

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN  
Dedication of Citizens Center and  
office complex  
Lincolnton, North Carolina  
October 18, 1980

#### CITIZENS CENTER DEDICATION

I want to congratulate you as you dedicate this handsome new Citizens Center and Office Complex. Most of you have studied history and have seen illustrations of the great architecture of the world. In some cases, one building epitomizes a civilization--the pyramids of Egypt, the Taj Mahal of India, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, or the Great Wall of China. Whether it is fair or not, historians sometimes judge an entire civilization by such architectural triumphs. And in truth, the pride of a civilization is reflected in its buildings. This is as true on the county level in North Carolina as it is on the national level in Washington.

It follows that a community does identify and take pride in its architectural surroundings. We all know how much pride we have in our schools, courthouses, post offices, auditoriums, and office buildings. Such buildings also indicate the stability of the community.

In this case, I am sure that there is more than the usual amount of pride involved in the completion of this building, for all of the funds come from the community. To me, this is one of the most significant aspects of this project, for it shows how determination from the local level is enough to achieve a significant goal.

Before I go further into this project, I would like briefly to mention a concept that I have been developing throughout my political career--Federalism. As you know, our government functions on many levels, the local, county, state, and federal. Our country originated in a fight against deomineering central power that was directed from England--taxation without representation. There is within the American people a strong streak of distrust of any government that is not directly under their control.

The history of our country is largely a story of the struggle to work out the proper balance of power among these different levels of government. As you well know, the trend throughout our history has been for the central government to take on more and more power, while the role of the state and local government has diminished.

This has been especially true since the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II. But early in our history there were portents such as the court cases Marbury v. Madison in 1803 and McCulloch v. Maryland in 1819 that expanded the powers of the federal government.

The Civil War certainly ended once and for all the constitutional debate about secession. Along with this came a stronger idea of federal power. And, as I mentioned, since the Depression and World War II, there has been a tremendous growth of the central government.

Somehow, many politicians and numerous citizens have come to believe that nothing is possible without federal aid. Now, it is clear that the federal government has enabled our country to make progress on many fronts. The federal government has a sphere in which it is entitled to operate, and the constitution spells this out.

But today I think that most Americans have come to realize that our hopes depend less on what the federal government can do than on what local citizens cooperating together can accomplish. We had rather depend on our local leaders whom we know, and trust,

and respect than on government bureaucrats far off in Washington. It is sometimes a lonely fight in the Senate attempting to convince people to leave power in the hands of the states, counties, towns, and cities.

I have in recent months seen excellent examples of cooperative federalism. In Harnett County we dedicated a Metropolitan Water District project last January. This illustrated how local, county, state, and federal agencies could cooperate to provide water service to urban and rural areas of the county.

Only a month ago I spoke at the dedication of the Aurora Community Center and Civic Center. Again, this was an example of federal, state, county, and local agencies working together. Aurora is revitalizing in a very constructive way. It has a real sense of community.

I took great pride in being at the dedication of both of those projects, for I think that cooperative federalism is one important way that our people can break free of dependence on the federal government. Local pride and initiative have been among our greatest resources.

There is no better example of this than your Citizens Center and Office Complex. Back in 1975 when your application for a HUD grant was not funded, things looked bleak. Some communities would have gotten discouraged and given up, but not Lincolnton, not Lincoln County. There was a need for a meeting place in the county that could seat a large number of people, and this need for a building spurred people to work hard on a bond issue. This campaign proved successful by a two to one margin, and carried on November 8, 1977.

Today, I am sure that you are all proud as you dedicate this \$2.8 million building. It seats 1,274 people and can be used from everything from opera to boxing. It is a multipurpose facility. I understand that it has already been used for an opera and a senior prom, among other things. You will find many uses for this office space. Already the Agricultural Extension Service occupies the first floor.

Let me reiterate that I think the significance of this attractive building goes far beyond the community. It is an example of what local government and community spirit can accomplish. It is a tribute to the government closest to the people.

If we are to reverse the trend toward more and more dependence upon the federal government and more control over our lives, we must start by reinvigorating our local government.

This building is a monument to that new spirit. You have set an example for the state and for the nation. If we are to regain the spirit of community, of innovation, of sacrifice, and of pride that made this country great, it will come from just such projects as this building.

I am sure that the use of this building will bring the people of the county closer together and produce harmony. In the future, when your children grow up, they can point with pride to this building as something their parents put up with their own sweat and money. In this sense, it is a most traditional American gathering here today. In the old days, there were barn raisings and corn huskings when the entire community chipped in to help. Today the entire community of Lincoln County dedicates a building that cooperation made possible. I congratulate you on your fine spirit. It renews my faith in our country.