

From the Campaign office of

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SPEECH BY: Robert Morgan, Attorney General
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"Remarks"

Let me express to you my sincere thanks for giving me the opportunity to be here with you tonight. I always enjoy meeting with North Carolina Democrats, but I particularly like to come here to Wayne County where I can speak to so many friends with whom I have worked over the past years.

I have known some of you in our State Senate and some during my five years as your Attorney General. I have had the privilege of working with almost all of you over the past decade or more in the cause of the Democratic Party.

I speak to you at a time when confidence in our national government and in our political system is at perhaps the lowest level in our country's history. Yet your presence here tonight indicates that you believe not only in the Democratic Party but also in the art of politics and a democratic form of government. That is why I want to talk frankly to you today about my candidacy for the position in the United States Senate.

I believe the national Congress and the Executive Branch of government have failed the people in many respects. Too many people neither trust their national government nor do they believe it will work. Too many promises have been made, and too many promises have been broken. Too often new government programs have produced, not new benefits for the people, but new layers of bureaucracy. Government has become too inefficient and therefore too ineffective. It has lost touch with the people and the people with it.

What is needed today, more than ever before, are individuals who are willing to find out what the people are thinking and then attempt to translate those constructive ideas into meaningful legislation.

I believe I know what North Carolina wants, and I believe that I can help. During my years as Attorney General, I have traveled more than a quarter of a million miles in North Carolina. I have been in every county and almost every town. I have walked the sidewalks of our college campuses. I have seen our hospitals, not from a car window passing by, but from the inside. I have met with law enforcement officers, town leaders and townspeople everywhere. I have made an effort to learn what was on their minds-- for if I were to be the people's Attorney General, there was no other way.

This constant contact with all North Carolina citizens enabled me to accomplish many of the promises which I had made earlier.

First of all we have assembled an excellent legal staff which I believe renders the most competent and efficient legal services ever provided in the history of the office of Attorney General. Because of their efforts, the citizens of North Carolina know for the first time the fact that their interests will be represented before State regulatory agencies where multi-million dollar decisions are made affecting the pocketbooks of individual consumers.

We have made fair dealing in the marketplace a requisite for doing business in our State. Consumers and honest businessmen alike have benefited, and we are proud of the support our efforts have received from both.

We have developed a Police Information Network which now links together more than 180 law enforcement agencies in their efforts to combat increasing crime. I have heard officer after officer say that this network is the greatest single step forward ever taken by law enforcement in North Carolina.

The State Bureau of Investigation has become one of the best in the nation. Investigative skills and services have improved as the size of the agency has grown through strong legislative and citizen support. The crime laboratory is an invaluable aid to local law enforcement officials and has received national recognition and awards.

Special units have been formed to fight the drug traffic and organized criminal activity and their effectiveness already has been proved.

I'm extremely proud of the progress made by the State Bureau of Investigation and the good men it has attracted to its ranks. Every North Carolinian has reason to be proud also.

Our legislative efforts on behalf of local law enforcement personnel have been very successful, though there is still much to do.

We have established minimum standards for all criminal justice personnel in North Carolina. At the same time, we have helped secure the enactment of a minimum salary bill, insuring every officer that he will be compensated for the services he performs and hopefully enticing more qualified persons to enter the field of law enforcement.

We have advocated an improved retirement program for these officers in an effort to see that they can live their later years in security and dignity. This program was passed by the last General Assembly.

And last, but certainly not least, we now have established a Statewide training system for criminal justice personnel and have plans well on the way for creating a full-fledged training academy which I predict will become the envy of law enforcement officials throughout the United States.

We have begun a well-reasoned effort to revise the criminal code of our State in order to improve the administration of our criminal laws.

We have formed a special prosecutorial unit to aid District Attorneys in trying difficult cases in their areas.

And I could go on and on.

But these successful programs, which I have mentioned, are the end product of many people's contributions. To me, they represent the very best of what government is all about in this country and that is to serve the people. That is accomplished not by operating in a vacuum in Washington but by getting people's ideas and putting them to work.

That is what I have tried to do during my years of public service. That is what I have to offer you as I seek the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate. When I served as Clerk of Superior Court in my home county of Harnett, I learned that government is a personal thing; that it affects in a very real way the every day lives of people and consequently that officials of government, at whatever level, serving at the will of the people, should be conscious of this fact.

I offer, therefore, to the voters of North Carolina my consciousness of government's increasingly important role in their lives and my desire to keep government as close to the people as possible and as personal as possible.

The people of my legislative district on five occasions elected me to represent them in the North Carolina General Assembly. By doing so, they allowed me to obtain experience as a lawmaker and legislative leader.

I learned there the ins and outs, the give and take of the legislative process. And I developed a love for law making.

I offer to the voters of North Carolina my law making experience and my understanding of how the legislative process functions.

In 1968 and again in 1972, the people of this State elected me to the office of Attorney General. As the "People's Attorney" I had an opportunity to represent the interest of the individual citizens and translate their concerns and hopes into positive, effective programs.

As Attorney General of North Carolina I learned that government can be innovative and became more convinced than ever that the average man need and, in fact, deserved to have an advocate in high office.

I believe that is what the government needs and what the people want. In any event, I believe it is my past and therefore my future.

The office of United States Senator is indeed a high office and it carries with it in North Carolina a rich tradition of outstanding leadership.

To be a United States Senator from this State is a great honor, reserved for few people, and bestowed only by the voters of this State.

North Carolina voters today are a diverse people. There is no longer a Tar Heel stereotype. We are White, Black, Indian. We are farmers, industrialists, professionals, factory workers, housewives, merchants, salesmen, teachers, and craftsmen. We are unionists and non-unionists. We are rural cooperatives, and we are private power.

We are large public universities, and we are small private colleges. We are municipalities, and we are counties. We are "wets" and we are "drys". We are the very rich and, regretfully, we are the very poor. And we are a thousand other things.

Woven together we make the fabric of what I believe to be the greatest state of these United States. The diversity of our present-day interests sustains us as a state, supports our economy, and provides us with the key to the great progress which we have made as a State.

But needless to say, this same diversity creates new problems and conflicts, challenging the creativeness and ingenuity of both Federal and State Government,

I offer to the people of North Carolina a record of advocating the people's interest and treating every citizen fair and equal regardless of his race, creed or social status. I offer you a record of being straightforward and honest.

This is a difficult time to be a public official, to be a United States Senator. But, I seek this honor, and ask you for the privilege of representing you.

In turn, I pledge to honor you, my fellow North Carolinians, and my State, by dedicated service, complete devotion to the duties and responsibilities of a United States Senator, and the exercise of good judgment, integrity, and independence from special interests.

When I first ran for the office of Attorney General in 1968, I promised that if elected I would be the "People's Attorney". I believe I have kept that promise.

Tonight I promise that, if nominated by the Democratic Party and elected by the voters of this State as United States Senator, I likewise will be the "People's Senator". Nothing could please me more.