



PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

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October 9, 1987

The Honorable Kenneth E. Brandt
House of Representatives
Room 414
Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Representative Brandt:

Thank you for accepting the invitation to address the "We The People" Breakfast at the PHCA Annual Convention. The Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, October 21, 1987 at 8:00 a.m. and will conclude at 9:20 a.m.

I am asking that your remarks be approximately 20 minutes in duration as we will also be giving PHCAPAC Awards at the breakfast.

We have made reservations for lodging for you and your wife for Tuesday evening, October 20, 1987 at The Hershey Pocono Resort, White Haven, and have anticipated you and your wife to play golf after breakfast on Wednesday.

If you should have any specific questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call me or my assistant, Deborah Myers, at our office.

Thank you for your assistance in helping us have a great convention.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Klugiewicz
Director of Government Relations

RJK/dm

(OPENING REMARKS YOU FEEL APPROPRIATE)

IN HIS 1987 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, PRESIDENT REAGAN SAID: "THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION IS THE IMPASSIONED AND INSPIRED VEHICLE BY WHICH WE TRAVEL THROUGH HISTORY."

THE "WE," OF COURSE, BEING WE THE PEOPLE.

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION IS, INDEED, A UNIQUE DOCUMENT. MANY OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE CONSTITUTIONS. THE SOVIET UNION HAS ONE. IT SUPPOSEDLY GRANTS A NUMBER OF FREEDOMS TO ITS PEOPLE. OTHER NATIONS' CONSTITUTIONS HAVE PROVISIONS FOR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY. SO, IF THIS IS TRUE, WHAT MAKES THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES SO EXCEPTIONAL?

THE DIFFERENCE IS SUBTLE. IT CAN ESCAPE YOU IF YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT IT BECAUSE WE, AS AMERICANS, HAVE BECOME SO USED TO THE EMPOWERING IT GUARANTEES US. IT'S SUMMED UP IN THREE WORDS--WE THE PEOPLE.

IN OTHER CONSTITUTIONS THE GOVERNMENT TELLS THE PEOPLE OF THOSE COUNTRIES WHAT THEY ARE PERMITTED TO DO. IN OUR CONSTITUTION, THE PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO TELL OUR GOVERNMENT WHAT IT CAN DO, AND IT CAN DO ONLY THOSE THINGS LISTED IN THAT DOCUMENT AND NO OTHERS.

HAVING RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN THE CELEBRATION EVENTS SURROUNDING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION, I'VE HAD GOOD REASON TO REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE LIVES OF US AS INDIVIDUALS, AND AS A NATION.

LIFE IN THE 1980'S IS VASTLY DIFFERENT THAN SOCIETY IN THE 1780'S. THE ISSUES WHICH GOVERNMENT MUST INVOLVE ITSELF IN TODAY ARE MATTERS THE FOUNDING FATHERS COULD NOT HAVE ENVISIONED. THIS YEAR, IN THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE ALONE, OVER 1,800 SEPARATE PIECES OF LEGISLATION HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED FOR POSSIBLE ENACTMENT INTO LAW.

WITH SO MANY PROPOSALS, WITH SO MANY AREAS OF EVERYDAY LIFE CRYING FOR ATTENTION BY THE GOVERNMENT, WE, AS ELECTED OFFICIALS, MUST REMIND OURSELVES THAT WE ARE HERE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE WE REPRESENT. AND TO PASS INTO LAW ONLY THOSE STATUTES WHICH ARE CALLED FOR BY THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

THE TEMPTATION TO PROPOSE LEGISLATION AS A SOLUTION TO EACH AND EVERY SITUATION INVOLVING A LEGISLATOR'S DISTRICT IS GREAT. BUT WE MUST TREAD LIGHTLY. WE MUST REMIND OURSELVES THAT THE FOUNDING FATHERS WROTE THE BILL OF RIGHTS TO KEEP GOVERNMENT UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE PEOPLE, NOT TO PUT THE PEOPLE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

HOW DO WE GO ABOUT THAT THAT TODAY, AS WE STAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY? WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITY GOES ON AN WE ENDEAVOR TO MAKE CHANGES IN OUR POLICIES? JUST WHAT WAS THE "ORIGINAL INTENT" OF THE CREATORS OF THE CONSTITUTION? ARE WE CARRYING IT OUT?

