

© 1976. This is a rough draft. We are getting the Cicero quote for insertion. Thought you might want to make changes so I can revise for printing. John Bullington

REMARKS BY GOVERNOR JAMES B. EDWARDS  
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After a year in the Governor's Office back in Columbia, you have no idea how good it feels to be back among friends again.

It is good to be here among so many of my friends and professional colleagues. In the past year, I have deeply missed the practice of oral surgery...and I am looking forward to returning again to the challenges of the dental profession.

I have found the political realm to have many of the same challenges as the dental profession...that is...the amount of red tape in government often demands radical surgery.

On a more serious side...let me offer you an idea that I firmly believe: no single American---especially those men and women in the professions---can afford apathy toward government today. This is one of the reasons I got into politics. I believe that if each of you will seriously consider your role in the decision-making process of government today, you will see how important your voice can be.

Those of us in the professions have often devoted so much time to our field of work that we have ignored our responsibility to our fellow man through the political process. Certainly we have sacrificed hours upon

hours to improve the health and well-being of humanity. We have not taken the easy way out. We have dedicated ourselves to one of the most demanding professions in the world.

But, I submit to you that there is a higher calling...that calling is the future of our nation.

As members of the healing professions, we have developed an acute sensitivity toward the problems of human beings. We have benefited from some of the best educational institutions in the world. We have developed a sense of judgment that must not allow mistakes.

I believe that with all of this expertise and ability---we owe our nation, the world and our fellow man our involvement and participation in the affairs of government.

Over the past year, I have seen what can really be accomplished by dedicated professionals when they direct their attentions to improving government. Now, I just can imagine what it would be like if more professionals would do likewise.

It does little good to simply grumble about the state of the nation...we must give of ourselves in solving of America's problems.

Let's take a moment to look at the state of America today. You have been reading and watching the news media, but let me review some of the problems this country now faces at home and around the world.

Last year, American forces pulled out of its commitment to South Vietnam...leaving thousands of freedom loving people in Southeast Asia to the oppression of a Communist regime. That action shook America's

allies throughout the world and made them reconsider the value and perhaps the honor of an American commitment. At the same time, it gave our enemies signs of hope by showing them our weak side.

Shortly after our wholesale withdrawal from South Vietnam, Communist forces in Portugal stamped out the hope of freedom for the people of that country. America stood by, acting powerless to prevent the takeover.

At this very hour, segments of the Russian fleet move about freely in the Indian Ocean and near the vital Suez Canal.

In the Middle East--truces are short-lived, fighting continues and terrorist activities run rampant.

In Angola, Communist forces...some sent direct from Cuba...are waging warfare to destroy the rights of free people while American support is being withdrawn by the Congress.

At home, repeated attacks on the CIA and the FBI have undermined public confidence in the necessity for a strong intelligence and investigative arm of government.

Unconcerned and inactive Congresses have turned a "deaf ear" to our defense needs...spending more and more money on domestic programs and foreign aid. As a result, our Navy, Air Force, and Army suffer cutbacks in budgets, cancellation of new weaponry and continued operation with out-dated equipment. The Congress has forgotten two major points in considering our defense expenditures: First, that money spent for defense is double dollars---they provide an adequate defense structure, while creating

Productive jobs in the private sector and increasing our nation's economic health.

Second, Congress has forgotten the words of Eleanor Roosevelt who said: "The war for freedom will never be won, because the price of freedom is constant vigilance over ourselves and our government."

Our nation's economy, despite bright promises, still feels the effects of inflation and recession. Meanwhile, the federal government continues an irresponsible spending binge producing a \$700 billion national debt. We end up spending \$84 billion every year just on the debt service. In addition, over-regulation by the federal government forces us to continue spending \$23 billion a year to buy energy from foreign sources.

All these problems I have outlined concern me and every other involved American. I am sure they concern you. I don't mean to say that our situation today is hopeless...far from it. America has the greatest resource in the world to cope its problems...that resource is our people. People like you.

It's people like you who are going to solve these problems. All we must do is look beyond our daily pursuits and see clearly our role in America's future. It's a shame that it took a man from another nation-- Alexander Solzhenitsyn to tell us we need a new national resolve. He told us that the only thing the Soviets respect is strength. He said Americans must re-awaken to the responsibilities of freedom. These are things we should already know!

Perhaps you say: "What can I do, I am only one person?" I assure you there are more than enough problems to go around. Whether

it's at the community, city, state, or federal level--there's plenty you can do.

This year, when you are filling out your tax returns...take a long look at how much money you are paying for government. Is it worth it? I believe not.

I believe we Americans are paying far too much for what we are getting. We are paying more and more every year. By the year two thousand--if things don't change we may be giving half our income to government. Those of us who are productive members of society are subsidizing the non-productive members of society. We are supporting an apathetic and spend thrift federal bureaucracy that continues to feed itself at the expense of the taxpayer.

We are at fault for some of this too. We are at fault because we let government do things to us. We did not tell it what to do. Government is supposed to be the servant of the people.

The politicians in Washington have sought to make good their campaign promises of everything for everybody...and it seems nobody figured out what it was going to cost. The bureaucracy has been pleased to oblige by enlarging programs, staffs, and spending.

Look at the food stamp program. It began as a simple program in 1962 to help poor families. It cost \$14 million to begin with. In 1976 it's costing upwards of \$6.6 billion. It has a national 'error' rate---I would rather call it "waste rate"--of 20 percent--\$1.3 billion.

It's evident that this program has been not only misjudged, but mis-managed. And the taxpayers are paying are paying the bill for the mistakes.

For many years now, state and local governments have competed with each other to get a bigger share of federal programs. Few of them foresaw the costs. When the federal programs were reduced or cut out, the local taxpayer had to pick up the tab.

Few state and local governments ever considered the long term costs. In addition, many saw the grants as free money. But it was not. If the local government did not end up funding the program the continuation of the federal program only contributed to everybody else's federal taxes.

These are just a few areas where government has gotten out of control. And we the people have let it.

Today, we are the only ones who can bring it back under control.

You--especially--have a responsibility to help. We must monitor the actions of government and make the voice of the taxpayer heard loud and clear at every level of government.

We must take the lead. Congress has refused to do so. The bureaucracy certainly won't.

Our nation has for too long become the victim of "followship." Many of our so-called leaders have followed popularity polls instead of their convictions. They have followed political expediency rather than the will of the people.

We have reached a time in America when there is an urgent need for responsible leadership. There is a need for confidence in government and a government that deserves that confidence.

Our people need a new spirit. We need a political "counter-revolution" that will bring about a re-dedication to the basic principles on which this nation was founded.

The great challenge before you is to make 1976 a "year of national destiny."

I urge you to go back to your respective towns and cities...look at the needs and the problems of our area and the nation...and dedicate yourselves to solving those problems. I would ask you to devote as much time as you can in this Bicentennial year to re-building the spirit of America. Personally dedicate yourselves to the ideals and principles of this nation... give of your abilities to the solving of our problems. This would be the greatest gift you can give America for her 200th birthday.

Let me, in closing, leave with you a quote that sums it up very well:

"What we have done for ourselves

Alone, dies with us.

What we have done for others and the world

remains and is immortal."