all our energies pointing out faults.

Condemnation comes cheap, and it alone solves no problems. By joining this organization, you have said to your neighbors and associates that condemnation is not enough. You have said to them that if you find fault you will also work to find solutions. You have dedicated yourself to the proposition of positive government.

And what is positive government. Let me tell you a little about the work of the 1971 Democratic General Assembly.

Positive government - your 1971 Legislature passed a bill reorganizing the North Carolina Council on Mental Retardation. The Council now had a mandate to act on behalf of persons having cerebral palsey, epilepsy and other neurological or developmental disabilities, as well as mental retardation. The name of the agency was changed by adding "And Development Disabilities."

A bill was passed providing financial relief for parent's with retarded children by limiting the charges at mental retardation centers to no more than the cost of care for a normal child at home, and eliminating charges for long-term patients over the age of 21.

Positive government - your 1971 Democratic General Assembly passed a bill allocating \$400,000 for community demonstration funds. These funds probably will be used for group homes in communities. Housing facilities for the retarded at the local level have long been a concern and group homes seem to be part of the answer.

For instance in Wake County and the Raleigh area there are 200 children known as Severely and Profoundly

Retarded Children. O'Berry which is the institution that serves this area takes only one such child a year. And when they do take such a child, it is usually understood that the child will regress as they do not have the staff to give such children the care they need.

These funds can be added to, at the local level, to provide daycare for these severely and profoundly retarded children - parents can take a day off occasionally to be away for just a few minutes from their awesome responsibility - perhaps even a vacation for a few days. Many of these children are handicapped to such an extent that parents cannot leave them - as you do - with the neighborhood babysitter.

Positive government - your 1971 Democratic General Assembly passed a bill establishing the North Carolina Drug Authority and a bill establishing new guidelines and controls for all drugs and narcotics. This legislation serves to control the manufacture and distribution of drugs in North Carolina with the overriding purpose of protecting the citizens of our State

from drug abuse.

A bill establishing mandatory licensing of day-care centers across the State was passed. This bill will insure that all daycare centers must protect the physical safety and moral environment of children in daycare.

Child abuse - your 1971 General Assembly passed a bill to protect children from abuse. The new law makes it mandatory for any professional or any other person to report the case of a child about whom he has reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. It is predicted that the number of child abuse cases detected and reported may rise from about 3,000 a year across the State to 5,000 or more.

Positive government - your 1971 Democratic General Assembly passed a bill regulating installment sales and services. This bill establishes additional safeguards for consumers by protecting them from unscrupulous creditors when buying on the installment bases. For example, it sets interest rates for



installment credit sales, restricts large balloon payments, and provides for rebates when paying off the debt before maturity.

Positive government - A bill passed requiring open meetings for governmental bodies. This is a move toward a more cohesive law of access. Meetings and minutes of all governmental bodies in North Carolina are open and public.

The name of politics today is participation. And let me remind you that politicians are nothing more than citizens exercising the responsibility of citizenship. You are a politician and properly so!

If we are to have a democracy, we as individuals must participate in the running of our counties, cities, State and nation. Our American system of government has come to be known as representative democracy because it is a government in which the people, the citizens, remain supreme.

It has been said that we should cease to take ourselves so seriously and begin to take our political

responsibility seriously. Ladies and gentlemen, I agree.

In defining what a North Carolina Democrat is today, I have a very close friend [Ralph Scott] - a loyal Democrat - who says -

"He is the same person who picked this State up by the bootstraps back in 1900 and launched it into an orbit of steady progress.

"He is the same person who nursed this State through the bitter depression of the thirties, who restored hopes, dreams, and, eventually, recovery.

"He is the same person who has fought bravely, and to the finish, his nation's wars.

"He is the same person:

who has had the will and the way to see that the public's needs are met in good times and bad.

who has seen that education, a good education, and health services are available to all.

who has seen that the unfortunate among us, such as the mentally ill and the retarded, are given a ray of hope in their dark world.

"He is the same person who has given North Carolina a system of community colleges and trade schools - a grassroots educational opportunity of tremendous proportions.

"Above all, this is the person with faith in the future of North Carolina - a faith that is unflinching and remains constant no matter what cross currents blow.

"The North Carolina Democrat, to use an illustration you may have heard, looks at a glass and says, 'It is half full.'" His Republican counterpart will say, "It is half empty.'

"Hope, Faith, Love. These are the traits of the North Carolina Democrat.

"Yesterday, today, tomorrow - The North Carolina Democrat is a person with a heart, a person who cares, a person who, when the going gets tough, gets going."

Ladies and gentlemen, I think that no other thing accounts more for the repeated success of the Democratic

Party in this State than the fact that we have consistently offered candidates who put themselves to the task of solving problems, and reaching goals - the same goals enunciated by that great Democratic president, Franklin Roosevelt, in 1935.