

Ladies and gentlemen, the destiny and direction of Maryland is within your grasp. Your dedication and your uncompensated service merit profound public gratitude for your responsibilities are awesome. Your opportunities at this moment, as never before, are inspirational. I urge each of you to explore your minds, to reexamine your philosophy of education, to accept, and affirm through action, new definitions and new directions. For it is within your power to influence a new generation, to stimulate a vital state of mind, to assure a vital State of Maryland.

ADDRESS TO CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION,
STATE HOUSE, ANNAPOLIS

September 29, 1967

When I took advantage of your kind invitation to address the organization session of this Convention, I suggested broad principles to guide your historic effort. I cited general objectives, stressed basic ideals, and concentrated on the essence rather than the specific.

It was my contention then, and I risk repeating it today for it cannot be overemphasized, that for a Constitution to endure it must be mainly limited to an expression of great principles.

What are these great universal principles? First, to secure and sustain the sovereignty of the people. Second, to protect and perpetuate the rights of the individual. Third, to create a political structure which safeguards the citizen by a series of checks and balances among — but not within — our three traditional branches. Fourth, to develop that superstructure for the State most conducive to efficient administration, effective legislation and impartial adjudication. Finally, to embrace a consistency of logic which reflects in the fewest words the fullest expression of a free society's solemn and voluntary contract with its government.

This assembly has been convened so that our State's Constitution may be reformed and rewritten to conform to those standards — standards which our present document fails to fulfill. All branches of our State government must be strengthened and streamlined. Simplicity and professionalism must be encouraged, responsibility to the electorate incisively exacted. Existing incoherencies require clarification. Superfluous detail must be discarded. Above all, a philosophy must prevail which recognizes the constitutional imperative that omission produces as significant an impact as inclusion.