PERHAPS THE MOST VEXING QUESTION ABOUT "ORIGINAL INTENT" IS WHY WE SHOULD BE BOUND BY AN INTERPRETATION OF A CONSTITUTION DESIGNED TO SOLVE THE PRESSING PROBLEMS THE YOUNG NATION FACED IN 1787.

I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING THE FOUNDING FATHERS WANTED THEIR INTERPRETATIONS CHISELED INTO THE DOCUMENT--SURELY, THEY DIDN'T WANT TO FREEZE THE DEBATE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR TIME. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THEY KNEW TIME WOULD NOT STAND STILL AND THAT THE NATION WOULD CHANGE AS IT GREW.

THE WRITERS PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH DEBATE WOULD CONTINUE. TO DO THIS, THEY SOUGHT THE ORDERED LIBERTY OF A REPUBLIC. THE FOUNDERS WERE WELL AWARE THAT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION COULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES THAT COULD MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN EITHER THE REASONED OR THE ARBITRARY USE OF POWER.

A CIVIL WAR, 26 AMENDMENTS AND TREMENDOUS SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES HAVE PUT FLESH ON THE BONES OF THE CONSTITUTION, ALTERING OUR READING OF IT AND RELATIONSHIP TO IT.

BUT I HAVE NO DOUBT IT HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME. WITH THE NECESSARY AMENDMENTS AND THE APPLICATION OF ITS UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES TO THE CHANGED CONDITIONS, IT CONTINUES TO PROVIDE A MEANS FOR A NATION GROWN EVER MORE POWERFUL, PROSPEROUS AND COMPLEX TO GRAPPLE WITH THE PROBLEMS PRESENTED TO IT BY A DANGEROUS AND INTERDEPENDENT WORLD.

TURN YOUR THOUGHTS WITH ME FOR A FEW MOMENTS IF YOU WILL TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION. IT PROVIDES OUR NATION WITH CLEAR, UNMISTAKABLE ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE WORLD'S DEEPEST QUESTIONS. FOREMOST, HOW TO LIVE WITH EACH OTHER'S DIFFERENCES? AND HOW DO PHILOSOPHIES AND FREEDOM INTERCONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER, RATHER THAN CANCEL EACH OTHER OUT?

IN A WORLD WHERE THE TRAGIC EXPERIENCE OF ULSTER OR LEBANON ARE ALL TOO COMMON, ARTICULATING AND DEMONSTRATING THE UNIQUENESS OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT IS A MORAL NECESSITY.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT'S FREEDOM OF SPEECH, RELIGION, PRESS AND PETITION CLAUSE, I FEEL, CONTAINS THE WESTERN WORLD'S STRONGEST CHALLENGE TO SOVIET REPRESSION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS ITS MOST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE WORLDWIDE RESURGENCE OF UNBRIDLED RELIGIOUS TRIBALISM AND NATIONALISM, SUCH AS IN IRAN.

NOW, BACK TO AN EARLIER QUESTION--HOW DO WE GO ABOUT MAKING CHANGES IN OUR POLICIES? YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT SOCIAL CHANGES COME ABOUT BECAUSE A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS JOIN TOGETHER TO MOBILIZE AND PUT FORTH A COLLECTIVE POSITION FOR THEIR CAUSE. IT'S A GIVEN IN OUR POLITICAL PROCESS.

THIS MEANS MORE MEANINGFUL, INFORMED INPUT INTO THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM UNDER THE FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH AND PETITIONING THE GOVERNMENT.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE LOUIS BRANDEIS ONCE SAID THAT "EXPERIENCE SHOULD TEACH US TO BE EVER ON GUARD TO PROTECT LIBERTY." AND I READ SOME PLACE RECENTLY

THAT THE FREE WILL IS NOT THE LIBERTY TO DO WHATEVER ONE LIKES, BUT THE POWER OF DOING WHATEVER ONE SEES OUGHT TO BE DONE.

