

REMARKS BY PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
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TO THE  
REPUBLICAN SOUTHERN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
JANUARY 27, 1984

Thank you so very much, Mack (Mattingly). What a joy to be with fellow Southerners this morning. You're not only the heart of our party -- you are its backbone as well! Each one of you here this morning provides the energy, the time, the resources, the leadership to win not only your own elections, but those of fellow Republicans as well. For it was the South, back in 1978, which elected Senator Cochran and in 1980, elected Senators Mattingly and Denton and helped our party gain control of the U.S. Senate. We need you to retain that majority in 1984, to strengthen Republican forces in the House, to rack up Republican victories in state and local races all across this region, and most importantly, to re-elect Ronald Reagan.

I know I echo your sentiments of appreciation for what our President has done for America. The last three years represent a special kind of change -- creating economic opportunity, bringing big government under control and renewing the confidence of the American people in their institutions. Our progress toward those goals was highlighted Wednesday night in the President's outstanding State of the Union address.

The news the President reported was, I'm sure, most welcomed. For 1983 was a year that many thought couldn't happen, at least not until the 1990's. Some said it would never happen. Inflation dropped -- from 12.4 percent -- to around three percent. The GNP rose -- to better than six percent. Civilian unemployment declined 2½ percentage points, while employment reached record levels. Industrial production increased 15 percent and consumer confidence soared. For the first time in recent memory, our



economy achieved a favorable combination of consistent growth, low inflation and falling unemployment. This is truly good news for all Americans. As Republicans, we're going to run on our record. Democrats must rely on their rhetoric. We will campaign on the President's achievements. We have a great message to share. Not only across the South, but across America.

Now today I want to focus on another very important part of the President's message. Call it the gender gap, women's issues, the fairness question. Whatever its label, it is largely a result of what I call America's "Quiet Revolution" -- the tidal wave of qualified and talented women who have entered our workforce in record numbers over the past twenty years.

I trust you'll forgive me if I begin by looking over my shoulder to a day in September 1962 when I entered Harvard Law School, one of 25 women in a class of 550. I'll never forget being accosted on my very first day at Harvard by a male classmate who demanded to know what I was doing there.

"Don't you realize," he said in tones of moral outrage, "that there are men who'd give their right arm to be in this law school? Men who would use their legal education." Obviously, the inference was that I was taking the place of a man. And come to think of it, some may have felt that way when I was appointed Secretary of Transportation! Today, the Harvard law class is almost 40% female, and gender precedents are being shattered everywhere. Among our own precedent shatterers are Jeane Kirkpatrick, the first woman to serve as Ambassador to the United Nations -- Sandra Day O'Connor, who was offered a legal typist's job in 1952 -- and went on to break the type, and interpret the law of the land on this nation's highest court -- Helene von Damm, the first woman to head all of Presidential personnel for the entire government -- Helene now serves as Ambassador to Austria, and Nancy Harvey Steorts, the first woman to head the Consumer Product Safety Commission -- and I'm pleased to be on the frontier in transportation, as one of three women in the Cabinet, the most to have served at any one time under any President, I have discovered my own little footnote in history -- I am the first woman to head a branch of the Armed Services, the Coast Guard.

Yes, we've watched that quiet revolution spread in this country, as inflation, changing family patterns, and their own career ambitions have led millions of women into the marketplace. When I finished Law School in 1965, only 30% of women were in the work force. Today, just 19 years later, some 52% are working. I was amazed to discover that 64% of women with children between the ages of 6 and 17 work outside the home. The increased divorce rate means a growing number of working mothers raise their children alone. In the last decade, there was an increase of 51% in single heads of households, most of them women.

The impact of this tidal wave of women entering the workforce, has not yet been fully perceived. For the quiet revolution has created a whole new set of problems which would face any President sitting in the Oval Office today.

