

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS H. KEAN

GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

LAWRENCEVILLE, NEW JERSEY

MAY 31, 1984

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, GAIL (KAPLAN).

IT IS A SPECIAL PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE TONIGHT AS
THE CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CHAPTER CELEBRATES ITS ANNUAL MEETING.

IT IS SPECIAL BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL KIND OF WORK THAT
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE DOES.

AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S FOREMOST HUMAN RELATIONS
AGENCIES, YOU ARE HELPING THOSE OF US IN GOVERNMENT DO OUR
JOB BETTER. BY HELPING TO MAKE A BETTER SOCIETY, YOU ARE, I
BELIEVE, HELPING TO MOLD A BETTER GOVERNMENT.

~~copy~~
K
Bridler

A FORMER GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY, ONE WHO WAS A STUDENT OF GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS AN EDUCATOR HIMSELF, ONCE EXPRESSED IT THIS WAY:

"GOVERNMENT IS NOT A MACHINE BUT A LIVING THING, MODIFIED TO ITS ENVIRONMENT... SHAPED TO ITS FUNCTIONS BY THE SHEER PRESSURE OF LIFE."

THAT FORMER GOVERNOR WAS WOODROW WILSON, AND HIS WORDS WERE A RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

WHAT IS A HUMAN RELATIONS AGENCY, AFTER ALL?

IT IS A COLLECTION OF PEOPLE WHO CARE.

YOU BELONG, AND YOU ARE HERE TONIGHT, BECAUSE YOU CARE.

AND I AM HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN PEOPLE WHO DO CARE. I APPRECIATE THEM, AND I DEPEND ON THEM, MORE THAN I CAN SAY.

I AM HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVE VERY FIRMLY THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MADE UP OF PEOPLE WHO CARE -- THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE RESPONSIVE.

AND I SAY THAT, AS ONE WHO HAS SPENT MANY OF THE YEARS OF MY LIFE IN GOVERNMENT WITH A DEEP SENSE OF CONVICTION: NOT BECAUSE RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT IS POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT -- ALTHOUGH IT MAY HAPPEN TO BE -- BUT RATHER BECAUSE, IN A WAY, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT IS A MORAL ISSUE.

IT IS AN ISSUE THAT GETS TO THE HEART OF WHAT "PUBLIC SERVICE" IS ALL ABOUT.

GEORGE SANTAYANA ONCE SAID THAT "A GOVERNMENT IS NOT MADE REPRESENTATIVE OR JUST BY THE MECHANICAL EXPEDIENT OF ELECTING ITS MEMBERS BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. IT BECOMES REPRESENTATIVE ONLY BY EMBODYING IN ITS POLICY, WHETHER BY INSTINCT OR HIGH INTELLIGENCE, THE PEOPLE'S CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS INTERESTS."

THAT'S THE SAME MAN WHO SAID THAT "THE ONLY RIGHT GOVERNMENT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT."

WHAT DOES ALL THAT MEAN? IT MEANS THAT MY JOB, AS GOVERNOR, IS TO DO MY BEST TO DELIVER WHAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE MOST WANT -- WHAT THEY MOST NEED.

IT IS TO ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES THAT THEY MOST CARE ABOUT.

IN NEW JERSEY, IT MEANS THAT WE IN GOVERNMENT HAVE GOT TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO MAKE OUR SCHOOLS BETTER.

IT IS ON THEM, ON OUR CHILDREN, THAT ALL OF OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE LIE.

IT MEANS THAT WE MUST FORCEFULLY ATTACK THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR ENVIRONMENT: TOXIC WASTES THAT THREATEN OUR WATER SUPPLY, DUMPING THAT THREATENS OUR OCEAN, ACID RAIN THAT THREATENS OUR LAKES AND FORESTS.

IF WE DO NOT CONFRONT THESE, WHAT KIND OF FUTURE CAN WE HOPE TO HAVE? ALL OF OUR BEST LAID PLANS WILL BE JEAPORDIZED.

IT MEANS PROTECTING THE MOST BASIC VALUES FOR WHICH WE ALL STAND: HUMAN DIGNITY, FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, STRONG AND SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS.

WHAT STRIKES ME IS HOW DIFFERENT -- HOW UNIQUE -- THIS AGENDA FOR GOVERNMENT IS HERE IN THE UNITED STATES.

JUST THE OTHER NIGHT, I SPOKE AT A BENEFIT IN NEW YORK FOR ANDREI SAKHAROV. THE EXPERIENCE WAS MOVING, AND THOUGHT PROVOKING.

HOW DIFFERENT HIS EXPERIENCE IS!! AS OF NOW, EVEN HIS WHEREABOUTS, AND THOSE OF HIS WIFE, ARE UNKNOWN.

FOR SPEAKING OUT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY, HE IS EXILED. TO WORK FOR FREEDOM, HE MUST ENDANGER HIS HEALTH, AND INDEED HIS LIFE ITSELF.

OR THINK OF BORIS KLOTZ, A REFUSENIK WHOM I HAVE ADOPTED. I CALLED HIM ON THE PHONE RECENTLY, IN ORDER TO SEND A SIGNAL TO THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES THAT WE IN THE FREE WORLD WERE WATCHING.

BORIS KLOTZ DOES NOT HAVE HIS FREEDOM PROTECTED BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HE HAS IT DENIED.

HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE WHO CARE, IT SILENCES THEM.

HIS GOVERNMENT, AND SO MANY GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD, ARE NOT MOLDED BY THE PUBLIC OPINION THAT WOODROW WILSON SPOKE OF, BUT RATHER THEY LIVE ON IN SPITE OF IT.

HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN DIGNITY, HUMAN FREEDOM. THEY REALLY ARE THE CUTTING ISSUES OF OUR TIME.

THEY ARE WHAT SEPARATE US FROM THE TYRANNIES, THEY ARE WHAT BIND OUR DIVERSE PEOPLE TOGETHER, THEY ARE WHAT GIVES OUR DEMOCRACY THE STRENGTH TO SURVIVE.

THAT'S WHY YOUR WORK IS SO IMPORTANT. TO THE SURVIVAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS, TO THE PROMOTION OF DIGNITY, TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY.

I TRULY BELIEVE THAT IT IS EASIER FOR GOVERNMENT TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WHEN IT IS WORKING WITH PEOPLE RATHER THAN AGAINST THEM. THAT ONE OF OUR GREATEST ASSETS IS GROUPS LIKE YOURS WHO CAN PITCH IN TO IMPROVING THE SOCIETY FOR ALL OF US.

IT GIVES OUR SOCIETY, OUR DEMOCRACY, A SENSE OF TEAMWORK. A SENSE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME. THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE.

JOHN F. KENNEDY SUMMED UP THAT SPIRIT, THAT SENSE OF POSSIBILITY, WHEN HE SAID THAT "NO PROBLEM OF HUMAN DESTINY IS BEYOND HUMAN BEINGS."

NOT ONLY DO I AGREE WITH THAT, I SEE EVIDENCE OF IT EVERY DAY.

AND I SEE EVIDENCE OF IT TONIGHT, WHEN I SEE THE SPIRIT AND SHARE AN EVENING WITH A GROUP THAT QUITE OBVIOUSLY CARES.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME, AND THANK YOU FOR CARING.