I AGREE WITH THAT. AND I BELIEVE YOU DO TOO. ALL OF US--ADVOCATES, POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, POLITICIANS--SHOULD DO "WHATEVER ONE SEES OUGHT TO BE DONE."

OUR NATION--OUR STATE--OUR SOCIETY ARE NOW IN A DIFFICULT STAGE OF TRANSITION. AT THE SAME TIME, WE STAND IN THE DOORWAY TO CHALLENGES AND CHANGES WE HAVE NEVER FACED BEFORE.

ALTHOUGH WE ALL KNOW THAT CHANGE MAY OCCUR "FOR BETTER OR WORSE," MOST AMERICANS PRESUME THAT CHANGE ALWAYS WILL BRING IMPROVEMENT, GREATER HEALTH, OR GREATER WEALTH--EVEN GREATER HAPPINESS. AFTER ALL, WHEN ANYTHING--A COMPANY, ANIMAL, PERSON, PLANT, OR SOCIETY--STOPS CHANGING, IT IS DYING!..

SO OPTIMISTIC HAVE WE BECOME IN RECENT YEARS REGARDING THE PROSPECTS OF CHANGE THAT THE SELF-HELP SALESMEN OF THE NEW AGE SUCCESSFULLY ARE POPULARIZING THE NOTION THAT SOCIETY CAN BE IMPROVED THROUGH PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION ALONE.

I AM HERE TO SAY THAT, IN MY POLITICAL EXPERIENCE, THERE IS NO PAINLESS ROUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE.

PEOPLE WILLING TO WAIT FOR A BETTER WORLD ACHIEVED THROUGH PERSONAL CHANGES--MADE ONE AT A TIME--HAD BEST REMAIN SEATED, FOR THEY HAVE A VERY LONG WAIT AHEAD OF THEM.

WHY DO I QUESTION PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT AS THE TRUE PATH TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY? BECAUSE IT DOESN'T GO FAR ENOUGH. BECAUSE IT'S ONLY A BEGINNING.

EVERY DAY DECISIONS ARE MADE THAT AFFECT THE QUALITY OF MY LIFE AND YOUR LIFE. AND MANY TIMES THEY ARE MADE BY OTHER PEOPLE. NOW, WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATING IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE. AND I CERTAINLY PREFER TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY THAT ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION, AS WELL AS TRUST. I BELIEVE PEOPLE MUST PARTICIPATE, MUST MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD IN THE DEMOCRATIC DEBATE THAT STEERS OUR DAILY DESTINY.

PARTICIPATION WAS THE CAUSE FOR WHICH OUR FOUNDING FATHERS AND MOTHERS WAGED A BLOODY REBELLION. AMERICA WASN'T BORN CIVILIZED. IT EMERGED FROM A VIOLENT

AND PROFOUND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S CIRCUMSTANCES. IT EMERGED BECAUSE A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO MATURE CITIZENSHIP WAS SEEN AS THE ONLY TRUE SOURCE OF A MEANINGFUL LIFE.

THE BOOK, HABITS OF THE HEART, IS A COMPILATION OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN VALUES COLLECTED FROM PEOPLE ACROSS AMERICA BY ROBERT BELLAH AND ASSOCIATES. IN IT, THEY OBSERVE:

"TODAY OUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT JUST POLITICAL. THEY ARE MORAL AND HAVE TO DO WITH THE MEANING OF LIFE. WE HAVE ASSUMED THAT AS LONG AS WE HAVE CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH, WE COULD LEAVE ALL ELSE TO THE PRIVATE SPHERE. PERHAPS THE TRUTH LIES IN WHAT MOST OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE MODERN WEST HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED. NAMELY, THAT THERE ARE PRACTICES OF LIFE, GOOD IN THEMSELVES, THAT ARE INHERENTLY FULFILLING."

WHAT ARE THESE PRACTICES? IT IS CONCLUDED THAT AT LEAST ONE OF THEM IS PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY POLITICS. THAT MEANS MORE THAN JUST WRITING A CHECK. IT MEANS "GET YOUR NAILS DIRTY" WORK, SUPPORTING THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES YOU BELIEVE IN.

