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County Commissioners and Engineers, September 9, 1975

Vern Riffe

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Recommended Citation

Riffe, Vern, "County Commissioners and Engineers, September 9, 1975" (1975). *Speeches*. 49.
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Fred Dewing

Room 110

Not feeling well.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNTY ENGINEERS

SUMMER CONVENTION
AQUA MARINE LODGE
AVON LAKE, OHIO

*Frank Lakeman
Hugh Conigan
Tom Barrett*

S.B. 70

SEPTEMBER 9, 1975

(APPROPRIATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

IN PREPARING TO COME UP HERE, I ASKED MYSELF --

WHAT WOULD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ENGINEERS WANT TO

HEAR FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE OHIO HOUSE.

FRANKLY, I AM NOT SURE.

I SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU AND I SHARE A SIMILAR

JOB. WE ARE ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE.

*Honored to
be here. We
share a similar
job.*

EVEN THOUGH I AM ELECTED FOR TWO YEARS AT A TIME,
AND YOU FOR FOUR YEARS AT A TIME, THE FACT WE MUST GO
TO THE PEOPLE FOR OUR JOBS MAKES US BROTHERS.

EVEN THOUGH I PARTICIPATE IN THE WRITING OF LAWS
AND YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE ADMINISTERING OF LAW, THE
PEOPLE HOLD US RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR CONDUCT IN OFFICE.

I AM ALSO NOT SURE WHAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN
HEARING, BECAUSE YOU AND I ARE POLITICIANS --- IN
ADDITION TO BEING OFFICEHOLDERS.

BECAUSE WE ARE POLITICIANS, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW
THAT THERE EXISTS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RHETORIC IN
WHAT WE SAY. I DO NOT WANT TO ENGAGE IN RHETORIC
THIS MORNING.

I DO WANT TO TELL YOU THAT IF YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN SEEING SOMETHING ACCOMPLISHED IN COLUMBUS, I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU, AND HEAR FROM YOU EARLY. I BELIEVE I AM A PATIENT AND GOOD LISTENER, I ALSO BELIEVE THERE ARE SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS WHICH CONFRONT US.

*Problems
Let me
hear from
you.*

MY NEARLY SEVENTEEN YEARS IN THE OHIO HOUSE HAVE LEAD ME TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE SOLUTIONS TO OUR PROBLEMS. AND SPENDING 12 OF THOSE 17 YEARS IN THE HOUSE IN THE MINORITY PARTY HAVE MADE ME PATIENT.

I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR COUNTY AND

LOCAL OFFICIALS. I SAY THIS FOR SEVERAL REASONS.

FIRST, MY DAD, VERNAL G. RIFFE, SR., WAS MAYOR
OF NEW BOSTON FOR 24 YEARS. DAD JUST WON'T LET ME
HAVE ANYTHING BUT RESPECT FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS.

Father

SECOND, COUNTY AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, FROM MY
STANDPOINT, ARE "THE PEOPLE BACK HOME" --- IF
A STATE REPRESENTATIVE IS NOT DOING HIS JOB IN COLUM-
BUS, THE PEOPLE BACK HOME, BECAUSE THEY ARE BACK
HOME AND CAN GET THE WORD OUT, WILL SEE THAT THE
REPRESENTATIVE DOES NOT GO BACK TO COLUMBUS.

Back Home

I GUESS YOU MIGHT SAY, I LIKE BEING SPEAKER,
SO I'M GOING TO BE RESPONSIVE TO YOU BECAUSE I WANT TO

GO BACK TO COLUMBUS FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
AND I WANT THE PEOPLE BACK HOME HELPING ME DO THAT.

AS SPEAKER, I HAVE FOUND THE DEMANDS ON MY
TIME AND ENERGY VERY DEMANDING. NOT ONLY MUST I
REMAIN RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF MY DISTRICT ---
WHICH IS PIKE, SCIOTO AND PART OF JACKSON COUNTY ---
BUT, I ALSO MUST REMAIN ACTIVE IN GETTING A LEGISLA-
TIVE PROGRAM THROUGH THE HOUSE.

EVEN THOUGH I FIND MYSELF EXTREMELY BUSY, I
WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I WANT TO BE BOTHERED IF
SOME OTHER ELECTED OFFICIAL HAS A PROBLEM WHICH I
CAN HELP SOLVE. IF YOU WRITE ME I MAY NOT BE ABLE

*Time &
Energy*

Busy

*Letters,
Leave Mark
if by phone*

TO RESPOND THE NEXT DAY --- BUT I WILL GET BACK TO
YOU. IF YOU CALL ME, AND I AM NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAIL-
ABLE, LEAVE A MESSAGE OR CALL AGAIN.

