

SPEECH BY:

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NORTH CAROLINA TEEN DEMOCRATIC STATE
CONVENTION
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YOUTH IN DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

LET ME EXPRESS TO YOU MY SINCERE APPRECIATION AT BEING GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY. I WANT TO SAY THAT I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO BE IN THE MIDST OF A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SO VERY INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PARTY VERY CLEARLY DEPENDS UPON THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELVES.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, WHICH PARTY YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY INDICATES YOU SUPPORT, HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS THE PARTY OF THE MANY AS OPPOSED TO THE PARTY OF THE FEW; THE PARTY OF THE PEOPLE AS OPPOSED TO THE PARTY OF THE PRIVATE INTERESTS. FOR IT IS THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY THAT IS THE TRULY NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY, THE ONE POLITICAL PARTY IN THIS COUNTRY THAT HAS WITHIN ITS MEMBERSHIP PEOPLE OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE REPRESENTING ALL TYPES OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES.

BUT PERHAPS THE GREATEST SINGLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PARTIES IS THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS HISTORICALLY BELIEVED THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY CAN BE TRUSTED TO GOVERN THEMSELVES. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS, DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, SHOWN HOW MUCH IT TRUSTS THE PEOPLE BY CONCENTRATING MORE AND MORE POWER

IN THE HANDS OF A VERY FEW PEOPLE. FOR DESPITE THE ADMINISTRATION'S CLAIM THAT IT WAS GOING TO RETURN POWER TO THE STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RATHER THAN CONCENTRATING THAT POWER IN WASHINGTON, WE HAVE WITNESSED OVER THE PAST FOUR AND ONE HALF YEARS THE TAKING OF MORE POWER BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN OUR HISTORY. AND I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THIS IS DUE, IN LARGE MEASURE, TO THE FACT THAT IT IS THE REPUBLICAN PARTY WHICH DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED TO ADEQUATELY GOVERN THEMSELVES.

WE HAVE SEEN IN RECENT DAYS AND MONTHS THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES THAT CAN FLOW FROM SUCH AN ENORMOUS CONCENTRATION OF POWER AND THE SECRECY WHICH ALWAYS FOLLOWS. IT HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR THAT THE ADMINISTRATION NOT ONLY DID NOT TRUST THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, THEY DID NOT EVEN TRUST THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND ACTIVELY CONSIDERED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECRET INVESTIGATIVE AGENCY.

SURELY, AS THOMAS JEFFERSON ONCE SAID, THERE IS "NO SAFE DEPOSITORY OF THE ULTIMATE POWERS OF SOCIETY BUT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES." IT IS THE PRACTICE OF THIS VERY PRINCIPLE THAT HAS ENABLED THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, BOTH NATIONALLY AND IN NORTH CAROLINA, TO ACCOMPLISH SO MUCH FOR OUR PEOPLE.

YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT IT WAS A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT WHO ENABLED THIS COUNTRY TO SURVIVE THE DEPRESSION YEARS OF THE 1930'S; IT WAS A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT IN THE LATE 1940'S AND

EARLY 1950'S THAT WAS WELL-KNOWN FOR HIS CANDOR AND HIS ABILITY TO SPEAK HONESTLY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT; IT WAS A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT, WHO IN 1961, PROPOSED THE IDEA OF THE PEACE CORPS SO THAT THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS NATION COULD SERVE OTHER PEOPLES OF THE WORLD IN A WAY NEVER BEFORE DONE. AND IT WAS PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON, WHO PERHAPS TRIED MORE THAN ANY PREVIOUS PRESIDENT, TO ERADICATE DISEASE, HUNGER AND INJUSTICE FROM THE FACE OF THIS LAND.

IN NORTH CAROLINA, DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND THE PROGRESS OF OUR STATE HAVE BEEN -- IN A VERY REAL WAY -- ONE AND THE SAME. NORTH CAROLINIANS ARE HEIRS TO A LONG HISTORY OF GOOD GOVERNMENT, ENLIGHTENED LEADERSHIP, AND SUSTAINED PROGRESS AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS MADE IT SO.

SO WHY SHOULDN'T WE LOOK WITH PRIDE TO THE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS VANCE, AYCOCK, MORRISON, BICKETT, HOEY, SCOTT, UMSTEAD AND SANFORD?

