

Equal Rights - Speech 7

47 N. Rogers Avenue
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043
April 15, 1968

Send to Judy

JUN - 7 1968

** note*

Hon. Spiro T. Agnew, Governor
State of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Governor Agnew:

Regarding your recent statement to the Negro leaders of Maryland, please let me say "Hooray for a Governor who will lay the facts on the line!" You stated that you knew you were committing political suicide. This may be true where Baltimore City is concerned, with its large Negro population, but all of their votes may not be lost either if they are responsible thinking people.

My praises go to you for putting personal politics aside and for saying what needed to be said at a time when it would be best heard. You were criticized for making your statement as some felt "your timing was poor" and that it "would add fuel to the fires of discontent". I do not agree with these peace-makers and pacifists. I think you were right in speaking up when you did - because the public was listening then. We were all fed up to the ears with the rioting and fear throughout the city and with each new concession that was being made to pacify the unruly minority. We felt that the majority, who were non-violence loving, were being taken for fools because there was no retaliation and our leaders seemed to "have the wool over their eyes".

Therefore, we were listening when you spoke to hear what was coming next and you laid the facts out for all to see. Some of the Negro leaders didn't like it and walked out. Some of the white leaders spoke against you - partly out of fear of the mob. The rank and file of the Maryland public is behind you because, as I have heard so many people say in the last few days, "He said what every man on the street wanted to say but could never be heard - and what no other official has had the guts to say for fear of losing the vote". If you had waited until the tension was eased your statement would not have had nearly as much impact and it would perhaps have come too late to salve the anger of the general populace. As soon as we knew you would not stand for any more adults hiding behind the guise that "the damage was done by children" we were once again secure in the knowledge that we had voted for a man and not a politician, and that you are a man to be reckoned with!

I have three reasons to be concerned about what you do. First, I am a citizen of Maryland and as such feel it my duty to be aware of the actions of our leaders. Second, both my husband and I are State Employees. He is with the Department of Correction and I am with the Department of Welfare. Perhaps because of this we are more aware than most people as to the social and economic problems of the Negro population. Nevertheless, we cannot excuse disregard of the law and infringement upon the rights of other people by a few people who are "deprived" due to unfortunate circumstances or through lack of motivation on their part to try to better themselves through education and hard work. Third, although you are unaware

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of the relationship, I am vaguely related to your wife. Her mother and my mother are first cousins and we have followed your political life out of family interest.) *

To conclude, also in the news this week one of the newsmen was talking about the government in Vietnam and the fact that the people there had no regard for the law and refused to cooperate with their officials because they had no respect for them. This was because they knew that their officials were corrupt and would sway to the ethics of the group who could pay the highest bribe. My first thought was "how well that statement would describe some segments of the United States".

Once again, let me say how pleased I am that you are putting the good of the people ahead of all other considerations - and I pray that other leaders will come to see your reasoning and will stop catering to the self-made, rabble-rousing leaders who advocate taking all they can while they can get away with it. Let us pray for responsible leaders who can see past the immediate tension and get to the real root of the trouble wherever the cause may lay, and place blame where it rightly belongs.

Very truly yours,

Barbara E. Satterfield

Barbara E. Satterfield
(Mrs.) James N. Satterfield