

the best instruments to serve and fulfill individual expression. State government, while it may often parallel local government in service, is sometimes divorced from individual confrontation and more remote from individual concerns. Frequently, it is the zoning policy of the county rather than the capital construction program of the State that arouses acute citizen concern.

State government deals with the representative, the lobbyist, the civic leadership. Local government deals directly with the citizen. State government, due to the scale and scope of its programs, must act slowly and depend upon the consensus of divergent interests. Local government requires less ambitious programs to serve a more homogeneous population. Local government may act swiftly, its action simplified by its limited scope. Local government need not always compromise to accommodate a broad spectrum of public opinion; it may frame programs specifically to respond to the immediate community of interest shared by all its citizens.

In Maryland, I have devoted a considerable amount of time in my first six months in office to stressing the importance of local government. From my own experience as the chief administrator of Baltimore County, I recognized the communications void that existed between the State House and the Court House. I pledged during the campaign last fall that I would visit every county in the State for a face-to-face, executive-to-executive talk with the County Commissioners and to open a channel of communications between local governments and the State.

These visits began in April, immediately after the Legislature adjourned. With key members of my staff, I have now visited the top administrators in 21 of our State's 24 political subdivisions. The remaining three visits will be completed in the next seven days. We have discussed mutual problems of developing and financing programs, planning and the implementation of plans, and, above all, the importance of day to day liaison within the executive branch of government. It has been a difficult schedule to maintain, but I believe this groundwork will yield important and positive results in the days and years ahead.

County government has the potential to become this nation's most vital and viable political instrument. But, as is the case with all in-