At the American Enterprise Institute, an analysis of 500 polls since 1948 identified a clear divergence between men and women that developed in the late 70's which helps explain the Gender Gap. Women have less faith in our institutions. Women are more skeptical about the future of our country and government's ability to handle problems. And it is no wonder. The median income of the woman raising her two children alone is just \$11,000. Because of the growing divorce rate, older women are one of the fastest growing groups of poor in America today. When you look back at the recession, and combine that with the phenomenon of last hired, first fired, it is not surprising that



women feel insecure about their futures. The President recognized these enormous changes in American society. Six months before I left the White House, he asked me to chair a Coordinating Council on Women to look at problems of women. For the first time six assistants to the President met on a regular basis to review the phenomenon which has been taking place in our country and to let him know what should be done about it.

There were immediate results. In last year's State of the Union message the President promised to help assure economic and legal equity for women. He promised to strengthen enforcement of child support laws and remedy inequities in pension laws. In this year's address he reinforced his commitment to ensure women's rights, including facilitating child care and increasing Individual Retirement Accounts for homemakers.

The President is keeping these promises, as well as numerous others. He continues to meet with his Cabinet on proposals dealing with the complex set of problems women face today. As we address the real problems of women truly in need, we are addressing the fairness issue -- for many women not in the target groups will applaud our actions. But our message is not getting out. The President, and all Republicans, have a lot to offer the women of this country. We have to tell the American people what a difference this President has made, for women in the workforce and for those who choose to work at home.

It is this President who sponsored legislation to strengthen governmental action against fathers who fail to pay court-ordered child support. These new efforts should help to bring nearly \$4 billion in delinquent payments to the millions of mothers who are trying to raise their children alone.

It is this President who is helping to address the needs of the older woman, the woman who has devoted herself entirely to the role of mother and homemaker -- perhaps the most ambitious and important of careers -- the same woman who finds her income meager in retirement. It is this President who helped to change social security laws to equalize benefits for widows and widowers; his proposals for pension reform, if enacted into law, guarantee that women who are dependent on their spouse's pension to ensure adequate retirement income, will no longer be surprised by its termination; a husband cannot waive pension rights without the wife's agreement in writing. Under the same proposal, courts may order some of the pension rights to go to a divorced homemaker, a provision similar to that already signed into law by this President for spouses of the military. And for those now entering the workforce, pension participation may begin at age 21 instead of 25, to compensate for the fact that women begin working at an earlier age than men. The pension proposal introduced by the President allows mothers to return to work after a year's maternity leave without losing their accumulated benefits.

It is this President who is determined to enforce those laws which can ensure economic equity for women. We are supporting women's rights in court case after court case -- winning the largest recovery ever -- \$2.7 million -- in an anti-discrimination complaint against a public employer. We are arguing that law firms must consider women for partnerships on an equal basis with the men (Hishon V. King & Spaulding). We have filed against one of the largest consumer loan companies in America, for alleged sex discrimination in the granting of credit. We have filed suit against the tenth largest police force in the nation for its alleged refusal to recruit, hire, assign, and promote blacks, Hispanics, and women on an equal basis with white Anglo men (U.S. V. Suffolk County, New York). We are pressing the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to secure nearly twice as much back pay for victims of discrimination as Jimmy Carter's



Administration did in 1980, and we are arguing that women employees must have pension benefits equal to men's.

And this is the President responsible for the 50 states project, designed to work with the Governors to identify and correct vestiges of discrimination in state laws and regulations. This is the President who set up the task force on legal equity for women, whose first recommendations were adopted in the Administration's social security package. Numerous other proposals to clean up the Federal code have already been introduced in the Senate -- with the President's whole-hearted backing -- by the senior Senator from Kansas, who takes a pretty active part himself in the fight for a sex-blind, color-blind society.

And this is only the beginning. Some people talk about tax reform. President Reagan has achieved it. Because he led the way, the overall tax burden in this country was slashed one-third of a trillion dollars. Thanks to Ronald Reagan, we also struck hard at the so-called "marriage tax" that unfairly penalized working women. As a result, two wage earner families with a combined income of \$30,000 can expect to keep an extra \$375 this year alone. Business owners who are married women, composing two thirds of the three million female entrepreneurs, can reap even greater benefits from this change. Since most of their businesses pay personal, rather than corporate taxes, they have more money to invest or save.

