

SPEECH BY U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE ROBERT MORGAN

ANNUAL CONVENTION
NC LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES
GROVE PARK INN
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
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IT IS A PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TONIGHT AND TO ADDRESS A GROUP AS DISTINGUISHED AS THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES. THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.

NORTH CAROLINIANS HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN PRIDE, AND RIGHTFULLY SO, IN THE QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA AT EVERY LEVEL, STATE AND LOCAL. OUR STATE TREASURER, EDWIN GILL WHO WORKS CLOSELY WITH YOU AND IS TREMENDOUSLY RESPECTED THROUGHOUT NORTH CAROLINA STATED LONG AGO THAT "GOOD GOVERNMENT IS A HABIT IN NORTH CAROLINA."

THERE ARE A LOT OF STATES WHICH CANNOT MAKE THAT STATEMENT WITH THE SAME SORT OF PRIDE WE CAN, AND IT IS LARGELY TO YOUR CREDIT THAT WE CAN DO SO HERE.

I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RECOGNIZE THE UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE AT THE CITY AND COUNTY LEVEL.

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, I STARTED MY PUBLIC CAREER BY SERVING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, NOT AT CITY HALL BUT AT THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE. HOWEVER, I THINK THE LESSON I LEARNED DURING MY FOUR YEARS AS CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT WAS THE SAME I WOULD HAVE LEARNED HAD I BEEN ELECTED MAYOR OF MY TOWN OR CITY COUNCILMAN.

I WOULDN'T EXCHANGE THAT EXPERIENCE FOR ANYTHING BECAUSE SERVING MY FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS AT AN EARLY AGE HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THAT GOVERNMENT IS AN INTENSELY PERSONAL THING AND AFFECTS, IN A VERY REAL WAY, THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF PEOPLE.

I GUESS THAT IS THE REASON I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A SORT OF "STATE'S RIGHTS" MAN WHO BELIEVES THAT GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO BE AS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

YOU KNOW BETTER THAN I HOW MUCH POWER HAS GRAVITATED TO WASHINGTON. AND, YOU ALSO KNOW WHAT A PAIN IT IS TRYING TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE FACELESS BUREAUCRATS WHO HOLD SO MUCH SWAY OVER OUR LIVES AND WHO SO OFTEN ARE INSENSITIVE TO LOCAL, INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.

IF I'M ANYTHING I'M AN INDIVIDUALIST AND THAT IS THE WAY I WANT TO BE TREATED. BY THE SAME TOKEN, I THINK THE THOUSANDS OF MUNICIPALITIES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE FIFTY STATES HAVE THEIR INDIVIDUAL ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO RECOGNIZE THAT FACT AND TREAT THEM THAT WAY.

REVENUE SHARING WAS A GOOD FIRST STEP IN THAT DIRECTION, AND I RECOGNIZE WHAT A GODSEND IT HAS BEEN TO OUR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

I'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT THE ECONOMY DURING THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, AND I'M NOT GOING TO GO INTO THAT TONIGHT. I WILL NOTE, THOUGH, THAT INFLATION AND SOARING PRICES HAVE HAD THEIR EFFECT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS JUST AS THEY HAVE ON RUNNING PRIVATE BUSINESSES AND TRYING TO SUPPORT A FAMILY.

REVENUE SHARING CERTAINLY CAME AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO HELP YOU MEET THE CONTINUING NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITIES WITHOUT TAXING YOUR PEOPLE TO DEATH WHEN THEIR BUDGETS ALREADY ARE STRETCHED TO THE BREAKING POINT.

I SUPPORT THE REVENUE SHARING CONCEPT AND HOPE WE WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE THOSE SERVING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL MORE DIRECT CONTROL OVER THE PROGRAMS THEY ADMINISTER.

I MENTIONED A MOMENT AGO THAT I THOUGHT GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO BE AS CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE. THIS PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO THE OFFICE OF A UNITED STATES SENATOR ALSO.

A FEW DAYS AGO A NEWSPAPER REPORTER ASKED ME HOW I WOULD LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED WHEN I LEFT THE UNITED STATES SENATE. (BY THE WAY, HE ASKED MY OPPONENT THE SAME QUESTION.)

I TOLD HIM I WOULD LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED AS SORT OF A "PEOPLE'S SENATOR," CONCERNED WITH THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LOT OF THE AVERAGE AMERICAN. I MEAN THAT, BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO DO IT: STAY IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE VOTERS SO YOU CAN KNOW WHAT'S ON THEIR MINDS AND CAN RESPOND TO THEM PROMPTLY.

AS YOUR UNITED STATES SENATOR, I INTEND TO DO JUST THAT. AND TO MAKE IT EASIER, I WILL MAINTAIN LOCAL OFFICES IN EACH AREA OF OUR STATE — THE EAST, THE PIEDMONT AND THE WEST.

AS A UNITED STATES SENATOR, I WANT TO BE ACCESSIBLE. I WANT TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU AS LEADERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONCERNED ABOUT PENDING LEGISLATION IN THE CONGRESS AS WELL AS TO THE MAN ON THE STREET WHO IS UPSET BECAUSE HIS VA OR SOCIAL SECURITY CHECK DOESN'T COME ON TIME.

