

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN
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BACKWARD OR FORWARD?

It always lifts my spirits to attend a meeting of Democrats, because I know I am in the company of people who care about people.

I also know I am meeting with and talking to members of the Party who want to go forward not backward and who are more interested in the future of the state and the nation than in returning to the past. I am reminded of the good Democratic father who was teaching his son how to drive. "If you want to go forward son, put it in 'D' for Democrat. If you want to go backward, put it in 'R' for Republican." There's truth to that, I think.

Recently, as I have gone about the state, speaking to various groups, I have been trying to talk about what is right with America, because there is a lot right with this country.

I know we have our temporary troubles, but that should not obscure the fact that we live in the freest, most prosperous nation on earth.

As I say, our troubles are temporary.

You read and you hear every day that we are in a business recession, and by the measures on the economic yardstick, we are.

Perhaps what makes this so newsworthy is that it is the first recession I can remember that occurred while the Democratic Party occupied the White House.

President Eisenhower had his recession.

President Nixon had his recession.

President Ford had his recession, and it was a dandy.

Now President Carter has his recession, but if you'll think a moment you will realize that circumstances are a bit different.

The root of our troubles lies in inflation that has been hurting everybody who went to the grocery store or pulled up to a gas station.

Our Republican friends say that the cause of inflation has been government spending. I'll agree with them this has

been a big factor and I've supported a balanced federal budget ever since I went to Washington in 1974.

But I would point out to them that President Nixon gave the nation its first \$200 billion budget and also its first \$300 billion budget.

And President Ford, during his last year in office, gave the country the largest deficit in its history, over \$66 billion.

And these Presidents didn't have to deal with the second principal cause of inflation. That is the great jump in oil and gasoline prices which are set in foreign countries and over which we've had little or no control.

But we will win the battle of inflation, because we are working to balance the federal budget and we are going to find new energy sources that will free us from the hold these foreign countries have over us with their oil prices.

And under Democratic leadership in North Carolina and in the nation, we will continue to go forward and look out for the people, and not the Big Oil companies.

Despite what you read and hear, we in this country have a lot going for us.

Today, there are over 2,700 drilling rigs searching for oil in various parts of the country, which is more than at any time since 1956.

Yet Republicans claimed that placing a windfall tax on oil profits-- to get back for the people some of that extra trillion dollars in profits that the oil companies will make during the next ten years-- would discourage drilling for new oil.

We can be proud that despite all we hear about productivity that a dollar earned in the United States will purchase more goods than anywhere in the world, and only Canada comes close to us in that respect.

But our main asset, and it is one that all the world envies, is our freedom and the stability of our government. In times of crisis there is no fear that an attempt will be made to disrupt or take over the establishment that we have chosen to make and enforce our laws.

Think about it.

If we are not looked upon as the one most desirable place to live, why do Communists constantly defect and ask us to receive them?

Why do Cubans try to flee by the thousands to enter our country?

Why do the Haitians and the Mexicans want to come here?

Why is the traffic always one way?

Because this remains the one great country of freedom and opportunity.

As Democrats, let's try to make our country better, but let's also appreciate what we have and what we enjoy.

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This year, we are to engage in a critical election.

This year, as never before in recent history, we are

going to have to make a decision as to which way we are going to go-- forward with Democrats or backward with Republicans.

The issue is really very simple.

Do we want to move ahead with leaders such as Jim Hunt and Jimmy Green, or do we want to turn the state over to the forces of reaction and say to the Congressional Club, whatever that is, "Here's North Carolina: Take it and use it."

Do we want a member of the Senate who will consider the issues and make up his own mind and vote his conscience, or do we want one who has said he wants to come to Washington and vote exactly like the Republican Senator who is there now?

Does North Carolina want to send a rubber stamp to the Senate? I think not.

Do the independent minded people of North Carolina want their senior Senator walking along the halls of the Senate office building humming that old song, "Me and My Shadow?"

Do we want to keep the fine Democratic members of the House of Representatives that we have in Washington or do we

want to replace them with a group of newcomers, running under the dual flags of the Congressional Club and the Republican party, who have said they want to stop the forward motion of this country?

I know the answer to these questions because I know Democrats, but we mustn't take anything for granted.

Our opponents this year will have money, as usual. Not North Carolina money, necessarily, but money that will come from all over the country from people who want their way in our state.

They will be well organized, and they will work hard to get every vote that is available to them.

But we have one great advantage.

We have the people-- the people that Democratic administrations have helped; people who have lived well and at peace while Democrats have run the government.

We have much to gain in the coming election, and there is also a lot that could be lost.

I know you realize this and as good Democrats you will join in the effort to keep this country going forward as it should.

I believe as strongly as I believe anything that we North Carolinians are too bright to be taken in by Ronald Reagan's promises of "quick fixes" and simple answers, and for that reason I am confident North Carolina will vote overwhelmingly to reelect President Jimmy Carter.

I believe as strongly as I believe anything that we North Carolinians are too independent to be manipulated by the doings of North Carolina's own "third party," the Congressional Club, whose candidates can't hold a light to such proven Democratic leaders as Jim Hunt and Jimmy Green.

I believe as strongly as I believe anything that North Carolinians don't want any Senator in Washington to have two votes and especially don't want the seat I occupy deeded over to the Senior Senator from this state and that mysterious organization, the Congressional Club.

They're asking people all over the nation to help them buy it, but in my opinion the people of North Carolina in

November will say in their loudest vote, "It's not for sale."

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I'm proud to be on the Democratic ticket this fall. It's a great one and I stand proudly with our Party's other nominees; Jimmy Carter, Jim Hunt, Jimmy Green and all the other Jims and Thads and Johns and Craigs and Harlans; the Ramey Kems, the Louise Brennans, the Henry Fryes and Monk Harringtons; the L.H. Fountains and the Charlie Roses and the mayors and commissioners and sheriffs all over this state. I stand proudly with them, and I tell you that working together we'll once again have a great Democratic victory in this state.

Thank you.