Thanks to Ronald Reagan, millions of women stand to gain from the virtual elimination of the estate tax, permitting for the first time a spouse to keep a farm or small business instead of having to sell it to pay the taxes. Thanks to Ronald Reagan, women benefit from improved IRA accounts for homemakers and from substantial increases in tax credits for child care expenses targeted to benefit low and middle income families the most. Starting this year, the 1040A short tax form contains an additional line for deducting child care costs, making it easier than ever before for lower and middle income parents to claim those deductions. In addition, this Administration is working hard to encourage employers in the private sector to provide more child care services for working mothers.

But perhaps the best evidence of fairness I know -- the kind you can put in your pocketbook -- is the difference that this President has made in our economy. It is Ronald Reagan who banished double-digit inflation from the grocery store and the gas pump -- who did it in fewer than two years rather than the decade or more the experts said it would take. And it is Ronald Reagan whose success in the fight against inflation means an extra \$911 in purchasing power and an extra \$207 through tax cuts for a single mother trying to support two children on a fixed income of \$11,000 a year.

It is Ronald Reagan who has sliced the prime rates nearly in half. Mortgage interest rates have come down five percentage points from the peak, lowering the average monthly mortgage on a \$50,000 house by \$200, and making it easier for men and women alike to buy not only new homes, but autos, appliances and all the other consumer goods that fuel a modern economy.

And it is Ronald Reagan whose combination of tax cuts, spending restraints, regulatory reform and plain common sense have created those four million jobs since last December. But again, let me stress: the message of what this President has done and will continue to do for the women of our country, is not getting out! You and I can do something about that. This compilation of initiatives -- the Reagan Record for women -- is available for each of you. And, ladies and gentlemen, there is more to be done.



And let us continue to attack discrimination wherever it exists. In the law books or the government offices or union halls. Let us open up the boardroom as well as the assembly lines -- the work benches as well as the Supreme Court's bench. Let us foster an atmosphere in which the career woman or the homemaker and mother is highly regarded, and rewarded, as the cornerstone of our future.

Let us spread the word and tell the truth to the American people. Let us carry the message of what this President has done for women, and for all Americans, in his continuing commitment to make this a better place to live.

There is not a person here today who does not recognize that our own commitment -- our vision of the future -- must begin where we are. When I arrived at the DOT, I asked how many women employees we had. I was told 19 percent. Then I asked how many women were at DOT when it was established in 1967. The answer: 18.5 percent. What's more, only one percent of the upper grade positions were filled by women. It didn't take long for us to design a program to change all that --or for the President personally to lend his backing when I presented my proposals to the Cabinet. Now we are helping women to enter our workforce, and we're preparing more women than ever before to assume managerial responsibilities and to broaden existing skills -- for example, to become air traffic controllers and move into higher paying jobs.

In a Department composed of 102,000 people, that vision of change is indeed a challenge -- it takes many women to move that female percentage up even one point! But we are totally committed to the task.

President Reagan has recognized the quiet revolution in American society. He is determined to harness it -- to solve new problems caused by the revolution and to assure American women of full participation in the economic life of our Nation. One of the greatest of American women never saw a voting booth. She never held public office. Yet her spirit and her example have inspired millions. Her name -- Helen Keller -- and she summed up her philosophy in a single sentence. "One can never consent to creep," she said, "when one feels an impulse to soar." Today, half a century after Miss Keller spoke out, American women are truly beginning to soar. And this party and this President can claim their rightful share of the credit.

From now until November, not one of us can consent to creep. We must ourselves redouble our efforts, for it is absolutely essential that our message be perceived and understood all across this Nation. The President deserves it. History demands it. And our children will reward it.

Thank you and God bless you all.

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