NOW, DON'T GO OUT OF HERE AND TELL THE
WORLD THAT VERN RIFFE WILL HANDLE YOUR PROBLEMS.
I SIMPLY WANT TO GET ACROSS THE POINT -- AND GET
IT ACROSS STRONGLY -- THAT I AM GOING TO BE RESPONSIVE
TO YOU IF YOU LET ME KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT SOME THINGS
THAT NEED TO BE DONE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME EXAMPLES. IN 1972,
COMMISSIONERS, ENGINEERS AND OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS
SAID THEY NEEDED MORE PAY. IN RESPONSE, THE GENERAL

*Don't tell
people that
I can solve
all problems,
I can't.*

Pay

ASSEMBLY ENACTED S.B. 250, A PAY RAISE BILL WHICH
RAISED THE PAY OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS APPROXIMATELY
20%.

PRESENTLY, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS BEFORE IT
REPRESENTATIVE FRED DEERING'S H.B. 734, A BIPARTISAN
BILL WHICH PURPOSES ANOTHER PAY ADVANCE FOR COMMISSIONERS,
ENGINEERS AND OTHER COUNTY OFFICIALS. THE BILL IS
PRESENTLY BEFORE THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
AND PROPOSES TO ELIMINATE THE PRESENT 35 CLASSES OF
COUNTIES FOR PAY PURPOSES AND INSTEAD SUBSTITUTE 15
CLASSES. THE MEASURE ALSO PROPOSES SUBSTANTIAL
PAY INCREASES TO BE PHASED IN THROUGH 1980.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WHERE PROBLEMS WERE BROUGHT

TO THE LEGISLATURE'S ATTENTION AND WERE SOLVED
INCLUDE THE PASSAGE THIS YEAR OF HOUSE BILL 664, A
MEASURE WHICH PERMITS COUNTIES TO ADOPT CODE REGULA-
TIONS SO THAT COUNTIES CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL
FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM.

YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS THE PASSAGE THIS YEAR
OF S.B. 67, A BILL WHICH WILL PERMIT COMMISSIONERS
TO CONTRACT FOR THE SERVICES OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANTS.

PRESENTLY THE OHIO HOUSE HAS BEFORE IT A PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BILL. I BELIEVE YOU
HAVE HEARD OF THIS MEASURE --- I KNOW YOU HAVE.

I AM FOR THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TO
BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY. I AM FOR A BILL WHICH WILL
ASSURE ORDER AND FAIRNESS IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC EM-
PLOYER - PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.

AT THIS TIME, I AM NOT CERTAIN WHAT ACTION THE
HOUSE WILL TAKE ON S.B. 70, THE BILL I AM TALKING
ABOUT. I DO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT SOMETHING MUST BE
DONE TO REPLACE OHIO'S FERGUSON ACT. I JUST DON'T
THINK THE FERGUSON ACT HAS BEEN WORKING.

*Caucus
Wed.*

*amended
54 times*

AS SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, MANY PEOPLE ASSUME THAT
I AM WELL VERSED IN ALL AREAS OF LEGISLATION, AND THAT
I HAVE ANSWERS TO EVERYONE'S QUESTIONS ABOUT PENDING
LEGISLATION. WELL, I DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING, OR HAVE

*most
Difficult
Bill*

ALL THE ANSWERS.

I SAY THAT TO YOU BECAUSE I WOULD BE LESS THAN
HONEST IF I SAID OTHERWISE.

I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY IN DEALING
WITH LEGISLATION ON GOVERNMENTAL MATTERS, TO BE STRAIGHT
FORWARD WITH THOSE PEOPLE YOU DEAL WITH.

*Be honest
with people.*

As I SAID AT THE START, YOU AND I SHARE A
SIMILAR BOND. WE ARE ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE AND
SERVE THEM ONLY SO LONG AS WE ARE RESPONSIVE TO THEIR
NEEDS.

MANY OF YOUR ACTIONS AND MANY OF MY ACTIONS
AFFECT HOW OHIO IS GOVERNED. I AM SURE YOU DO THE

*Our
actions*

-- 11 --

BEST YOU CAN. I CAN TELL YOU THAT I DO ALSO.

I AM HOPEFUL THAT WE CONTINUE TO GOVERN WITH THE
PEOPLE'S BEST INTEREST IN MIND.

IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE AND AN HONOR TO BE WITH
YOU. THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME HERE.