

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN  
Dedication of Aurora Community Center  
and Civil Center  
Aurora, North Carolina  
September 21, 1980

### THE ROLE OF CREATIVE FEDERALISM

Today, I feel elated as we meet for the dedication of the Aurora Civic Center and the Community Center. As you know, I got my start in politics over in Lillington as clerk of court, moved on to the State Senate, the Attorney General's Office, and now to the United States Senate. At all of these levels, I have observed both the possibilities of cooperation and the roadblocks that exist between local, state, and Federal agencies.

Today we come to bear witness that cooperation is possible as we dedicate these buildings. They combine the best features of federalism--the cooperation of several different levels of government in a good cause.

Before I talk about the specific development of this project, I would like to review briefly the role of the Federal government in aiding local people with their problems. First, let me admit that I read from the Federalist Papers at every opportunity, trying to gain more insight into how to make the present system

of government more like what the drafters of our Constitution had in mind. Much of what I say on the floor of the Senate, write in newsletters, or include in speeches comes from a basic belief that our founding fathers meant that State and local governmental units should retain as many powers as possible.

As you know, from the earliest days of our Republic there has been Federal encouragement of different projects. Under Alexander Hamilton, our first Secretary of the Treasury, manufacturing and banking received special attention. The government later encouraged the completion of post roads and created a highway system. After the Civil War the government encouraged the construction of the transcontinental railroads by giving them sections of land that paralleled the tracks to subsidize construction.

It was not until the Great Depression of the 1930s, however, that a basic change occurred in our thinking about the role of the Federal government in its relation to the states and to the local government. The Federal government had never really provided relief for people on the State or local level. Yet the relief approach tried by President Hoover did not really solve the serious problems that arose from the economic emergency.

Under Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, a new spirit of experimentation caught on. Some of us remember how the Works Projects Administration gave jobs to those who had been driven to unemployment by the Depression. Many worthwhile projects were completed during those years. The Federal government found a way to pump money down to the people who were most affected by the Depression.

The beginnings of our present farm program also came from these days--in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. For the first time, farmers signed agreements to limit their cotton and tobacco acreage. These programs were voluntary, and by and large they were successful in restoring stability.

There were many other governmental programs that originated in the 1930s and later, but the point that I am making is that there is a tradition of successful cooperation with the Federal government.

Now, I am sure that some of you are thinking that at times the Federal government has gone too far in their control and in their red tape. I couldn't agree more. I spend quite a bit of time trying to figure out how to hold the government accountable for projects and to prevent them from usurping

the rights of the states. Finding the balance between constructive federalism and outright control over states is a difficult problem.

I never want to see the pendulum swing to the point where we all meekly turn to the federal government for everything. We are an independent people, us Americans, us Southerners, and we had rather solve our own problems. That is why our dedication today is such a significant occasion.

The dedication of the Aurora Community Center and the Aurora Civic Center represent both a constructive use of Federal funds from the United States Housing and Urban Development Department along with community and State cooperation. These buildings represent a blend of the old and the new. The Civic Center, of course, used to be the Staley House, built in the early 1900s. This structure gives continuity, for it graces Main Street with the stately charm of the past. Your community should take great pride in the restoration of this building. I expect that it will quickly fill up with county, regional, and local organizations.

The Community Center will serve many purposes. It symbolizes the present, just as the Civic Center symbolizes

the past. I congratulate you on your decision to preserve the Staley House and also to construct such an attractive and useful new building.

The Community Center, I understand, will house the Busy Bee Day Care Center, and the senior citizens will have a lunch program . There will also be youth development programs and social activities such as dances, weddings, and dinners. It is significant that the State Department of Public Instruction is providing funds to equip a large kitchen for the day care center and for other uses. The new day care equipment and playground equipment will be paid for by funds from the North Carolina Department of Human Resources.

These buildings, along with the new Aurora Medical Center and the Dental Center show how much a town can get done with the initiative supplied by Mayor Grace Bonner and an enthusiastic community.

Since your town recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, the dedication of these buildings is especially significant. It is gratifying to me to see your town prospering as you seek to improve the lives of all citizens by aggressively seeking funding from all possible sources. Having grown up

in a rural area and having practiced law in Lillington, another small town, I think that such communities are the backbone of our country. While urban areas often become swallowed up in problems such as housing, crime, and traffic, small towns preserve a sense of community. People know and care for each other. You greet each other on the street. I tried to continue this friendliness in Washington, but often when I say hello, people seem startled.

This dedication is the culmination of Mayor Bonner's vigorous plan to reinvigorate Aurora. I am impressed with the strides that have been made in housing, for instead of tearing down old houses and taking HUD money to buy house trailers, which do not have a long life span, you have wisely used CETA workers as well as bid out house construction in order to replace old structures with new ones.

I am proud of the way that you have used Federal Community Development dollars to revitalize old neighborhoods and construct the Aurora Medical Center. I hope that you successfully complete the recreational mariana that is being built on South Creek.

I also know that you are proud of the fire, rescue, and police emergency services in the community. And your new high school, completed in 1977, is a jewel in the community.

Let me reiterate that I firmly believe that small communities such as Aurora give our country great strength. Community institutions--such as schools, churches, museums, civic centers, and others--are close to the people. Our world is getting increasingly complex, and in large cities, people seldom know their neighbors and feel that they are alone against the world. However, small towns continue to provide an excellent place to live and to rear children. Such renovation as I witness here gives me hope that small town life throughout our state can continue strong and constructive.

Four years ago when Jimmy Carter was running for President, he observed that there should be creative federalism, that local and state governments should work more in harmony with the Federal government. During most of these years, we have been so busy with problems of energy and foreign affairs that we have lost sight of this idea. Recently, Ella Grasso, the Governor of Connecticut, praised the Carter Administration for understanding local and state problems better than any former administration. Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles echoed these thoughts. I think that these two leaders--one on the state and one on the city level--illustrate something that we have learned with your project here--that there can be constructive federalism, that different levels of government can cooperate in achieving goals.

I hope that the testimony of these leaders and our experience here are signs of a constructive change in the way that the Federal government and State and local governments share responsibility.

In conclusion, let me again reiterate that in every way possible I have tried to limit the growth of the Federal control over our lives. The increasing power of the Federal government must be stopped, reversed. Yet we must not throw out all programs that include Federal support. There are constructive programs that come from the Federal government, and I welcome cooperating with such programs.

I hope that your example of creative federalism will spread and help other towns develop their resources this way. It is encouraging to me to see the people of Aurora take the lead, and I hope that the people here who have worked so hard to see this project completed benefit from it.

Life should be better for people in Aurora and in the countryside because of these buildings. I hope that we can continue to grow in ways that preserve the rural and small town heritage of our state, and in ways that bring pride to our state and to the nation.