



DANIEL K. INOUYE
INSTITUTE

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Democrats – There is a Difference

For more than two decades my activities have been closely related to those of the Democratic Party here in Hawaii, and to those of the Democratic Party nationally. The Democratic Party has been woven into all the years of my adult life. Despite this relationship, I must frankly say that, at times, the thread has been stretched almost to the breaking point. Our Party has not been without its share of scandals and scoundrels. And sometimes we have delivered badly on our promises on occasion not at all.

Whatever our Party's failures, however, the Democratic Party has kept its roots in the people. We have been a Party which cares a Party which cares about the people's basic concerns.

It is not just here in Hawaii that Democrats have reason for pride in our achievements as we take stock in this Bicentennial year. The national Democratic Party has always been the friend and protector of America's working men and women. It has been the champion of the less fortunate among us. Our Party has rewritten our nation's history. The vision and hard work of generations of Democratic leaders from Thomas Jefferson to Lyndon Johnson has brightened and eased the lives of every one of us here today.

The direction of our Party has been clear. We have kept the goal of greater equity for all clearly before us. We have kept the needs of our nation in an ever-changing world the fixed point on our compass.

I do not claim that only in the Democratic Party can you find people with such concerns. Even among Republicans there are some who seek our goals and some who share our concerns. But they are a distinct minority in that Party and it is the majority that makes things happen in democratic governments. The Republican Party continues to be the Party of the few, by the few and for the few.

There are some who will tell you that the Party is not important. That there is no real difference that its tweedledum and tweedledee.

Unfortunately, more and more Americans seem to be buying that proposition and this must be of real concern to us. It is bad for the Democratic Party and it is bad for our State and our Nation. It is a threat to our freedoms and to our liberties. For if faith in our political process dissipates further then who will infuse the policies of government with the hopes, the anxieties and the angers of our people? Who will hold that vast and sometimes distant bureaucracy accountable to the will of the people?

I may be like a preacher talking to the converted but politics is important. The political process is the lifeblood on which democratic governments must nourish.

It does make a difference whether a Democrat or a Republican sits in the White House. And it does make a difference whether a Democrat or a Republican sits In the Governors office or represents you in the United States Congress.

Who can honestly say that there is not a dimes worth of difference between a Roosevelt or a Hoover? Between a Truman or a Dewey? A Kennedy or a Nixon? A Johnson or a Goldwater?

Who can say that it didnt mean anything that during the eight years of Kennedy and Johnson we created 13 million new jobs in America and brought unemployment down to 3.6 percent?

Since 1972 the Republicans have managed to provide only one job for every four new job seekers in our country. During the Democratic 60s when we had control of both the Congress and the White House, we not only increased the number of jobs but we increased the average take home pay of every working man and woman, after taking into account inflation, by 12.4 percent. By contrast during the past three years alone those who kept their jobs in the Republican stagflation experienced a drop of 5.4 percent in the real value of their earnings. It has been even worse for the retired .American and, of course, much worse for the unemployed.

Who can say that it didnt mean anything that President Ford recommended a 30 percent cut in funding for job training and unemployment programs this year?

Who can say that it made no difference that the President vetoed the bill passed by large majorities in both Houses of Congress to provide hundreds of thousands of jobs at a time

when 8 million Americans were out of work and looking for jobs?

The callousness of President Ford's actions was underscored when he called the public works bill election year pork barrel. Throughout the Republican primaries this year the President's own election year pork barrel has served him and the states holding primaries well. As Jerry Ford went from primary state to primary state announcing his federal contracts for each state, his opponent Ronald Reagan suggested that the welcoming bands substitute for Hail to the Chief with Here comes Santa Claus.

But neither Gerald Ford, nor Ronald Reagan represent Santa Claus to the millions of our employed. In fact, former Governor Reagan's campaign pronouncements make Calvin Coolidge look like a socialist and Herbert Hoover a New Dealer. In a recent interview, Mr. Reagan called for the immediate balancing of the Federal budget, stating that those Americans without jobs would have to be patient. If the unemployed had a continuing income from Death Valley Days or old movie royalties, perhaps they could be patient.

This country cannot afford to be patient with our current economic policies. That becomes apparent when we calculate the economic losses we have encountered during the Nixon-Ford recession. Between the years of 1973 to 1976 at least \$400 billion was lost in output and income. In 1975 alone \$27 billion in revenues was lost to state and local governments.

