

Remarks before the Grocery Manufacturers of America

Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers

Senate, Public relations, Speeches, Organizations, Box PR72, Folder 121

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REMARKS OF
THE HONORABLE SPARK M. MATSUNAGA
U. S. CONGRESSMAN FROM HAWAII
AT THE
PUBLIC POLICY FORUM
GROCERY MANUFACTURERS OF AMERICA
MADISON HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D. C.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1976

MR. PRESIDENT, THANK YOU FOR THAT GRACIOUS INTRODUCTION.

IT IS A REAL PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO TALK ON
ONE OF MY FAVORITE TOPICS -- THE U. S. CONGRESS.

I FIRST DECIDED TO BE A CONGRESSMAN WHEN I WAS A
SCHOOLBOY ON THE ISLAND OF KAUAI, THE SMALLEST OF THE FOUR
MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. SINCE MY PARENTS WERE IMMIGRANTS
WHO WORKED IN THE SUGAR AND PINEAPPLE FIELDS, AND SINCE
HAWAII WAS NOT EVEN A STATE AT THAT TIME, MY FRIENDS ALL
LAUGHED AT ME. AFTER WORLD WAR II, HOWEVER, WHILE ATTENDING
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL ON THE GI BILL, I CAME TO WASHINGTON
AND LOBBIED HARD FOR STATEHOOD. IN A SENSE, I GUESS I *HELPED*
To CREATED A JOB FOR MYSELF.

I HAVE BEEN A CONGRESSMAN FOR NEARLY FOURTEEN YEARS

NOW, AND, BEFORE THAT, I SERVED IN THE HAWAII TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE. ALL TOLD, I HAVE BEEN A PUBLIC SERVANT FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, AND I FEEL THAT THERE IS NO MORE SATISFYING AND FULFILLING CAREER FOR A PUBLIC-SPIRITED CITIZEN.

CONGRESS HAS CHANGED A LOT SINCE I WAS SWORN IN FOR THE FIRST TIME 14 YEARS AGO. AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE AND THE HOUSE DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND POLICY COMMITTEE, I HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN SOME OF THOSE CHANGES AND I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THEM AND DISCUSS SOME OF THE CHANGES WHICH I BELIEVE WILL OCCUR IN THE 95TH CONGRESS WHICH CONVENES IN JANUARY 1977.

PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WHICH I HAVE WITNESSED DURING MY 14 YEARS IN THE HOUSE IS THE DEATH OF SENIORITY SYSTEM. WHEN I FIRST ENTERED CONGRESS, EVERYTHING WAS DETERMINED BY SENIORITY, FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF OFFICE SPACE. TODAY, HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN MUST BE ELECTED BY THE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS, THE

DEMOCRATS BEING THE MAJORITY PARTY. AS YOU KNOW, THREE SENIOR COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN FAILED TO WIN THE CAUCUS ELECTION AND LOST THEIR CHAIRMANSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 94TH CONGRESS.

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO, NOT ONLY WAS THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP DETERMINED BY SENIORITY, BUT SO WAS THE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP. A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF SENIOR HOUSE MEMBERS HELD ALL OF THE IMPORTANT COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS AND THE MAJOR SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS. TODAY, THE NUMBER OF ^{FULL COMMITTEE ON} SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS ^{TO ONE} A MEMBER MAY HOLD HAS BEEN LIMITED AND A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF JUNIOR MEMBERS HAVE BECOME CHAIRMEN OF SUBCOMMITTEES.

AS THE IMPORANCE^A OF SENIORITY HAS DECLINED, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS BECOME MORE OPEN AND MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PUBLIC. THIS IS DUE IN PART TO THE FACT THAT POWER IN THE HOUSE IS NO LONGER CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF A FEW SENIOR MEMBERS, BUT DISPERSED AMONG MORE MEMBERS, INCLUDING RELATIVELY YOUNGER AND MORE JUNIOR

CONGRESSMEN. IN ADDITION, THE HOUSE HAS ADOPTED PROGRESSIVE NEW RULES OPENING UP ITS COMMITTEE MEETINGS TO THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC. I KNOW THAT I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THE BUSINESS OF CONGRESS -- PARTICULARLY IN THE HOUSE -- IS CONDUCTED IN COMMITTEE. WITH 435 MEMBERS, WE JUST COULDN'T DO EVERYTHING ON THE HOUSE FLOOR. PRIOR TO 1972, MANY SO-CALLED "EXECUTIVE SESSIONS," OR CLOSED COMMITTEE MEETINGS WERE HELD IN THE HOUSE. TOO OFTEN, MEMBERS EXPRESSED ONE OPINION IN PUBLIC AND THEN, IN THE CLOSED COMMITTEE MEETING, EXPRESSED A SECOND, SOMETIMES A QUITE DIFFERENT OPINION. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 93RD CONGRESS, HOWEVER, RULES WERE ADOPTED WHICH REQUIRE COMMITTEES TO VOTE PUBLICLY ^{FOR THE RECORD} ON WHETHER OR NOT THEIR MEETINGS SHOULD BE CLOSED. SINCE THEN, MEETINGS HAVE BEEN CLOSED ONLY IN THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, WHEN NATIONAL SECURITY OR THE PERSONAL REPUTATION OF A MEMBER IS INVOLVED.

IN 1970, MY OWN PROPOSAL FOR RECORDED TELLER VOTES WAS INCORPORATED IN THE LANDMARK LEGISLATIVE REORGANIZATION

ACT OF THAT YEAR. TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RECORD TELLER VOTE, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TO EXPEDITE CONSIDERATION OF THE NATION'S BUSINESS, SOMETIMES FUNCTIONS AS A COMMITTEE. WHILE IN THE "COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE," AS IT IS CALLED, FEWER MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED FOR A QUORUM. THE HOUSE USUALLY RESOLVES ITSELF INTO A COMMITTEE WHEN IT IS GETTING READY TO START THE LENGTHY PROCESS OF DEBATING AND AMENDING A BILL. THE COMMITTEE THEN "REPORTS" THE BILL AND ANY AMENDMENTS IT HAS ADOPTED TO THE HOUSE AND THE HOUSE VOTES ON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE BILL AND AMENDMENTS. PRIOR TO 1970, RECORDED VOTES WERE NOT PERMITTED WHILE THE HOUSE WAS FUNCTIONING AS THE "COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE." THAT MEANT THAT KEY AMENDMENTS COULD BE ADOPTED OR DEFEATED AND ONE WOULD NEVER KNOW HOW HIS REPRESENTATIVE HAD VOTED ON THEM. MY PROPOSAL, BY PROVIDING FOR RECORDED TELLER VOTES IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE, MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC TO FIND OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME HOW CONGRESSMEN WERE VOTING ON SUCH AMENDMENTS. /'

FINALLY, SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE RACE ^{FOR} ~~OF THE~~
^{SEATS}
HOUSE _A HAVE OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE NEW LAWS WITH RESPECT
TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND CAMPAIGN SPENDING. WHILE
MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IN THIS AREA, THE REQUIREMENT
THAT POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN EXCESS OF \$100 BE REPORTED,
AND THAT THE REPORTS BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC HAS HAD
A SALUTARY EFFECT ON POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS. SO HAVE OUR
INITIAL EFFORTS TO IMPOSE LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING.
EVEN THOUGH THE OVERALL CEILING ON EXPENDITURES WAS
STRUCK DOWN BY THE SUPREME COURT, DURING ITS BRIEF EXISTENCE,
IT RAISED THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF POLITICIANS AND THE PUBLIC.
NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, IT IS NO LAUGHING
MATTER FOR A POOR YOUNGSTER TO DREAM OF BECOMING A
CONGRESSMAN. WE ARE MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR ANY CANDIDATE
TO RUN A CREDITABLE CAMPAIGN WITHOUT BEING A MILLIONAIRE,
GOING INTO DEBT, OR SEEKING LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS.