WHY SHOULDN'T WE LOOK WITH PRIDE TO OUR FINE SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS -- 15 COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND 41 TECHNICAL INSTITUTES -- THE SECOND LARGEST SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY. AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE "OPEN DOOR" POLICY OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TO DEVELOP HIS POTENTIALITIES NO MATTER WHAT THE FIELD OF INTEREST OR LIMIT OF PROFICIENCY. 97 PER CENT OF OUR POPULATION IS WITHIN 30 MILES -- EASY DRIVING DISTANCE -- OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL. OVER 400,000 STUDENTS ARE ENROLLED IN THIS SYSTEM WHICH HAS GAINED THE DISTINCTION OF BEING

THE NATIONAL MODEL FOR OTHER STATES. ALL OF THIS WAS DONE UNDER DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS.

WE HAVE 16 STATE UNIVERSITIES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ATTEND; GOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NOW EVEN A BUDDING KINDERGARTEN SYSTEM FOR OUR CHILDREN -- THESE ARE POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS, AND ONES THAT HAVE GIVEN NORTH CAROLINA THE NATIONAL NAME OF BEING THE MOST PROGRESSIVE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.

WHAT STATE IN THIS NATION CAN BOAST OF A BETTER RECORD IN HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION THAN NORTH CAROLINA? WHAT STATE CAN COME CLOSE TO MATCHING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF GOVERNORS BICKETT, MORRISON AND KERR SCOTT -- DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS -- WHO PUSHED NORTH CAROLINA TO THE FOREFRONT IN PROVIDING HIGHWAYS FOR ITS PEOPLE.

AT THE CLOSE OF LAST YEAR, NORTH CAROLINA HAD 74,368 MILES IN ITS STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM, MORE THAN ANY OTHER STATE AND MORE THAN THE STATES OF ALABAMA, GEORGIA, TENNESSEE AND SOUTH CAROLINA COMBINED. THIS INCLUDED 10 PER CENT OF ALL THE STATE MAINTAINED PAVED ROADS IN AMERICA WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, I AM TOLD WE MAINTAINED THIS WITH ONLY 4 PER CENT OF THE COMBINED BUDGETS OF ALL THE 50 STATES.

DURING GOVERNOR SCOTT'S ADMINISTRATION, WE SPENT \$563,000,000 ON HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION ALONE AND ANOTHER \$285,000,000 ON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE. \$54,000,000 WAS SPENT ON SECONDARY ROADS -- ROADS SO VITAL TO THE PEOPLE IN OUR RURAL AREAS. WHAT OTHER STATE CAN

POINT TO THIS KIND OF RECORD IN ROAD BUILDING AND HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE? NOT A ONE.

LUTHER HODGES, A GREAT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR IN THE LATE FIFTIES, SET NORTH CAROLINA ON THE ROAD TO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN A WAY THAT HAS MADE THIS STATE THE ENVY OF THE NATION. THE RATE OF FACTORY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN TWO TO THREE TIMES THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

PEOPLE FLOCK TO NORTH CAROLINA FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO VISIT OUR RESEARCH TRIANGLE AND THOUSANDS HAVE COME TO THE TAR HEEL STATE TO MAKE THEIR HOMES AND USE THEIR SKILLS IN THIS RESEARCH CENTER. AGAIN, WE'RE THE ENVY OF THIS NATION AND BECAUSE OF THE FORESIGHT AND VISION OF LUTHER HODGES, A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR.

TALK ABOUT THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR PARTY IS NOT A STUDY IN ANCIENT HISTORY, AS SOME WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE. LOOK TO THE POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE LAST DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION WHICH ADDED TO THE LAW BOOKS IN THIS STATE LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT, WHICH SHOULD INSURE THAT OUR CHILDREN HAVE CLEAN AIR TO BREATHE, PURE WATER AND SURROUNDINGS WHICH ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

WE REVAMPED OUR WATER AND AIR LAWS. WE PASSED A COASTAL PROTECTION AND BEACH EROSION ACT, A FAR-REACHING PESTICIDE ACT AND AN ACT REGULATING THE MINING OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

THUS, I BELIEVE IT IS EVIDENT THAT IT IS THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, A POLITICAL PARTY WHICH OVER THE YEARS HAS STOOD FOR

POSITIVE, PROGRESSIVE GOVERNMENT...WHICH HAS SOUGHT TO INSPIRE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN ABILITY TO RULE EFFECTIVELY. A PARTY WHICH HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO LEAD THE PEOPLE, THROUGH REASON, RATHER THAN STAMPEDE THEM INTO THOUGHTLESS, IRRATIONAL ACTION OR REACTION.