YOU'VE PROBABLY FOUND THAT DEMOCRACY IS AN IMPERFECT TOOL FOR EFFECTING

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SOCIETAL CHANGE. PROGRESS WON IS OFTEN ERASED. CANDIDATES DISAPPOINT YOU ONCE THEY'RE IN OFFICE. YOU WON'T LIKE ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'RE REQUIRED TO WORK WITH. YOU WILL OBSERVE BEHAVIOR YOU CAN'T ABIDE. YOU WILL EXPERIENCE FRUSTRATION, AND SOMETIMES YOU WILL FAIL.

BUT I PROMISE YOU--YOU WILL GROW. NEITHER FLATTERY NOR MANIPULATION WILL GET YOU WHAT YOU WANT IN THE END, BUT COMPROMISE WILL. YOU WILL GROW MORE TOLERANT. YOU WILL LEARN TO DISTINGUISH SYMBOLISM FROM REALITY. ACTION FROM ILLUSION AND EMPTY TALK.

REAL ADULTS KNOW POLITICS IS A BRUTISH BUSINESS. EVERYONE SAYS YOU CAN'T FIGHT THE SYSTEM. BUT, HERE'S SOMETHING I'VE LEARNED. WE ARE THE SYSTEM. AND IF WE WANT THE SYSTEM TO CHANGE, WE HAVE TO GET INVOLVED.

POLITICS IS AN ADVERSARIAL PROCESS. I RESPECT MY ADVERSARIES, BECAUSE THEY CARE ENOUGH TO JOIN THE STRUGGLE THAT SHAPES OUR STATE. LIKE THOMAS JEFFERSON, I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE "ARE INHERENTLY CAPABLE OF MAKING PROPER JUDGMENTS WHEN THEY ARE PROPERLY INFORMED."

TODAY, THE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO PERFORM THE TASKS FOR WHICH IT WAS DESIGNED.

IT WAS DESIGNED TO PREVENT TYRANNY. IT DOES NOT CONCENTRATE POWER, BUT RATHER DISPERSES IT AMONG THE BRANCHES AND LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

IT WAS DESIGNED TO FOCUS GOVERNMENT POWER ON ITS LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVES. AND SO, GOVERNMENT REMAINS FENCED OUT OF OUR HOUSES OF WORSHIP, OUR NEWSROOMS AND THE PRIVATE PRECINCTS OF OUR FAMILIES. IT WAS DESIGNED TO ENFRANCHISE THE PEOPLE. AND SO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS OPENS TO AN EVER-EXPANDING CIRCLE OF AMERICANS ENTITLED TO EXERCISE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY.

THE CONSTITUTION'S BICENTENNIAL INVITES US TO CELEBRATE OUR CHARTER'S PAST AND REFLECT ON ITS PRESENT. BUT IT ALSO PROVIDES AN OCCASION TO DREAM ABOUT ITS FUTURE.

THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT IN ORDERED LIBERTY WILL NOT DEPEND ON SOME NEWLY DISCOVERED SHRED OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE THAT SHED A FLICKERING LIGHT ON THE ELUSIVE TOUCHSTONE OF "ORIGINAL INTENT." AS IN THE PAST, THE CONSTITUTION'S FUTURE WILL DEPEND ON THE ABILITY OF A SELF-GOVERNING NATION OF FREE MEN AND WOMEN TO FIND WITHIN THIS RICH AND LIVING DOCUMENT THE MEANS TO CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES OF THE CENTURIES TO COME.

WE THE PEOPLE. STARTING THE THIRD CENTURY OF A DREAM.

YES, PRESIDENT REAGAN, THE U.S. CONSTITUTION IS THE IMPASSIONED AND
INSPIRED VEHICLE BY WHICH WE TRAVEL THROUGH HISTORY. WE ALL KNOW THE JOURNEY IS NOT
OVER. THAT THE EXPERIMENT GOES ON. AND AT ITS CENTER? WE THE PEOPLE--EMPOWERED AND
EMPOWERING.

IT HAS BEEN MY DISTINCT PLEASURE TO BE HERE. THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO
SHARE MY THOUGHTS WITH YOU.

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