



a call to excellence in leadership

The Ripon Society

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STATEMENT OF THE RIPON SOCIETY
before
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presented by
HOWARD GILLETTE, JR., PRESIDENT
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We are gathering in Miami not just to nominate a ticket or to affirm the record of the current Administration. We are here to build for the future. Our platform should serve then not only as an affirmation of the past but as the keystone to building a new Republican majority in the future.

The Ripon Society is proud of the fact that so many of our early research proposals -- revenue sharing, welfare reform and governmental reorganization -- have been adopted by the Nixon Administration.

Taken together these programs mark a greatly needed departure from the New Deal in what President Nixon calls a "peaceful American Revolution."

For the first time an American President proposes in government reorganization not just a reshuffling of the bureaucracy but a commitment to organization around purposes not programs. Under this concept government can provide a more efficient role as a manager for incentives rather than a solver of problems by direct bureaucratic means. As Peter Drucker has put it, "Government has to do less to achieve more."

For the first time, in the government's revenue sharing program, we have devolved power back to the localities, where decision-makers are closer to the problems they must solve and where they, in turn, are closer to public scrutiny.

For the first time, the President's welfare proposal, as originally drafted, promised to break the cycle of dependence on a massive and unwieldy bureaucracy which serves neither the poor or the

taxpayers who fund it.

We believe these programs deserve the enthusiastic support of this convention and of the electorate. We believe they offer a first step towards establishing a political and philosophical alternative to the worn-out patterns of government centralization, relied on so heavily by the Democrats.

We are concerned, however, that the merits of these programs have been clouded by political rhetoric in our own party which too often in the past has emphasized what Republicans are against rather than what they are for. Too often Republicans have appealed to people's fears and prejudices -- particularly in the 1970 campaign -- rather than to their aspirations and mutual self-interest.

The founding fathers of our party faced a similar dilemma in attempting to forge a new majority in the 1850's. In opposing the Democrats they found themselves attacking immigrants and their lifestyles on the one hand and the Southern slave aristocracy on the other hand. In many parts of the country these people were known only as anti-Democrats or "the opposition." Republicans thrived as a party and as a national political force only after they embraced programs of opportunity -- the homestead act, land-grant colleges, the tariff and emancipation.

Of course Republicans oppose the Democrats in 1972. But what we need today are policies of hope and opportunity -- not of polarization -- equivalent to the homestead act and the early civil rights legislation which first made the G.O.P. the party of the majority.

Expanded Ownership

One new proposal we believe can fulfill that role is a program to encourage the expanded ownership of private property.

The giant corporations which now dominate our economy are just as inaccessible as the worst government bureaucracies, so many Republicans complain about. It was the hope of many progressives at the turn of the century, particularly Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, that big government could curtail the abuses of big business in the public interest. But all too often the regulated have controlled the regulators.

We believe the diffusion of private property through incentives rather than government dictates is the single most important counter to government controls and socialization on the one hand and citizen dispair and alienation from the sources of wealth on the other hand. Restoring private property means, in its broadest sense, to use the power of government to create the conditions, principally through tax policy, which will facilitate the effective decentralization of huge economic aggregations, restore genuinely free market competition, diminish restraints of trade, provide the opportunity for a reduction of Big Government, and enable the great majority of American citizens to once again acquire a share of the productive wealth of their country under their proximate control.

A full outline of the kinds of government incentives which can make expanded ownership a reality are detailed in the August issue of the Ripon Forum. Briefly stated, these proposals include:

**encouragement to small business, especially minority enterprise

**encouragement to profit sharing trusts

**home ownership for lower income families

**community corporation development

**a National Development Partnership to undertake the redevelopment of inner city areas in such a way that the resident of these areas can enjoy a share of the profits from the redevelopment process and the eventual ownership of the land in their own neighborhoods.

President Nixon has laid the foundation for these important initiatives in his 1968 "Bridges to Human Dignity" speech and in his State of the Union address. Expanded ownership emerges naturally out of Republican philosophy, but at the same time it offers new hope to those, regardless of race, religion or sex, who are not now Republicans. It is a practical and progressive plan to bring our politics and our policy in line with a new politics of hope and reconciliation.

Welfare Reform

The exapnded ownership proposals share a Republican bias for decentralization, government incentives rather than coercion and a concrete commitment to individual opportunity.

The President's proposal for welfare reform deserves special attention here, because it originally embraced these advantages.