THE EFFECTS OF THE NEW CAMPAIGN SPENDING LAWS AND
THE MORE BUSINESSLIKE AND RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE OF THE

HOUSE CAN BE READILY SEEN. THE HOUSE IS NO LONGER A HAVEN FOR SENILE MEMBERS FROM SAFE DISTRICTS. NINETY-THREE NEW MEMBERS ENTERED THE HOUSE IN 1975 AND ONE -- CONGRESSMAN TOM DOWNEY OF NEW YORK -- WAS, AT 25, BARELY OLD ENOUGH TO TAKE HIS SEAT. INDEED, THE 95TH CONGRESS IS THE YOUNGEST SINCE WORLD WAR II. THE AVERAGE AGE OF HOUSE MEMBERS IN 1975 WAS 49. THERE WERE A RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN HOUSE MEMBERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 94TH CONGRESS -- 18 -- AND A RECORD NUMBER OF MINORITIES, INCLUDING 16 BLACKS, THREE ASIAN AMERICANS, AND THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF MEXICAN AMERICAN ANCESTRY.

WHAT WILL THESE CHANGES MEAN IN THE 95TH CONGRESS? I EXPECT THAT THE TREND TOWARD HOUSE REFORM AND MORE OPENESS WILL ACCELERATE. THERE IS A GROWING BELIEF IN THE HOUSE THAT OUR COMMITTEE SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE STREAMLINED AND BROUGHT UP TO DATE. THE ISSUE OF ENERGY IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CURRENT HOUSE COMMITTEE SYSTEM. PRESENTLY, ENERGY MATTERS ARE PARCELLED OUT TO NO

LESS THAN FOUR HOUSE COMMITTEES. ALTHOUGH AN EARLY COMMITTEE REFORM PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED BY THE HOUSE ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO, I BELIEVE THAT THE 95TH CONGRESS WILL MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE.

THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE, TOO, THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE HOUSE SESSIONS ON TELEVISION, STARTING IN THE 95TH CONGRESS. THE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE IS PREPARING LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD PERMIT RADIO AND TELEVISION TO BROADCAST THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE.

THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE NEXT YEAR. HOUSE SPEAKER CARL ALBERT HAS, AS YOU KNOW, ~~HAS~~ ANNOUNCED HIS RETIREMENT AS OF THE END OF THE 94TH CONGRESS. PRESENTLY, IT APPEARS THAT THE NEW SPEAKER WILL BE CONGRESSMAN THOMAS P. "TIP" O'NEILL, WHO CURRENTLY SERVES AS MAJORITY LEADER. MR. O'NEILL, A VIGOROUS BOSTONIAN, IS A FORMER RULES COMMITTEE MEMBER WITH A WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION AS A LIBERAL, REFORM-ORIENTED REPRESENTATIVE.

BECAUSE OF THE OTHER CHANGES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE HOUSE, HOWEVER, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL EVER BE ABLE TO SAY, AS SPEAKER SAM RAYBURN DID: "IF YOU WANT TO GET ALONG, YOU HAVE TO GO ALONG." THE HOUSE LEADERSHIP, HAVING LOST MUCH OF ITS AUTHORITY TO APPOINT CHAIRMEN AND AWARD CHOICE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS, HAS BECOME MUCH MORE CONCILIATORY IN RECENT YEARS. SPEAKER ALBERT HAS FOLLOWED A POLICY OF CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP, THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND THE CAUCUS, AND I EXPECT THAT THAT POLICY WILL BE CONTINUED UNDER SPEAKER O'NEILL.