WE MUST ERASE THE ALL TOO POPULAR NOTION THAT GOVERNMENT IS SOME FAR-REMOVED ENTITY WHICH RESPONDS TO THE RICH AND THE INFLUENTIAL BUT IS TOO DEAF TO HEAR THE VOICE OF THE INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYER WHO FOOTS MOST OF THE BILLS OR THE MUNICIPALITY WHOSE HOPES FOR BETTERING THE LOT OF ITS CITIZENS ARE BEING STRANGLERED BY WORTHLESS BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE.

AS YOUR UNITED STATES SENATOR, I'M WILLING TO DO MY PART TO MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE RESPONSIVE AND I'M READY TO START BY ESTABLISHING OFFICES WHERE THE PEOPLE CAN GET TO THEM TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS, ASK THEIR QUESTIONS AND GET SOME ANSWERS.

FRANKLY, I DON'T WANT TO BE A UNITED STATES SENATOR OR ANYTHING ELSE IF IT REQUIRES THAT I LOSE TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA WHOM I HAVE ENJOYED SERVING FOR SOME 24 YEARS AND WITH WHOM I AM MORE THAN WILLING TO TRUST MY POLITICAL FATE AT THE POLLS NEXT TUESDAY.

YOU HAVE ASKED ME TO COMMENT ON ONE OTHER TOPIC THIS EVENING: THE MATTER OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BY EMPLOYEES OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT I EARLIER STATED I BELIEVE STRONGLY IN THE RIGHT OF STATES TO MANAGE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE. WELL, AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED THAT INCLUDES LAWS RELATED TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

DURING THE LAST SEVERAL SESSIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO GIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES IN OUR STATE THE RIGHT TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY. IN EACH INSTANCE, THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITIZENS OF THIS STATE HAVE REFUSED TO ENACT SUCH LEGISLATION, AND I BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN RIGHT IN REFUSING TO DO SO.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE NOW PRESENTLY PENDING BEFORE CONGRESS SEVERAL BILLS WHICH WOULD, IN VARYING DEGREES, MANDATE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA ALREADY HAVE MADE THEIR DECISION THROUGH THEIR STATE LEGISLATURE AND

I AM OPPOSED TO ANY FEDERAL LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD IGNORE THEIR WISHES AND REQUIRE, TO ANY DEGREE, THAT STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PARTICIPATE IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. IN MY OPINION, THIS WOULD BE AN UNWARRANTED INVASION ON THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF EACH STATE TO DECIDE THIS VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR THEMSELVES.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, ARE MONOPOLIES. FOR INSTANCE, IN MOST OF OUR COMMUNITIES THERE ORDINARILY EXISTS BUT ONE DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION, ONE POLICE FORCE, AND ONE APPARATUS FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS. THIS IS TRUE IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION WHERE THE VAST MAJORITY OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUPILS ARE ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC FUNDS. IF UNION LEADERS ORDER TEACHERS OUT ON STRIKE, THERE IS NO SCHOOL UNLESS AND UNTIL EITHER THE SCHOOL BOARD OR STRIKERS ARE EXHAUSTED TO THE POINT THAT ONE GIVES WAY TO THE DEMANDS OF THE OTHER. THE SAME GOES FOR EVERY ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE.

THERE ARE SOME STATES WHICH HAVE ENACTED COMPULSORY, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LAWS WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WHICH PROHIBIT PUBLIC EMPLOYEE STRIKES. IT IS VERY EASY TO INCLUDE WITHIN SUCH A LAW THE STRIKE PROHIBITION. IT IS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE IT WORK. DURING THE LAST DECADE, IN SPITE OF THEIR ILLEGALITY, PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKES HAVE INCREASED BY MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND PERCENT.

THERE ARE SOME WHO WOULD CONFUSE THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TO BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY WITH THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND

AND WITH FREEDOM TO ASSEMBLY. THE TWO ARE NOT THE SAME. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHERE SUPPLY AND DEMAND AND THE NECESSITY FOR MAKING A PROFIT CONTROL IS AN ACCEPTED PART OF OUR AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM. BUT, I DO OPPOSE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WHERE EXPERIENCE PROVES IT LEADS TO DISRUPTION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND CHAOS.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THIS EVENING.

THERE ARE MANY ISSUES ON ALL OUR MINDS THAT I FEEL NEED TO BE EXPLORED EVERY TIME I HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH CIVIC, BUSINESS OR GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

BUT, I KNOW THERE ISN'T TIME FOR THAT TONIGHT, AND I WON'T IMPOSE ON YOUR HOSPITALITY.

HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITIES TO SEE THAT NORTH CAROLINIANS GO TO THE POLLS AND VOTE ON NOVEMBER 5. INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT IS ONE WAY TO START RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN IT.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT TUESDAY. AND, IF ELECTED TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE, AS I HOPE TO BE, I LOOK FORWARD JUST AS MUCH WORKING WITH YOU AS YOU SERVE THE RESIDENTS OF YOUR RESPECTIVE TOWNS AND CITIES. MY DOOR WILL ALWAYS BE OPEN.