

OPENING REMARKS OF  
THE HONORABLE THOMAS H. KEAN  
GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

AT THE  
SPERLING BREAKFAST  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
DECEMBER 19, 1985

GOOD MORNING.

FIRST, I'D LIKE TO THANK GODFREY SPELING FOR INVITING  
ME TO BREAKFAST THIS MORNING.

I APPRECIATE ALL OF YOU GETTING OUT OF BED ON SUCH A  
COLD MORNING TO COME TALK TO ME.

TODAY IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THOMAS PAINE'S FAMOUS  
"THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS" SPEECH. AND I  
BET THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE THINKING WHEN YOU  
CLIMBED OUT OF BED THIS MORNING!

I'M ACTUALLY HERE IN WASHINGTON TODAY NOT ONLY TO MEET WITH YOU, BUT ALSO BECAUSE I HAVE ANOTHER MEETING LATER THIS MORNING. THAT ONE'S WITH FRANK FAHRENKOPF, THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CHAIRMAN.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN THIS YEAR I SAID THAT I WOULD COME DOWN HERE AFTER IT WAS OVER TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS WITH THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN -- AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING TODAY.

WE HAD AN INTERESTING ELECTION UP IN NEW JERSEY, AS SOME OF YOU WHO CAME UP THERE SAW.

MANY OF THE POLLS THROUGHOUT THE RACE SHOWED THAT I WAS LEADING CONSIDERABLY, BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY WE RAN.

THERE IS A FAMOUS QUOTE, FIRST UTTERED BY JOHN WESLEY, IN "A NOTE TO A FREEHOLDER" IN 1748, WHICH I KEPT WITH ME THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN. THE QUOTE IS: "ACT AS IF THE WHOLE ELECTION DEPENDED ON A SINGLE VOTE."

THAT'S THE WAY I CAMPAIGNED, AND I'LL TELL YOU WHY.

I WON MY FIRST ELECTION IN 1981 BY 1,700 OUT OF TWO AND A HALF MILLION CAST. THAT'S LESS THAN ONE TENTH OF ONE PERCENT. NOT ONLY THAT, YEARS AGO I LOST A CONGRESSIONAL RACE BY 84 VOTES. SO I KNOW ABOUT CLOSE ELECTIONS.

BUT BEYOND THAT, MY LAST ELECTION WAS THE BENCHMARK. I KNEW I -- AND OUR PARTY AS A WHOLE -- HAD TO DO AT LEAST AS WELL AS LAST TIME; WE COULDN'T DO ONE PERCENTAGE POINT WORSE.

IN THAT SENSE, THERE IS AN ANALOGY TO THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN PARTY. EVEN WITH OUR STRONG GROWTH OF LATE, WE ARE STILL A MINORITY PARTY. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE ANYBODY THAT WE HAVE --- AND OUR MISSION IS TO GROW. IF WE'RE GOING TO SUCCEED -- IF WE'RE GOING TO WIN ELECTIONS -- WE'VE GOT TO ATTRACT PEOPLE THAT HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN REPUBLICANS.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE OF MY ELECTION -- AND THE ONE THAT I HOPE CAN BE INSTRUCTIVE TO THE NATIONAL PARTY -- WAS EXACTLY THIS: THAT WE HAD TO BUILD A NEW AND BROADER COALITION TO WIN.

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS MORNING.

IN NEW JERSEY, WE SET ABOUT TO BUILD THAT COALITION FOUR YEARS AGO, NOT JUST WHEN THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN.

MY EMPHASIS THROUGHOUT THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS WAS IN BRINGING THE STATE TOGETHER -- FOCUSED AROUND THE NOTION OF BUILDING PRIDE IN OUR STATE.

NEW JERSEY HAD SOME PRETTY ROUGH YEARS IN THE 1970'S. WE LOST JOBS. LOST PEOPLE. CRIME WENT UP. THE SCHOOLS GOT WORSE.

WE WORKED ON TURNING THE STATE AROUND, NOT JUST POLITICALLY, BUT SUBSTANTIVELY. AND WE FOUND THAT BUILDING PRIDE IN THE STATE -- BRINGING NEW JERSEY BACK -- WAS NOT A PARTISAN ISSUE, BUT RATHER A CONSENSUS ISSUE.

MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE ISSUE OF TURNING NEW JERSEY AROUND -- BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND, IN A WAY, PSYCHOLOGICALLY -- WAS OF SUCH OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE THAT IT WAS THE MOST COMPELLING ISSUE FOR EVERY SECTOR OF THE ELECTORATE.

AS A RESULT, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO MIX OUR MESSAGES. WE DIDN'T HAVE A BLACK STRATEGY FOR BLACK VOTES, A WOMEN'S STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S VOTES, AND ANOTHER TYPE OF STRATEGY FOR EVERY OTHER KIND OF VOTE.

WE STRESSED THE SAME FOUR ISSUES FOR EVERYBODY.

CONSENSUS ISSUES. AND, FRANKLY, WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT THAT MUCH ELSE. ONE COHERENT MESSAGE CENTERED AROUND FOUR ISSUES:

- CREATING JOBS;
- IMPROVING THE SCHOOLS;
- CLEANING UP THE ENVIRONMENT;
- AND FIGHTING CRIME.

MOST OF MY MAJOR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES OVER FOUR YEARS WERE CENTERED AROUND THOSE ISSUES. AND THEY WERE THE HEART OF THE CAMPAIGN.

RATHER THAN ATTACKING THE DEMOCRATS OR ENGAGING IN ANY PARTISAN BATTLE WHATSOEVER, WE ASKED THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE TO CONSIDER THE INCREDIBLE PROGRESS WE HAD MADE IN THOSE FOUR AREAS.

AND PEOPLE RESPONDED -- BLACK, WHITE AND HISPANIC, YOUNG AND OLD, WOMEN AND MEN -- THAT, YES, THOSE WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES TO BE WORRYING ABOUT. THEY WERE, IN SHORT, CONSENSUS ISSUES.

WE CAN GET INTO SOME OF THE SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH OUR RECORD ON THOSE ISSUES AFFECTED SPECIFIC SECTORS OF THE ELECTORATE. MINORITY EMPLOYMENT ROSE FASTER THAN WHITE EMPLOYMENT, FOR EXAMPLE. CRIME WAS DOWN SHARPLY IN THE CITIES. SOUTH JERSEY FINALLY HAD A VOICE IN THE CAPITAL.

BUT ONE CENTRAL PHENOMENON WAS CLEAR.

NEW JERSEY REALLY HAS CHANGED FROM BEING A FOLLOWER TO BEING A LEADER. FROM A STATE THAT WAS DYING ECONOMICALLY TO ONE THAT IS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF ATTRACTING HIGH TECH JOBS.

FROM A STATE THAT PEOPLE LAUGHED AT TO A STATE THAT PEOPLE LOOKED TO FOR NEW IDEAS.

AND PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF THAT. THAT'S WHY THEY VOTED AS THEY DID.

THANK YOU.

I'M READY FOR ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE.