

## SELECTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

NBC Forum  
Statler-Hilton Hotel  
Washington, D.C.

March 5, 1977

The Vice Presidency, long an ignored or belittled American political institution, has in recent years received increased attention in this country consistent with the increased responsibilities of the office.

This new interest also derives in great part from the fact that, of the last nine Vice Presidents, four succeeded to or were elected to the presidency itself. And three others were leading candidates for their parties' presidential nominations.

I was privileged to carry the Democratic party's standard in 1968, opposing a former Vice President who emerged victorious after a close and exciting contest.

Another reason the vice presidency is undergoing special examination is the widespread feeling in both major parties that the vice presidential selection process has been too hurried and has not received the attention from national convention delegates that the office deserves.

In the traditional vice presidential selection process, the presidential nominee announces a running mate almost at the last minute, sometimes to the dismay and surprise of the convention.

Critics of this process point especially to 1972, when the Democratic party's vice presidential nominee withdrew from the national ticket, and the Republican nominee, although elected, later resigned from the vice presidency itself.

Because the vice presidency is a springboard to the White House, increasing attention is being focused on two questions:

First, what should be the role of Vice Presidents in our political system?

Second, should there be changes in the process by which nominees for Vice President are selected?

As Vice President and as a candidate for President concerned with selecting a vice presidential running mate, I have reached some general conclusions about both these questions.

The Constitution gives the Vice President only the responsibility for presiding over the Senate and casting votes in that body in the case of a tie, or succeeding to the presidency in case of a vacancy or disability in that office.

Consequently, some critics argue that a vacancy or disability in the presidency is not the best time to introduce an unfamiliar face -- that of the Vice President -- to the country. The widest possible acceptance of such a transfer of power should be one of our political system's highest priorities.

This is a strong argument for a President to assign important duties to the Vice President -- duties that will equip him for the difficult decision-making responsibilities of the President, and functions that will give the Vice President periodic public exposure. I applaud the initiatives taken by President Carter in giving Vice President Mondale precisely these kinds of assignments.

But, second, the wise and careful selection of a vice presidential nominee helps to insure public acceptance of a later possible transfer of power precisely because that nominee was elected to office.

The elevation to the presidency of a Vice President elected on the same ticket and who is committed to the same platform and policies as the President, maximizes the opportunity for continuity in programs and policies endorsed by the nation in the preceding presidential election.

When no one was especially concerned with the vice presidency, scant attention was paid to nominees for the office. Our political history is full of vice presidential nominees chosen to placate factions of a party, regions of the country, or ruffled personalities otherwise unhappy with other convention decisions. Frequently, in our political history more attention has been given to the political needs of the party than to the selection of a candidate of presidential timber.

But in the last 30 years, because of deaths and illnesses of Presidents in periods of general international instability, we increasingly have come to recognize that we cannot afford the luxury of giving priority to in-house party politics in the selection of vice presidential candidates.

Selection of vice presidential nominees is not a matter that is controlled or guided by federal law. Therefore, it is essential that the major parties institute reforms in the selection of vice presidential nominees that will contribute to the serious consideration of the nomination that the office deserves.

I served as Chairman of the Democratic Party's Commission on Vice Presidential Selection which reported proposed changes in vice presidential selection to the Democratic National Committee, in December, 1973.

Our commission's work might be interpreted as having had limited impact. But it should be recognized that, after having considered other alternatives, our major recommendation was a reaffirmation of the party's national convention as the best forum for vice presidential candidate selection.

But from an historical perspective, the most important fact was that the establishment of the commission and the widespread attention given to our work clearly indicated that the vice presidential selection process had become a matter of national concern.

The commission recommended that the length of the Democratic national convention be extended by one day to permit an interval of 48 hours between the selection of the party's presidential and vice presidential candidates.

A second recommendation made by the commission would allow the presidential candidate to ask the convention for additional time if it agreed that one extra day did not allow enough deliberation on the choice for a running mate. He also could propose more than one person for that nomination.

If that additional time were granted, a special meeting of the Democratic National Committee would be held between 14 and 21 days after the convention to select the party's vice presidential candidate.

We also proposed that every Democrat, even without the presidential nominee's recommendation, might seek the vice presidential nomination, providing petitions supporting his or her candidacy are signed by at least 10 percent of all delegates, and those delegates are from at least three states.

There have been many proposals to change the method of selecting vice presidential nominees. These include such radical departures from present practices as requiring presidential candidates to indicate their choices for running mates before state conventions and presidential preference primaries, or requiring that the vice presidential nomination be awarded to the runner-up in the presidential nomination balloting. Other proposals similarly seek to narrow the options open to the party and the presidential nominee.

It is my belief that the present method -- allowing the presidential nominee and the delegates to the national convention to agree on a choice that need not be made official until mid-convention -- best serves the needs of our political system.

After all, both the party and the presidential nominee want to win the election. They want to face the electorate with issues and candidates they can proudly support. Any arbitrary system that forces a vice presidential nominee on a reluctant presidential nominee would not serve the interest of the party or the nation.

Today, both parties should be focusing on the real problem in vice presidential selection -- how to give the presidential candidate and his advisers time to make a wise choice.

There is no way to take politics out of the business of choosing candidates for public office. No detailed party rules can prevent a presidential candidate and a party convention from choosing a vice presidential candidate for purely political reasons or prevent what may later prove to be a bad choice.

We must rely on the individuals involved in the process -- just as we rely on the good judgment of public officials to enact good laws and carry them out with good sense.

Our system of government provides the best check yet devised against poor government. That check is the ballot box or, in the case of political party conventions, the vote of the delegates.

← 1964 - LBJ -  
← 1968. Munkie Selection

(Competence)

Careful Selection Procedures

SELECTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL

CANDIDATE

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Herb Schlosser  
Alvin Perlmutter  
David Brinkley

L THE VICE PRESIDENCY, ~~long~~ <sup>a long</sup> IGNORED OR BELITTLED AMERICAN  
POLITICAL INSTITUTION, HAS IN RECENT YEARS RECEIVED INCREASED  
ATTENTION, ~~IN THIS COUNTRY CONSISTENT WITH THE INCREASED~~  
~~RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE.~~

L THIS NEW INTEREST ~~IS~~ DERIVES IN GREAT PART FROM THE  
FACT THAT, OF THE LAST <sup>9</sup> NINE VICE PRESIDENTS, <sup>4</sup> FOUR SUCCEEDED  
TO OR WERE ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY ITSELF. ~~AND THREE~~ OTHERS  
WERE LEADING CANDIDATES FOR THEIR PARTIES' PRESIDENTIAL NOMI-  
NATIONS.

I WAS PRIVILEGED TO CARRY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S STANDARD  
IN 1968, OPPOSING A FORMER VICE PRESIDENT WHO EMERGED VICTORIOUS  
AFTER A CLOSE AND EXCITING CONTEST.

~~ANOTHER REASON THE VICE PRESIDENCY IS UNDERGOING SPECIAL  
EXAMINATION IS THE WIDESPREAD FEELING IN BOTH MAJOR PARTIES  
THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS HAS BEEN TOO HURRIED  
AND HAS NOT RECEIVED THE ATTENTION FROM NATIONAL CONVENTION  
DELEGATES THAT THE OFFICE DESERVES.~~

L IN THE TRADITIONAL VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS, THE  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE ANNOUNCES A RUNNING MATE ALMOST AT THE LAST  
MINUTE, SOMETIMES TO THE DISMAY AND SURPRISE OF THE CONVENTION.

L CRITICS OF THIS PROCESS POINT ESPECIALLY TO 1972, WHEN THE  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE WITHDREW FROM THE  
NATIONAL TICKET, AND THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE, ALTHOUGH ELECTED,  
LATER RESIGNED FROM THE VICE PRESIDENCY ITSELF.

L BECAUSE THE VICE PRESIDENCY ~~IS~~ <sup>is</sup> A SPRINGBOARD TO THE WHITE

HOUSE, INCREASING ATTENTION IS BEING FOCUSED ON TWO QUESTIONS:

(1) L FIRST, WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENTS IN OUR  
POLITICAL SYSTEM?

(2) L SECOND, SHOULD THERE BE CHANGES IN THE PROCESS BY WHICH  
NOMINEES FOR VICE PRESIDENT ARE SELECTED?

L AS VICE PRESIDENT AND AS A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT CONCERNED  
WITH SELECTING A VICE PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE, I HAVE REACHED  
SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT BOTH THESE QUESTIONS.

L THE CONSTITUTION GIVES THE VICE PRESIDENT ONLY THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESIDING OVER THE SENATE AND CASTING VOTES IN THAT  
BODY IN THE CASE OF A TIE, OR SUCCEEDING TO THE PRESIDENCY  
IN CASE OF A VACANCY OR DISABILITY IN THAT OFFICE.

↳ CONSEQUENTLY, SOME CRITICS ARGUE THAT A VACANCY OR DISABILITY  
IN THE PRESIDENCY IS NOT THE BEST TIME TO INTRODUCE AN UNFAMILIAR  
FACE -- THAT OF THE VICE PRESIDENT -- TO THE COUNTRY. ↳ THE  
WIDEST POSSIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH A TRANSFER OF POWER SHOULD BE  
ONE OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM'S HIGHEST PRIORITIES.

↳ THIS IS A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR A PRESIDENT TO ASSIGN  
IMPORTANT DUTIES TO THE VICE PRESIDENT -- DUTIES THAT WILL  
EQUIP HIM FOR THE DIFFICULT DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES  
OF THE PRESIDENT, AND FUNCTIONS THAT WILL GIVE THE VICE PRESIDENT  
PERIODIC PUBLIC EXPOSURE. ↳ I APPLAUD THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY  
PRESIDENT CARTER IN GIVING VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE PRECISELY  
THESE KINDS OF ASSIGNMENTS.

(2) L

BUT, SECOND, THE WISE AND CAREFUL SELECTION OF A VICE

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE HELPS TO INSURE PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF A

LATER POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF POWER ~~PRECISELY BECAUSE THAT NOMINEE~~

~~WAS ELECTED TO OFFICE.~~

~~L THE ELEVATION TO THE PRESIDENCY OF A VICE PRESIDENT  
ELECTED ON THE SAME TICKET AND WHO IS COMMITTED TO THE SAME  
PLATFORM AND POLICIES AS THE PRESIDENT, MAXIMIZES THE OPPORTUNITY  
FOR CONTINUITY IN PROGRAMS AND POLICIES ENDORSED BY THE NATION IN  
THE PRECEDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.~~

WHEN NO ONE WAS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED WITH THE VICE PRESIDENCY,  
SCANT ATTENTION WAS PAID TO NOMINEES FOR THE OFFICE. OUR POLITICAL

HISTORY IS FULL OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES CHOSEN TO PLACATE  
FACTIONS OF A PARTY, REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY, OR RUFFLED PERSON-  
ALITIES OTHERWISE UNHAPPY WITH OTHER CONVENTION DECISIONS.

*all too often*  
FREQUENTLY, ~~IN THE PAST~~ MORE ATTENTION HAS BEEN

GIVEN TO THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE PARTY THAN TO THE SELECTION  
OF A CANDIDATE OF PRESIDENTIAL TIMBER.

↳ BUT IN THE LAST 30 YEARS, BECAUSE OF DEATHS AND ILLNESSES  
OF PRESIDENTS IN PERIODS OF ~~GENERAL~~ *and national* INTERNATIONAL INSTABILITY,

WE INCREASINGLY HAVE COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD

THE LUXURY OF GIVING PRIORITY TO " IN-HOUSE PARTY POLITICS IN THE

SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES IS NOT A  
MATTER THAT IS CONTROLLED OR GUIDED BY FEDERAL LAW. THEREFORE,  
IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE MAJOR PARTIES INSTITUTE REFORMS IN THE  
SELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO  
THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE NOMINATION THAT THE OFFICE  
DESERVES.

I SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S COMMISSION  
ON VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION WHICH REPORTED PROPOSED  
CHANGES IN VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION TO THE DEMOCRATIC  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE, IN DECEMBER, 1973.

L OUR COMMISSION'S WORK MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS HAVING HAD LIMITED IMPACT. L BUT IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT, AFTER HAVING CONSIDERED OTHER ALTERNATIVES, OUR MAJOR RECOMMENDATION WAS A REAFFIRMATION OF THE PARTY'S NATIONAL CONVENTION AS THE BEST FORUM FOR VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SELECTION.

BUT FROM AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT WAS THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION AND THE WIDESPREAD ATTENTION GIVEN TO OUR WORK CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS HAD BECOME A MATTER OF NATIONAL CONCERN.

L THE COMMISSION RECOMMENDED THAT THE LENGTH OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION BE EXTENDED BY ONE DAY TO PERMIT AN INTERVAL OF 48 HOURS BETWEEN THE SELECTION OF THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

↳ A SECOND RECOMMENDATION MADE BY THE COMMISSION WOULD  
ALLOW THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE TO ASK THE CONVENTION FOR  
ADDITIONAL TIME, IF IT AGREED THAT ONE EXTRA DAY DID NOT ALLOW  
ENOUGH DELIBERATION ON THE CHOICE FOR A RUNNING MATE. ↳ HE ALSO  
COULD PROPOSE MORE THAN ONE PERSON FOR THAT NOMINATION. Context.

↳ IF THAT ADDITIONAL TIME WERE GRANTED, A SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WOULD BE HELD BETWEEN  
14 AND 21 DAYS AFTER THE <sup>National</sup> CONVENTION TO SELECT THE PARTY'S  
VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

↳ WE ALSO PROPOSED THAT EVERY DEMOCRAT, EVEN WITHOUT THE  
THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE'S RECOMMENDATION, MIGHT SEEK THE VICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, PROVIDING PETITIONS SUPPORTING HIS OR  
HER CANDIDACY ARE SIGNED BY AT LEAST 10 PERCENT OF ALL DELEGATES,  
AND THOSE DELEGATES <sup>ARE</sup> FROM AT LEAST THREE STATES.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PROPOSALS TO CHANGE THE METHOD OF  
 SELECTING VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES. THESE INCLUDE SUCH RADICAL  
 DEPARTURES FROM PRESENT PRACTICES AS REQUIRING PRESIDENTIAL  
 CANDIDATES TO INDICATE THEIR CHOICES FOR RUNNING  
 MATES BEFORE STATE CONVENTIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL  
 PRIMARIES, OR REQUIRING THAT THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION  
 BE AWARDED TO THE RUNNER-UP IN THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION  
 BALLOTING. OTHER PROPOSALS SIMILARLY SEEK TO NARROW THE OPTIONS  
 OPEN TO THE PARTY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE.

~~Keep~~ Keep  
 IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE PRESENT METHOD -- ALLOWING THE  
 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE AND THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONVEN-  
 TION TO AGREE ON A CHOICE THAT NEED NOT BE MADE OFFICIAL UNTIL  
 MID-CONVENTION -- BEST SERVES THE NEEDS OF OUR POLITICAL  
 SYSTEM.

↳ AFTER ALL, BOTH THE PARTY AND THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE  
WANT TO WIN THE ELECTION. ↳ THEY WANT TO FACE THE ELECTORATE  
WITH ISSUES AND CANDIDATES THEY CAN PROUDLY SUPPORT. ↳ ANY  
ARBITRARY SYSTEM THAT FORCES A VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE ON A  
RELUCTANT PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE WOULD NOT SERVE THE INTEREST OF  
THE PARTY OR THE NATION.

↳ TODAY, BOTH PARTIES SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON THE REAL PROBLEM  
IN VICE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION -- HOW TO GIVE THE PRESIDENTIAL  
CANDIDATE AND HIS ADVISERS TIME TO MAKE A WISE CHOICE --

*Rearranging convention schedule, set up  
advisory committee to assist in the Vice  
Presidential selection process - advisory committee  
to ask presidential contenders for lists of  
prospective running mates - these lists  
to be available to public no later than  
the final round of primaries*

↳ THERE IS NO WAY TO TAKE POLITICS OUT OF THE BUSINESS  
OF CHOOSING CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE. ↳ NO DETAILED PARTY RULES  
CAN PREVENT A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND A PARTY CONVENTION FROM  
CHOOSING A VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR PURELY POLITICAL  
REASONS OR PREVENT WHAT MAY LATER PROVE TO BE A BAD CHOICE.

↳ WE MUST RELY ON THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS --  
JUST AS WE RELY ON THE GOOD JUDGMENT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO  
ENACT GOOD LAWS AND CARRY THEM OUT WITH GOOD SENSE.

↳ OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THE BEST CHECK YET  
DEvised AGAINST POOR GOVERNMENT. ↳ THAT CHECK IS THE BALLOT  
BOX OR, IN THE CASE OF POLITICAL PARTY CONVENTIONS, THE VOTE  
OF THE DELEGATES.



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