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GOVERNMENT REFORM

Watergate Reform Bill--1

Everybody has talked so much about Watergate that you probably wish you never had to hear about it again. Well, we have passed a bill that, I hope, will keep things like that from every happening again. The whole thing would have been over at least a year sooner if the people who committed the crimes hadn't been also running all the investigations for a long while. Finally, a Special Prosecutor was appointed, you remember, and the first one was fired because he wouldn't back off from the investigation. The second one wouldn't back off either, and finally we learned the truth. Now, to prevent any Watergates of the future, and to act as a deterrent to those in positions of power who might be tempted to break the laws, we have established a permanent, independent office of Special

Prosecutor. He will have the power and duty to investigate the President, the Vice-President, the Attorney General of the United States, the Director of the FBI, any Federal Judge, any Member of the House or Senate, or any government official that makes above a certain salary--in other words, people who hold offices of public trust and power. We all hope that no one ever achieves high office in this land who is not worthy of it-- there is an inscription on the mantle over the fireplace at the White House--"May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof." We join in that dream, and at the same time we are trying, through reforms such as this, to make real the ideal of honesty and wisdom in positions of public trust.

We may well have to revise this law--because I think we will find the prosecutor has no check and balance to his great power.

But the Congress' willingness to do this shows we wanted  
to respond to the people's demand for reform.

GOVERNMENT REFORM-LOBBYING DISCLOSURE

We have tried to make your government more open, more efficient and more responsive--it's part of the continuing process of perfecting the American experiment in democracy. The Senate has passed a Lobbying Disclosure Act which requires lobbyists--people who are paid professionals who try to influence the votes of your Congressman and Senator--to register, telling who they work for, who pays their salaries, and how much money they are spending to try to get the Congress to vote their way. The bill also provides for fines and criminal penalties for lobbyists who might try to influence Congress in unlawful ways.

We have passed one of the most significant laws in many years, and it will be a great incentive to better government and a fairer treatment of the public by government agencies. This is the aptly-named, "Government in the Sunshine" law. It means that your government cannot do your business behind closed doors. Except for discussions of the obviously sensitive materials, like defense matters, or foreign policy discussions, and a few other things, this law means that the deliberations of your Congress and of your government agencies are open to you. And if you can't be there--you can read what happened in the newspapers or hear about it on television. There will be no more secret meetings, secretly called, and no more secret decisions secretly

Government Reform  
Sunshine Law--2

arrived at in the conduct of your federal government's daily business. We are bringing government into the sunshine, and that will mean better government. In the book of John it says, 'Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'" From now on, there will not be darkness and secrecy in the meetings of your government, and, we hope this will discourage any potential there may be for evil.

"DEMOCRATIC DIVERSITY"

possibly used in a speech at

Rally for Steve Neal

North Wilkesboro, N. C.

September 18, 1976