As first proposed the President's plan offered both the unemployed and the working poor an incentive to work, for those who could, by eliminating the 100% tax on earnings. It offered to reduce bureaucratic waste and depersonalization. But now that plan has been emasculated. The libertarian features have been replaced with authoritarian government demands on the poor. Day-care facilities have been offered not as an opportunity, but as a requirement that poor mothers take jobs whether or not they receive decent wages. Most important the incentive to work has been practically eliminated by a 67% marginal tax which marks a return to the old welfare strategy of relying on bureaucratic compulsion to stimulate work effort among the poor.

This committee should re-affirm the principles of the original welfare proposal -- to eliminate, not just modify -- a wasteful and dehumanizing system in favor of humane reforms.

In particular we urge this platform to support a low marginal tax to provide incentives to work and preference for work under the job placement program to volunteers, thereby reducing current criticism of work compulsion.

Reform in Criminal Justice

For the last few years Republicans have made it clear they oppose crime. We have seen some gains in the field of criminal prosecution, but we have fallen short of reaching our goal of providing safe streets. In our opinion such a goal will continue to be illusory as long as we embrace the current system of criminal justice.

In order to effectuate needed alterations to the current system we must acknowledge that no fight against lawbreaking will be successful if society fails to treat the nonpersonal, environmental causes of crime. We should also resolve to give far greater attention to the rehabilitation of offenders -- two-thirds of whom now return to criminal activity after their release from prison. Finally, we must always remember that more muscle in the enforcement process alone will not make the system wiser or more capable of dispensing evenhanded and merciful justice.

The Ripon Society favors reducing the number of offenses for which persons are arrested and sent to jail. It believes that prosecuting people for such "victimless crimes" as gambling, drunkenness, drugs, disorderly conduct, abortion, obscenity, and prostitution is a gross misallocation of law enforcement resources and counterproductive in its effects. Penalties for these infractions should

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either be reduced or eliminated altogether. The arguments for this more realistic view of the capabilities and responsibilities of criminal law were presented in a February 1972 Ripon Forum article. The National Law Reform Commission's Proposed New Federal Criminal Code makes a number of similar recommendations.

America's prison system, like the current welfare morass, accomplishes only a minimum of the purposes assigned to it while costing the taxpayer untold billions of dollars in direct and related costs. America's pluralistic society deserves a more worthy alternative to the oppressive institutions which now serve to propagate crime rather than deter it. Republicans have always preferred locally-based programs which can be more effective because they are more receptive to community needs, initiatives and diversity. No American institution is in greater need of decentralization and reform than the prison system. As President Nixon said in his address to the 1971 National Conference on the Judiciary: "The time has come to repudiate once and for all the idea that prisons are warehouses for human rubbish; our correctional systems must be changed to make places that will correct and education."

The Ripon Society believes that the primary purpose of incarceration must be rehabilitation -- not merely detention. All prisoners should be encouraged and assisted in making a new life as productive citizens outside the jailhouse gates.

Toward this end we propose adoption of state and national correctional standards which would include: (1) separation of offenders by offense and age; (2) guarantees of minimum wages for prison work, and assurances that such work will enable inmates to develop job skills usable outside the prison; (3) the earmarking of prison industry profits for rehabilitation and employment training programs; (4) accrual of social security credits for work performed while in jail; (5) liberal work-release programs, educational furloughs, weekend passes, and conjugal visit arrangements; (6) restoration of inmates' right to vote and defend their legal rights in court; and (7) a "Philadelphia Plan" for prisoners and ex-convicts, requiring unions and employers to accept and train those who are or have been incarcerated. Many of these proposals are set forth in the forward-looking Omnibus Criminal Justice Reform Amendment of 1972 (S. 3492) sponsored by Senator Charles McC. Mathias and twelve of his Republican colleagues.

The Ripon Society also supports continued expansion of federal (Law Enforcement Assistance Agency) block grants to state and local law enforcement agencies, with special additional funding for efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency and to resocialize youthful offenders.

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Strengthening of the various state and national gun control statutes is also a matter of high legislative priority. Finally, as is provided in the Senate Republicans' omnibus reform package, consideration should be given to making government-subsidized reimbursement payments to all victims of serious crimes. This program has the advantage of spreading losses attributable to criminal activity more equitably throughout the society, and such an insurance-type plan is now working successfully in Great Britain.

Each one of these proposals, in admittedly different fields of public policy, embrace government initiatives which offer American citizens greater opportunity. They do so, not according to the old Democratic party way of spending more money in Washington for a bigger bureaucracy, but rather they offer decentralized services in a more effective and humane fashion than we are accustomed to. These policies are not only consistent with Republican philosophy but with the real needs and aspirations of people who normally vote outside our party -- the poor and the displaced.

We believe good policy is good politics and we urge you to take these proposals into your hearts and minds as part of a new Republican politics of hope and opportunity.