RULES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RAY MADDEN, WHO HAS SERVED IN THAT POST SINCE THE RETIREMENT IN 1972, OF FORMER CHAIRMAN WILLIAM COLMER, WAS DEFEATED IN A PRIMARY ELECTION THIS YEAR AND WILL NOT BE RETURNING. IT APPEARS THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL BE CHAIRED BY REPRESENTATIVE JAMES J. DELANEY, OF NEW YORK. MR. DELANEY, WHOSE VIEWS ARE MODERATE TO CONSERVATIVE, WILL BE AN ABLE CHAIRMAN AND WILL NO DOUBT WORK VERY WELL WITH HIS FORMER COMMITTEE COLLEAGUE,

TIP O'NEILL. THE COMMITTEE WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE TO FUNCTION, AS IT HAS FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AS AN ARM OF THE LEADERSHIP. BY DRAFTING THE LEGISLATIVE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1970 AND THE BUDGET AND IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT OF 1973, THE COMMITTEE HAS PROVEN THAT IT CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL REFORM, AND I EXPECT THAT THE NEW SPEAKER WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIGN SUCH MAJOR TASKS TO IT. IN ADDITION, THE COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO ACT AS THE "TRAFFIC COP" OF THE HOUSE, SETTING THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH LEGISLATION IS CONSIDERED ON THE HOUSE FLOOR. THAT IN ITSELF IS NO SMALL JOB, FOR BY DECIDING HOW MUCH DEBATE SHALL BE PERMITTED AND WHETHER OR NOT AMENDMENTS SHALL BE OFFERED, THE COMMITTEE FREQUENTLY DETERMINES THE FATE OF THE BILL.

THE RULES COMMITTEE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CONTINUE ITS CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR REGULATORY REFORM AND AMENDMENTS TO THE BUDGET AND IMPOUNDMENT CONTROL ACT. ONE MAJOR BILL PRESENTLY PENDING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE PROVIDES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "ZERO-BASED" BUDGET. THAT WILL ALMOST

CERTAINLY BE A TOP PRIORITY ITEM ON THE COMMITTEE'S AGENDA NEXT YEAR, PARTICULARLY IF GOVERNOR CARTER BECOMES PRESIDENT. HE IS A PROPONENT OF THE LEGISLATION -- SOMETIMES CALLED A "SUNSET BILL" -- WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE EXPIRATION AND REAUTHORIZATION OF ALL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS EVERY FOUR YEARS.

BOTH REGULATORY REFORM AND THE "SUNSET BILLS" ARE DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE AWESOME POWER OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OVER THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO RETURN GOVERNMENT TO THE PEOPLE. THE FACT THAT THEY ARE BEING CONSIDERED AT ALL INDICATES HOW MUCH CONGRESS HAS CHANGED. STARTING ABOUT 1970, AND SPURRED ON BY THE IMPOUNDMENTS AND SECRET MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION, THE CONGRESS HAS ACTED TO REGAIN THE CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS USURPED BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THIS IS A TREND WHICH I EXPECT WILL CONTINUE, WHETHER THE NEXT PRESIDENT IS DEMOCRATIC OR REPUBLICAN.

IN CLOSING, I SHOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT THERE WILL BE

AT LEAST ONE NEW DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE NEXT YEAR, SHOULD THE DEMOCRATS RETAIN CONTROL OF THE HOUSE. AS MANY OF YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW, I HAVE ANNOUNCED MY CANDIDACY FOR THE U. S. SENATE. I HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING SINCE MY ANNOUNCEMENT IN JANUARY AND, AT THE PRESENT TIME, THINGS ARE GOING VERY WELL. ALTHOUGH I HAVE TOUGH OPPOSITION, BOTH IN THE PRIMARY AND THE GENERAL ELECTION, I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY OF SERVING THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII AND THE NATION IN THE SENATE NEXT YEAR. I HOPE TO PUT MY 14 YEARS OF HOUSE EXPERIENCE TO GOOD USE THERE AND, IN A FEW YEARS, I WOULD LIKE TO COME BACK AND REPORT TO YOU ON THE CHANGES IN THAT UPPER BODY. I HOPE THAT I WILL BE IN THAT POSITION TO BE INVITED BACK AGAIN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.