I KNOW THAT SOME OF YOU OR SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS MAY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A TIME FOR DESPAIR FOR THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THIS COUNTRY DUE TO THE CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT WHICH WE ARE NOW BEING EXPOSED TO IN WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, I WOULD URGE ALL OF YOU NOT TO JUDGE HARSHLY THE PROFESSION OF POLITICS AND THOSE WHO CHOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN IT BY THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME WHO HAVE NOW BEEN PROVED UNWORTHY OF THEIR TRUST. FOR I BELIEVE THAT THE EXPOSURE OF CORRUPTION IN WASHINGTON AND THE SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATIONS WHICH HAVE FOLLOWED STRONGLY INDICATE THAT DEMOCRACY IS VERY MUCH ALIVE AND WELL IN THIS COUNTRY.

BUT DEMOCRACY AND ITS METHODS CAN ONLY WORK WHEN THE CITIZENS OF A NATION TAKE THEIR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY, AND WHEN THEY NOT ONLY HAVE RESPECT FOR, BUT TAKE PART IN POLITICS, AND I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER TIME FOR A PERSON TO BEGIN DOING SO THAN WHEN HE IS YOUR AGE. FOR ALTHOUGH POLITICIANS ARE QUITE OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS OLD FOGIES; AND POLITICS, A GAME OF OLD MEN; NEITHER IS TRUE.

THE IMAGINATIVE AND IDEALISTIC MINDS OF YOUNG AMERICANS HAVE ADDED MUCH TO AMERICAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, AND I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU HERE TODAY GAINING EXPERIENCE IN THE LEGITIMATE PROCESSES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY -- OUR NATION'S YOUNGEST PRESIDENT -- SAID, "IT IS THE FATE OF THIS GENERATION TO LIVE WITH A STRUGGLE WE DID NOT START, IN A WORLD WE DID NOT MAKE. BUT THE PRESSURES OF LIFE ARE NOT ALWAYS DISTRIBUTED BY CHOICE. AND WHILE NO NATION HAS EVER FACED SUCH A CHALLENGE, NO NATION HAS EVER BEEN SO READY TO SEIZE THE BURDEN AND THE GLORY OF FREEDOM." I AM HAPPY THAT YOU HERE TODAY ARE SHOWING YOURSELVES TO BE READY AND EAGER TO SEIZE THE BURDEN, FOR AS PRESIDENT KENNEDY ALSO SAID, "IF WE SUCCEED IN THIS COUNTRY, IF WE MAKE THIS A GREAT COUNTRY TO LIVE IN, IF WE REFLECT OUR VITALITY AND ENERGY AND STRENGTH AROUND THE WORLD, THEN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM IS STRENGTHENED. BUT IF WE FAIL, ALL FAIL. IF WE STAND STILL, FREEDOM STANDS STILL."

AMERICA'S VITALITY AND ENERGY IS TO BE FOUND IN YOU, ITS YOUTH; IF WE SUCCEED, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL SUCCEED, AND IF WE FAIL, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL FAIL. THE WORLD IS YOURS; YOU ARE FULL OF VIGOR AND VITALITY, AND YOUR VIGOR AND VITALITY CAN BE USED TO FURTHER DEMOCRACY BY USE OF THE ORDERLY AND PROVEN METHODS OF DEBATE, PERSUASION, AND THE BALLOT -- THE METHODS OF POLITICS.

YOUR INTEREST IN THE STATE TEEN DEM ORGANIZATION INDICATES THAT YOU WANT TO REMAIN AUTONOMOUS, THAT YOU WANT TO REMAIN A FREE PEOPLE, AND THAT YOU ARE WILLING AND EAGER TO DO THE THINGS NECESSARY THAT AMERICANS SHOULD REMAIN FREE. I NOT ONLY CONGRATULATE YOU, BUT THANK YOU, FOR NO GREATER HONOR CAN BE BESTOWED ON A POLITICIAN THAN THE HONOR YOU HAVE BESTOWED ON ME IN ASKING ME TO COME HERE AND SPEAK TO YOU TODAY. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT I WILL SOME DAY HAVE THE PLEASURE OF WORKING CLOSELY WITH MANY OF YOU

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IN THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR STATE.

THANK YOU.