Let us translate these losses into human terms. We support and feed our families, purchase the comforts and ease of life and provide for our retirement years with our work. To be without work is to be less than a whole man or woman. Skilled and energetic workers who have lost their jobs also soon lose their self-respect and the respect of others. Those young people who are deprived of any meaningful chance for education or training because their parents are unemployed or unable to find respectable jobs themselves, may drift inexorably toward juvenile delinquency and crime. In a society where much of a man or woman's identity is related to the work they do, to deny them a job is to deny them their identity. Such a denial is unworthy of a great nation and of a political party that cares about people. And it is not just in the area of jobs and income that there is a difference. For those who say there is no difference let me ask:

Is there no difference between a government that pushes to provide adequate housing and one that mismanages our housing programs to the tune of tens of millions of dollars as recently detailed in a Government Operations Committee Report?

Is there no difference between a Party which seeks to provide improved health care for every individual and one which seeks: to not rock the board and leave things as they are at a time when health costs are skyrocketing and our nation is falling far behind many others in the quality of care available to its people?

And I ask you, is there no difference between a Democratic Congress which turns the national spotlight on the past excesses of our intelligence community and establishes new procedures to assure that it wont happen again and an Administration which has sought to withhold embarrassing, information from the public and engage in cover-ups in the name of security?

Is there no difference between a Republican Administration which seeks to embroil us in escapades in Angola and a Democratic Congress which says no more waste in American lives and no more waste of American dollars in mischievous gambles with both lives and dollars in African adventures?

I am here today to affirm that there are differences big differences. There is a choice and there will be a choice in November.

I cannot predict who our Party will nominate for President and Vice President in July, but I can tell you that there will be a difference regardless of who the Republicans nominate.

And I cannot predict who our Party will nominate here in Hawaii for the United States House of Representatives, but I am here to tell you that there will be a difference between what our candidates stand for and what our candidates ' can do when they get to Washington and what the Republican candidates will stand for and do if they get there.

And I cannot predict who our nominee will be in the race for the United States Senate this year, but I can tell you that there will be important differences between what our candidate stands for and will do in Washington and what the Republican candidate will try to sell you.

There are differences between the Parties and the candidates of the Parties -- important differences. There is a choice not just a choice of personalities, but, a choice based upon philosophy and commitment to make government work for people.

There is a difference between those who look upon government as a necessary evil and those who look upon government as the agent of the people. There is a difference between Democrats and Republicans - a difference which can probably best be expressed in Adlai Stevenson's description of a Republican Party which had to be dragged, screaming and

kicking into the Twentieth Century, and the Democratic Party which despite its shortcomings, has been willing to face up to the challenges of a changing nation and a changing world.

The year 1976 is not only the year of our Bicentennial but also the year when your efforts and your vote and your participation in the Democratic Party can make a difference - a big difference.

And, we are not talking just about the next Congress and the next Administration. We have only a quarter of a Century till the Bimillennium of the modern era the year 2000.

The quarter of a century which remains in the 20th Century is crucial crucial not only for America but for civilization. It is crucial in terms of our management of resources resources of air, water, energy, and land. It is crucial in terms of what we can do to manage the world's rapidly expanding population growth. In these years we may well exercise the final option to insure sheer physical livability not only in the United States but in the world.

This quarter of a century may well be the last chance to insure an international structure which will permit a world at peace. The real race is the race against time - not the race between candidates in California or the race for the nomination in New York in July or Kansas City in August.

The race in November will make a difference, however, for that race, regardless of who the candidates of the respective Parties may be, will determine whether we have a leadership which believes in using the tools at his command to solve the problems which confront us, or whether we will have someone who sees all the problems but none of the opportunities for effective action, I urge, therefore, that we resolve to go forward together in our common quest for the good life, for an opportunity to engage in productive work, for a world at peace.

I speak as a Democrat and I speak to you as fellow Democrats, to urge that we stand together:

that we stand together for peace built not on the quicksand of the mutual threat of nuclear annihilation but on strengthened institutions of international stability;

that we stand for a reasoned national defense and not for an obsessive armaments race which will burden the backs of mankind;

that we stand for an end to military adventuring in alien lands where no vital interests to American security are really at stake;

that we stand for a Party which will not tolerate 8 million Americans out of work;

that, we stand for a Party which will not turn its back on those Americans who have not

shared in our wealth or in our opportunities;

that: we stand, for a Party which reaches out to all Americans, without regard to race, or age, or sex or economic classes

We are all Americans and the place of our birth, the color of our skin, man or woman, young or old, each of us has the same inherent right and desire for a decent chance for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

There is room in our Party for all who share our goals. There is room for all who will work for peace in the world. There is room for all who will join in moving our State and our Nation forward to new levels of understanding and compassion and new heights of achievement.

For my 17 years in the government of the United States and in my lifetime of affiliation with the Democratic Party there has been room for me and for those who share our basic goals even though we differ over how and with whom we may best achieve those goals. To you fellow Democrats, whether I have known you for 30 years or for a day, I urge you to come together, and to stay together, for all the Novembers yet to come.