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Press Release - Muskie Contends Agnew's Dictionary Lacks Two Words - 'Plain Talk'

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FOR RELEASE

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MUSKIE CONTENDS AGNEW'S DICTIONARY LACKS TWO WORDS -- 'PLAIN TALK'

In a day when Americans are asking vital questions, Vice President Agnew is avoiding answers by dreaming up tongue-twisting phrases, Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) told a New Jersey audience tonight.

"Now, if ever, is the time for the Republican Administration to express its ideals," Senator Muskie said in remarks prepared for delivery at a rally for Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., (D-N.J.) at Perth Amboy.

"Now, when its chief spokesman is flying from State to State, speaking for candidates who think as he does. Now, when Americans are asking for new directions to the future.

"Americans want to know the way to cure the economy. And the Vice President talks about 'nattering nabobs of negativism.'

"Americans want to know the way to reduce crime and stop violence. And the Vice President talks about 'pusillanimous pussyfooters.'

"Americans want to know the way to end the war. And the Vice President talks about 'whimpering isolationists.'

"Two words are missing from the Agnew dictionary -- plain talk...

"Plain talk that makes sense...plain talk that Americans can understand... plain talk that Americans want to hear. It seems as if the Administration has decided to copy one of the most questionable fashion trends of the year. It's dressing the thinnest ideas in the longest words it can find."

Senator Muskie told the New Jersey audience that Senator Williams is the kind of leader who has helped show the way "toward peace, toward security, toward opportunity" and that "we must keep him in the Senate."

He praised Senator Williams for defending the dignity of the senior citizen, for helping create hundreds of thousands of acres of new park land in New Jersey through his work on the Federal Open Space Act and for leading the fight for the Construction Safety Act and the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act.

REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
IN BEHALF OF SENATOR HARRISON A. WILLIAMS AT
PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY

September 22, 1970

I want to thank you for inviting me to New Jersey.

I ran across someone recently from this part of the country, who told me about a trip he made to Maine.

He had traveled several miles without seeing any traffic directions.

So he became confused.

Finally, he spotted someone sitting beside the road, who looked as if he knew his way around.

"Say there," he asked, "am I on the right road to Portland?"

The fellow half looked up. "This is the road all right," he replied, "But if you want to get to Portland, you'd better turn around--it's in the other direction."

Some people have also become confused this year about the directions we are taking as a nation.

But certainly you should not feel confused here in New Jersey about the direction you want to take.

For you have developed leaders in this State--men who have demonstrated time and again the ability to point the way--

--toward peace;

--toward security;

--toward opportunity.

Pete Williams is that kind of a leader--and we must keep him in the Senate.

Remember what one of your greatest Governors once said:

"Sometimes people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am American."

And even Spiro Agnew can't make us forget that Woodrow Wilson was right.

Now, if ever, is the time for the Republican Administration to express its ideals.

Now, when its chief spokesman is flying from State to State, speaking for candidates who think as he does.

Now, when Americans are asking for new directions to the future.

Americans want to know the way to cure the economy.

And the Vice President talks about "nattering nabobs of negativism."

Americans want to know the way to reduce crime and stop violence.

And the Vice President talks about "pusillanimous pussyfooters".

Americans want to know the way to end the war.

And the Vice President talks about "whimpering isolationists".

Two words are missing from the Agnew dictionary--Plain Talk--

--Plain talk that makes sense;

--Plain talk that Americans can understand;

--Plain talk that Americans want to hear.

It seems as if the Administration has decided to copy one of the most questionable fashion trends of the year.

It's dressing the thinnest ideas in the longest words it can find.

But no matter how long the words are, they still can not hide the promises that the Administration made 20 months ago.

They were going to add 15 million people to the ranks of the employed.

And now more than a million and a half people have been added to the ranks of the unemployed.

Don't blame that on the Democrats.

They were going to follow a plan to end the war.

And now--almost two years later--they refuse to tell us when.

Don't blame that on the Democrats.

They were going to make the streets safe to walk on.

And now more people are victims of crime than ever before.

Don't blame that on the Democrats.

Harry Truman used to keep a sign on his desk.

It said, "The buck stops here."

That sign belongs back in the White House.

And yet the Vice President tells us that we have forgotten the heritage of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy.

But I ask you.

Who cares about the father who has to line up for his unemployment check in order to feed his family?

The party of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy.

Who cares about the housewife who has to pay more money for less groceries?

The party of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy.

Who cares about the young couple that can't afford a home of their own because interest rates are at their highest level since the Civil War?

The party of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy.

Who cares about the senior citizen whose income remains the same while the cost of living continues to rise? The senior citizen whose dignity Pete Williams has done so much to defend?

Who cares that unemployment in the Perth Amboy-New Brunswick area has increased more than 40% in a year and a half?

Who cares that too many Americans are still divided and angry? That they are hostile to each other? That their level of tolerance is low?

Yes--the party of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy.

We know that the foundations of America are--

--trust

--and fairness;

--and understanding;

--and compassion.

We know that the mortar which holds these foundations in place is self-discipline;

--and restraint;

--and peaceful conduct.

We know about our people's fears that the land is not steady... that the mortar is crumbling...that the foundations may collapse.

And why?

Have we lost the common courage that built this nation?

The courage to talk sense?

To face the issues?

To take responsibility for what happens?

No--I do not believe the American people have lost that courage.

But I believe some people have lost faith in the ability of Americans to exercise the courage they possess.

Courage is not just talking about what is right in America.

It is also preserving what is right.

That's why Pete Williams worked to pass the Federal Open Space Act--which has helped create hundreds of thousands of acres of new parklands in New Jersey.

Courage is not just criticizing what is wrong in America.

It is also correcting what is wrong.

That's why Pete Williams led the fight for the Construction Safety Act and the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act--to improve the lot of the working man.

Courage is not denouncing your opponent in the most scathing words you can find.

It is speaking up for the values you believe in.

That's why Pete Williams is campaigning through the length and breadth of this State, telling people where he stands.

My father came to America when he was seventeen years old--because his father wanted him to have a place to grow--free from want and free from fear.

He shared the hardships--and the opportunities--which this land had to offer.

His life was a belief in freedom...in the basic notion that every American is somebody...that everyone should be able to develop his own potential.

And he helped build a country--not always loving his neighbors...or praising them...or agreeing with them--but tolerating them...respecting them...learning to understand them.

Those are the lessons he handed down to me.

And I think I know what those lessons mean.

They mean that every American has the right--

--To be safe--on any street of any community at any time of day or night;

They mean that every American has the right--

--To be treated equally and with respect--wherever he or she tries to live and work;

They mean that every American has the right--

--To be left alone--free from noise and pollution and interference with his or her private life.

Peace, opportunity and freedom--these must be our objectives.

They are objectives that Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy pointed out to us in a special way.

They are objectives we must aim for--if America is to be wise...and open...and secure.

And no amount of campaign rhetoric can dishonor these objectives--or the records of the men who have supported them.

The voters of America are not impressed by words that are unusual, or unpleasant, or unpronounceable.

They want to know what the record shows.

And in New Jersey, the record of Pete Williams will speak louder than all the words of this campaign--both in terms of his service to his State and his respect for all its citizens.

It is a record that reflects the pride in our nation's past and the promise in our nation's future.

You must decide whether the people of New Jersey--and of America--deserve the best in 1970 and the years to come.

I have no doubt what your decision must be.

Pete Williams will continue his work in the United States Senate.

Thank you.