

REMARKS BY GOVERNOR JAMES B. EDWARDS
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION WINTER MEETING AND LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
FOR RELEASE: 1:00 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1976

LAST WEEK IN MY STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS, I EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS IN GOVERNMENT. THIS NEED HOLDS TRUE WHETHER IT BE AT THE STATE, COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT.

WE HAVE REACHED A TIME IN OUR NATION WHEN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT IS AT A LOW LEVEL. IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS THE LEADERS IN GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE THAT CONFIDENCE. WE CAN THROUGH SOME VERY SIMPLE, STRAIGHTFORWARD WAYS. WE MUST ENSURE THAT EVERY DOLLAR WE SPEND IS NOT JUST DEFENSIBLE, BUT THAT IT IS SPENT FOR WHAT THE TAXPAYERS REALLY NEED.

WHEN WE SPEND THOSE TAX DOLLARS, WE MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT THEY ARE SPENT BOTH EFFECTIVELY AND WITH A MINIMUM OF WASTE. IN A TIME WHEN TAXES HAVE REACHED AN ALARMINGLY HIGH PORTION OF PEOPLE'S INCOME --- WE MUST NOT SPEND REVENUES UNWISELY.

EACH YEAR A LARGER AND LARGER PORTION OF PERSONAL INCOME GOES TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 -- IF CURRENT TRENDS CONTINUE -- MORE THAN HALF OUR INCOMES WILL GO INTO GOVERNMENT.

THIS OF COURSE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM. OUR CONGRESS AND WE THE PEOPLE MUST PREVENT THIS FROM HAPPENING. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL THAT WE CAN DO AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL.

OF COURSE WE CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER OUR OWN SPENDING PATTERNS. WE CAN "PULL IN THE REINS" ON UNPRODUCTIVE AND WASTEFUL PROGRAMS.

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT FEDERAL SPENDING? WE MUST DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY THERE AS CITIZENS -- WE MUST ELECT MEN AND WOMEN OF FORESIGHT WHO WILL WORK TO END EXCESSIVE SPENDING.

THERE ARE A FEW OTHER THINGS THAT WE CAN DO AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. FOR MANY YEARS WE HAVE ALL TENDED TO LOOK AT FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND FEDERAL MONEY AS IF THEY WERE FREE. MANY OF YOU SITTING HERE TODAY KNOW THAT THERE'S NOTHING FREE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS. BUT THIS GOES FARTHER THAN JUST THE MATCHING FUNDS THAT MUST BE PROVIDED.

THERE ARE NUMEROUS FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND GRANTS THAT CREATE RECURRING COSTS --- COSTS THAT MUST BE PICKED UP BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHEN THE FEDERAL MONEY RUNS OUT. I SUGGEST THAT WE TAKE A HARDER LOOK AT THESE PROGRAMS.

IN STATE GOVERNMENT TODAY, THERE ARE MANY RECURRING COSTS FROM FEDERAL PROGRAMS. MANY OF THESE INCLUDE THE COST OF EMPLOYEES HIRED TO IMPLEMENT AND ADMINISTER FEDERAL PROGRAMS. THE FEDERAL MONEY IS GONE -- BUT STATE COSTS ARE STILL THERE.

WE MUST PUT AN END TO ACCEPTING FEDERAL PROGRAMS JUST BECAUSE THE MONEY IS THERE. WE CAN NO LONGER JUMP AT FEDERAL GRANTS SIMPLY BECAUSE WE ARE AFRAID THAT SOMEBODY ELSE WILL GET THE MONEY. AS I SAID BEFORE THERE IS NOTHING FREE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS -- WE ALL PAY FOR THEM SOONER OR LATER.

WHAT WE MUST DO IS TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT THE NEED FOR SUCH PROGRAMS. WE SHOULD THEN BALANCE BOTH CURRENT AND LONG-RANGE COSTS AGAINST THE BENEFITS THAT RESULT.

THERE IS A LOT OF RHETORIC COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON ABOUT LOCAL CONTROL OF PROGRAMS. I HOPE THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL FORCE THESE PROMISES TO BE MADE GOOD.

WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE LOCAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS AS MUCH CONTROL OVER FEDERAL PROGRAMS AS POSSIBLE. IF WE DO NOT, WE WILL FIND OURSELVES RESPONDING TO A MULTITUDE OF FEDERAL GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS THAT WILL COST OUR TAXPAYERS EVEN MORE. WE ALL KNOW THAT GOVERNMENT IS BEST WHEN IT IS CLOSEST TO THE PEOPLE -- AND IT'S OUR JOB TO KEEP GOVERNMENT CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE.

I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE AT THE STATE LEVEL STAND READY TO HELP YOU IN REACHING YOUR GOALS AND PROVIDING EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT SERVICES TO YOUR CITIZENS.

MY DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS ALWAYS OPEN TO YOUR PROBLEMS, SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS. WE HAVE A PARTNERSHIP IN THIS GREAT STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA. WE ALL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING SOUTH CAROLINA A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU OVER THE COMING MONTHS AND YEARS TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT AND MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR CITIZENS.