

SPEECH BY: ROBERT MORGAN
To: NAACP CONVENTION
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1974

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO BE WITH YOU TONIGHT.

I AM ESPECIALLY HAPPY TO JOIN YOU BECAUSE I KNOW SO MANY OF YOU PERSONALLY AND COUNT YOU AMONG MY FRIENDS.

AS YOU KNOW, I AM APPEARING HERE AS THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE IN THE NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION.

AND IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT I WOULD WELCOME YOUR SUPPORT IN THIS CAMPAIGN.

I AM RUNNING ON MY PUBLIC RECORD.

IT IS A RECORD BUILT UPON 24 YEARS IN PUBLIC LIFE, ALWAYS AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL.

JUST 24 YEARS AGO I STARTED OUT AS THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT IN MY HOME COUNTY.

SINCE THEN I HAVE SERVED FIVE TERMS IN THE STATE SENATE AND ALMOST SIX YEARS AS THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NORTH CAROLINA.

DURING THOSE 24 YEARS I HAVE ALWAYS ATTEMPTED TO BE FAIR WITH EVERYONE AND TO DO MY BEST TO ACT IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE WHO ELECTED ME AND ACCORDING TO MY CONSCIENCE.

I AM PROUD THAT DURING MY TIME AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, I BECAME KNOWN AS "THE PEOPLE'S ATTORNEY GENERAL."

AFTER I GET TO WASHINGTON, I WANT TO EARN THE TITLE OF "THE PEOPLE'S SENATOR."

DURING THE PAST FIVE AND ONE-HALF YEARS AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, MY DOOR HAS ALWAYS BEEN OPEN. MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT BECAUSE MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN TO SEE ME THERE IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY,

WHEN I GET TO WASHINGTON, I PROMISE YOU THAT MY DOOR WILL BE JUST AS OPEN.

YOU CAN'T BE A GOOD ATTORNEY GENERAL OR A GOOD SENATOR OR A GOOD PUBLIC OFFICIAL OF ANY KIND UNLESS YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE PEOPLE AND FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE THINKING. I HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH OFFICIALS WHO, ONCE ELECTED, TRY TO INSULATE THEMSELVES. THAT HAS NEVER BEEN MY WAY AND IT WILL NEVER BE MY WAY.

AS ATTORNEY GENERAL, I HAVE TRIED TO MAKE THE OFFICE ONE THAT ACTIVELY HELPS THE PEOPLE.

WHILE I SERVED THERE, WE INSTITUTED A CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION, SOMETHING THIS STATE HAD NEVER HAD.

NOW, A CONSUMER PROTECTION PROGRAM DOESN'T HELP THE CORPORATIONS OR THE BIG BUSINESSES WHICH DO SO WELL UNDER THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON.

THE PEOPLE IT HELPS ARE THE PEOPLE WHO GET HURT IN THE MARKET PLACE, AND IN MOST CASES THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD TO BE CHEATED OR MISTREATED BY BEING SOLD INFERIOR MERCHANDISE.

YOU DON'T GET ANY CALLS FROM GENERAL MOTORS OR FORD OR CHRYSLER AT THE CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION. RATHER YOU GET CALLS FROM INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN STUNG OR BADLY USED EITHER BY SOME FIRM OR SOME FLY-BY-NIGHT OPERATOR.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, DURING MY TIME AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, THE PEOPLE HAD AN ADVOCATE WHO APPEARED BEFORE THE UTILITIES COMMISSION WHEN POWER COMPANIES SOUGHT TO RAISE THE RATES ON ELECTRICITY AND GAS.

WE WEREN'T ALWAYS SUCCESSFUL, BECAUSE, TO BE FAIR, THE UTILITIES HAVE BEEN HIT BY HIGHER PRICES AND HIGHER INTEREST RATES AND HAVE DESERVED SOME OF THE RELIEF THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

BUT ONE MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION SAID IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS HAD SAVED USERS OF ELECTRICITY MORE THAN \$100 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR IN RATES THEY WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IF MY OFFICE HADN'T OPPOSED THEM.

I BELIEVE ACTION SUCH AS THIS HELPED EARN THE TITLE OF THE "PEOPLE'S ATTORNEY GENERAL."

WE STARTED SOME OTHER THINGS.

WE ENLARGED THE STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND MADE IT INTO A REAL PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATIVE ORGANIZATION. WE MADE ITS CRIME LABORATORY ONE THAT IS RESPECTED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

WE ESTABLISHED A CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY TO TRAIN POLICE OFFICERS SO THAT THE COMMUNITIES AND COUNTIES IN THE STATE COULD BE SERVED IN A MORE PROFESSIONAL MANNER.

IN FILLING POSTS IN THE DEPARTMENT, WE TRIED TO DO SO ON A BASIS OF MERIT AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE STATE'S HISTORY A NUMBER OF BLACK PEOPLE WERE PLACED IN THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

AND THESE WERE NOT TOKEN APPOINTMENTS.

WE SINCERELY TRIED TO PLACE PEOPLE IN JOBS WHERE THEY COULD USE THEIR TALENTS AND THEIR EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE. AMONG THE JOBS BLACKS WERE EMPLOYED IN WHILE I WAS AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WERE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, AGENTS IN THE SBI, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS AND SECRETARIES.

I ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL CONTINUE THIS PRACTICE WHEN I GO TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

THESE ARE TROUBLED TIMES.

OUR COUNTRY AND OUR STATE HAVE BEEN HIT BY THE WILDEST INFLATION OF THIS CENTURY AND THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON HAS ALLOWED US TO DRIFT WITHOUT OFFERING ANY ANSWERS.

THE THING THAT IS TROUBLING PEOPLE MOST IS THEIR MONEY AND THAT IT BUYS LESS AND LESS EVERY WEEK.

HERE AGAIN, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GETTING HURT WORST ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE LEAST.

JUST THE OTHER MORNING, EARL BUTZ, THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE WAS BEING INTERVIEWED ON TELEVISION, AND WHAT HE SAID SEEMED TO ME VERY TYPICAL OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION REGARDING POOR PEOPLE AND PEOPLE ON SMALL INCOMES.

MR. BUTZ IS THE MAN WHO ENGINEERED THE RUSSIAN WHEAT DEAL, IN WHICH WE SOLD TO THE SOVIETS ABOUT ONE-FOURTH OF OUR WHEAT AT A VERY FAVORABLE PRICE AND WHICH BENEFITTED NOT THE FARMERS BUT THE BIG GRAIN COMPANIES.

IN THIS INTERVIEW, MR. BUTZ WAS BRAGGING ABOUT THE FACT THAT AMERICANS PAY ONLY ABOUT 16 PER CENT OF THEIR INCOME FOR FOOD.

BUT, THE INTERVIEWER ASKED, HOW CAN THAT FIGURE BE SO, WHEN POORER PEOPLE MUST PAY UP TO 25 PER CENT OR MORE FOR FOOD AND ARE GETTING HURT MORE THAN PEOPLE WHO ARE BETTER OFF?

"OH," REPLIED MR. BUTZ, "IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY."

NOW THERE IS A TYPICAL BIG BUSINESS, BE-KIND-TO-THE-RICH ATTITUDE THAT HAS PREVAILED IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR TOO LONG.

IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY, SO LET THE LITTLE MAN GET HURT, LET THE MINORITIES BE TREATED AS MINORITIES, LET THE LAW BE MORE EQUAL FOR SOME THAN FOR OTHERS — IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY.

YES, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY AND THERE IS NOTHING IN THE RECORD OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY THAT MAKES ME BELIEVE THINGS WILL GET ANY BETTER AS LONG AS THEY HAVE CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT.

AS I SAID EARLIER, I AM RUNNING ON MY RECORD OF PUBLIC SERVICE.

I BELIEVE IT IS A RECORD OF EFFICIENCY.

A GROUP OF BUSINESS LEADERS WHO WERE ASKED BY A REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR TO STUDY THE VARIOUS STATE DEPARTMENTS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THEIR OPERATIONS MUST HAVE THOUGHT SO ALSO.

WHEN THEY SUBMITTED THEIR REPORT, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WAS THE ONE PLACE WHERE THEY MADE NO SUGGESTIONS THAT CHANGES BE MADE.

SO I AM CONTENT TO RUN ON THAT RECORD.

AND SINCE I AM RUNNING FOR A NATIONAL OFFICE, I FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE NEGLECTING THE NATIONAL INTEREST NOT TO RUN AGAINST THE RECORD THE OTHER PARTY HAS WRITTEN DURING THE PAST SIX YEARS.

THEY HAVE MISHANDLED THE ECONOMY AND LED US INTO A FINANCIAL CRISIS WHICH IS PERHAPS THE WORST IN THE NATION'S HISTORY.

THEY SOLD OUR WHEAT TO THE RUSSIANS AND THEY REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE WERE HEADING FOR DISASTER IN THE SHORTAGE OF PETROLEUM. LAST WINTER THEY PUT US IN THE GASOLINE LINES AT THE SERVICE STATION.

THEY HAVE CAUSED PEOPLE TO BECOME CYNICAL ABOUT THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR ELECTED LEADERS AND THEY HAVE SEEN MORE THAN 40 PERSONS WHO WERE IN HIGH APPOINTIVE POSITIONS EITHER CHARGED OR CONVICTED IN THE COUNTRY'S WORST POLITICAL SCANDAL.

AND THE PEOPLE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THAT THE DISCREDITED ADMINISTRATION WAS ELECTED ON A LAW AND ORDER PLATFORM.

I SAY TO YOU WE HAVE GOT TO GET THIS COUNTRY BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK, AND THAT MEANS RESTORING THE PEOPLE'S FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP.

HISTORICALLY, WHEN THINGS HAVE GOTTEN TO A CRUCIAL STAGE, THE PEOPLE HAVE TURNED TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOR RESCUE.

I BELIEVE THIS IS A DEMOCRATIC YEAR.

I ASK YOUR SUPPORT, NOT ONLY FOR MYSELF, BUT FOR THOSE THAT ARE RUNNING WITH ME ON THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET.

I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT MANY OF THE GAINS THAT WERE MADE BY BLACK PEOPLE DURING THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE BEEN LOST SINCE THE REPUBLICANS GAINED CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

I WANT TO HELP RESTORE THOSE GAINS.

I HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL JOIN WITH ME IN THIS EFFORT TO PUT THIS COUNTRY BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

###