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Legislature and Issues, April 1, 1977

Vern Riffe

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SPEECH
SCOTTISH RITE BANQUET
PORTSMOUTH AMERICAN LEGION HALL
APRIL 1, 1977 6:30 P.M.

TOPIC: LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. HOME AGAIN

1. PROUD OF PORTSMOUTH, THE 89TH DISTRICT
2. THANKFUL THAT THE VOTERS SUPPORT ME
3. WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT I WOULD NOT BE SPEAKER
OF THE HOUSE

B. LEGISLATURE AND ISSUES

1. AS AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE AND AS SPEAKER,
I GET MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT THE
LEGISLATURE
2. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFFECTS OHIOANS MORE THAN
ANY OTHER LEGISLATIVE BODY -- BE IT CONGRESS OR
CITY COUNCIL

3. I AM PROUD OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ITS RECENT RECORD
4. IT IS A PLEASURE OUTLINING THE ISSUES FACING THE NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND INFORMING THE PEOPLE ABOUT STATE PROBLEMS, STATE ACTIVITIES

II. ISSUES FACING THE LEGISLATURE

A. BUDGET

1. PRIORITY ISSUE IN NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS THE BUDGET
2. TWO-YEAR STATE BUDGET -- JULY 1, 1977 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1979
3. GOVERNOR HAS SUBMITTED \$14.5 BILLION BUDGET -- A RECORD
4. ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN STATE REVENUES -- 22% IN GENERAL FUND, OR \$1.5 BILLION -- MAY BE LESS BECAUSE OF ENERGY CRISIS
5. DESPITE RECORD BUDGET AND 22% REVENUE GROWTH, STATE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO TIGHTEN ITS BELT BECAUSE --

A. INFLATION, WHICH HAS CREATED SOME OF THE GROWTH, HAS ALSO INCREASED COSTS TO GOVERNMENT

B. THERE WILL BE NO NEW TAXES -- STATE WILL HAVE TO LIVE WITHIN CURRENT INCOME

6. EVERY STATE AGENCY AND DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE TO JUSTIFY ITS APPROPRIATION REQUEST

B. ENERGY

1. ERA OF CHEAP AND PLENTIFUL ENERGY IS ENDING

2. OHIO HAS SUFFERED FROM THE GAS SHORTAGE -- LOSS OF REVENUE, UNEMPLOYMENT, SCHOOL CLOSINGS

3. PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT MUST NOT NEGLECT PROBLEM UNTIL NEXT WINTER

4. GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL SEEK TO DEVELOP STATE ENERGY POLICY

A. DUAL POLICY -- PROMOTE CONSERVATION OF EXISTING ENERGY SOURCES AND PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENERGY SOURCES

- B. POLICY WILL ALSO PROTECT VITAL SERVICES SUCH AS SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, ETC., FROM WHOLESALe ENERGY CURTAILMENTS

5. COAL IS KEY FOR OHIO

- A. STATE HAS PLENTY OF KNOWN COAL RESERVES
- B. TECHNOLOGY MUST BE DEVELOPED TO BURN COAL CLEANLY, EFFICIENTLY

C. ECONOMY

- 1. PRESENT MAJOR OBSTACLE TO STRONG BUSINESS ECONOMY IS ENERGY SHORTAGE
- 2. LEGISLATURE WILL ALSO SEEK TO REMOVE OTHER OBSTACLES TO BUSINESS GROWTH
- 3. LACK OF CAPITAL HAS BEEN A PROBLEM, LEGISLATURE WILL FUND A BUSINESS LOAN PLAN
 - A. FUND THE OHIO DEVELOPMENT FINANCING COMMISSION IN NEW BUDGET
 - B. COMMISSION WOULD MAKE LOW INTEREST LOANS TO ASSIST OHIO BUSINESSES

- c. ELIGIBLE LOAN ITEMS WOULD INCLUDE LAND, BUILDINGS, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT
 - d. PENNSYLVANIA HAS HAD A SUCCESSFUL LOAN PLAN FOR 20 YEARS -- THAT STATE HAS LOANED \$407 MILLION FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT -- RESULT -- TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT OF \$1.1 BILLION AND 170,000 JOBS
4. PRODUCT LIABILITY -- PROBLEM -- LEGISLATURE WILL INVESTIGATE THE SOARING COST OF PRODUCT LIABILITY INSURANCE AND CLAIMS AND SEEK WAYS TO REDUCE COSTS AND CLAIMS
5. SMALL BUSINESS -- EACH LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER HAS A COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH CONCERNS OF SMALL BUSINESS
- A. RED TAPE AND PAPERWORK
 - B. SOURCES OF FINANCING
 - C. OVERREGULATION
6. SMALL BUSINESS IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF OHIO'S ECONOMY SINCE HALF THE WORKFORCE IN OHIO IS EMPLOYED BY SMALL BUSINESSES

III. CONCLUSION

A. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

1. NOT EVERYONE WILL BE PLEASED WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S ACTIONS
2. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL, HOWEVER, TRY TO MAKE OHIO A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, LEARN, AND WORK
3. PLEASE RECOGNIZE THAT THE LEGISLATURE CANNOT SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM

B. COMMUNICATION

1. AS I SAID IN THE BEGINNING, IT IS A PLEASURE OUTLINING THE ISSUES FACING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND INFORMING THE PEOPLE ABOUT STATE ACTIVITIES
2. BUT COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET -- I WANT TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE, LEARN THEIR CONCERNS, THEIR PROBLEMS, THEIR NEEDS, AND THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS