

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY ROBERT MORGAN
UNITED STATES SENATOR
HARNETT COUNTY YOUNG DEMOCRATIC CLUB
MARCH 12, 1976

1. There is reason to feel more positive about Democratic chances in November. Strong leadership for the party has not yet appeared, but the ground for leadership has been cleared.

2. Looked for a long time like Gerald Ford was a shoe-in, and he is still a formidable candidate. Untouched by Watergate, bolstered by the Mayaguez affair, and enjoying all the advantages of incumbency. Pulling decisively ahead of Ronald Reagan.

3. But people don't realize that the Democratic Party has had a tremendous rebuilding job to do. Watergate tore the Republicans apart--but even with that looming up, they could elect a President.

4. The fact is that in 1972 the American people repudiated the liberal wing of the Democratic Party so decisively that their message could not be ignored.

5. I have been saying for some time that my own party would have to change its ways with regard to two issues -- over--spending and over--regulation -- if it were ever going to regain the

confidence of this nation.

6. If anything is true, the American people are even more of that opinion, four years later. And I have not changed my opinion, either.

7. Look what has happened in Massachusetts. The sole state which went for George McGovern in '72 -- and here they are voting for moderate-to-conservative Democrats in the 1976 primary.

8. The people are coming out of the recession in a mood that must be reckoned with. I try to stay in close touch with the people of my state, and as I read their mood, they are sick to death of Congressional willingness to spend and spend and spend, and regulate, regulate, regulate.

9. Now it used to be that the objection to federal spending used to be the cry of the rich and the few. But now the burden of government falls heavily on all, and the government's ability to stimulate the economy by spending appears to be smaller and smaller. The promises of government spending don't get delivered.

10. Therefore Harry Hopkins, old slogan of "spend and spend, elect and elect" is way out of style. With the average family trying to work its way out of debt and save some money, that old slogan is a formula for defeat at the polls.

11. Now here comes a bill from Senator Ted Kennedy, to increase federal spending on health research until it is triple what the spending is now from all sources, public and private.

12. I grant you that health research is very important, and it is one thing the taxpayers don't mind so much -- as long as they can afford it. And the fact is they can't afford any such tremendous increase as that.

13. So where is the money to come from? From a tax on tobacco. The idea is to increase the tobacco tax so much that a consumer of tobacco products who now pays \$120 a year in taxes would pay fully \$300.

14. That is the kind of spending that the American people won't stand for any more. And they will not stand for the attitude which spawns all this regulation -- the attitude that people must be protected from themselves, and must not be allowed to

drive without their seat-belts fastened, and must not be allowed to smoke.

15. The great social programs of the past, which began in the Depression, have deteriorated into just plain meddling in people's private affairs.

16. The people sent a message in 1972, and they are still sending it in the present run of primaries, by refusing to vote for the liberal candidates. This is the real Democratic Party talking, in the primaries.

17. Everyone here who has been involved in Democratic party work at the grass roots knows that the party leadership is really the people themselves, and that the national candidates must stand for the opinion of the rank and file.

18. Not the case that a select group at the top can impose a candidate on the party. That was tried in 1972. Rather, the leaders of the party gain their authority as spokesmen by summing up the mood and wisdom of the people themselves.

19. This process is now going on. The leader is yet to emerge. But the people of the party are now, in primary after primary, outlining the platform of the party. And it is going to be a platform of fiscal responsibility and governmental moderation. It will feature a strong defense posture. It will show less willingness to tolerate government repression in our own nation, or to deal with nations which practice intolerance and repression with a vengeance, and then abuse us in the world's forums.

20. As the rank-and-file Democrats rewrite the party's platform, I am encouraged that they will do it in time. The party is rebuilding itself from the grass roots level up -- and my hopes are high that by the time of the convention a candidate will emerge who will represent this politically viable consensus which is being expressed in the primaries.

21. The constituency of the left is now nearly gone, and the Democratic Party cannot be identified with it. But the middle ground is open for the taking.

22. Middle ground -- that means hold back on new programs. Examine old programs for effectiveness. Realize the recession is ending and move as soon as possible to a balanced budget and

an end to deficit spending. Help people who need it, but don't destroy their wage-earning ability with taxes to pay interest on national debt. And don't destroy their life savings and the value of their social security checks by inflationary spending. That will be **really** caring about the democratically-minded majority in this country.