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WASHINGTON

MEMO TO: WFM

FROM: BERNIE

SUBJECT: DFL Speech

I thought you mind want to see the transcript
of your speech to the DFL.

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE
MINNESOTA DFL CONVENTION
June 3, 1978

I cannot tell you how I felt coming in to Minnesota today, the emotions that I now have, as I address this convention of Democrats at this historic moment in our state and in our nation's history. There have been many important and decisive Minnesota Democratic conventions. But I don't think there have been any in which the delegates have been asked to choose more wisely and to think more deeply and to ponder more carefully the issues and the candidates than this Convention. Being a delegate to any convention of the Democratic Party is always an honor. But I think especially this year what you're being asked to do is of a special dimension. I also cannot come to this Convention without expressing again what this Party and this State has meant to me. My roots are in this state; I was educated in the State; all my values come from this State. This state has trusted me, perhaps more than it should, as the Attorney General; for 12 years in the United States Senate; and then I think in large measure because of the history and traditions of this State, I was selected and then elected to the second highest office in the land. And then what this Party has meant to this country. We have 50 marvelous states. But there's something special about Minnesota and about this Party. This institution of ours has been the source of more progressive thought, of more new ideas, of more challenges to the conscience, and deeper commitment to human values than I think any other political organization of its kind not only in the United States but in the world today. And what you do today and what you do in these

next five months as Democrats is being watched, not just by Minnesotans, but by the nation and by the world. There are many, many national reporters in this hall with us today, wondering what you're going to do and wondering whether this profound and basic tradition of the Democratic Party will continue to prevail in Minnesota, and I would like to tell them that the answer is yes. These standards that we've set have come about because ours is an open political party. It is not run on patronage, it is not run on orders, it is run on the basis of debate and openness. And many outsiders that look at our convention say, oh, there's controversy there, and that must mean that our political party is in trouble. I've been to so many Democratic Conventions that I can no longer count them. And I've never been to a Democratic Convention yet where we didn't have controversy. I've gone to conventions where we couldn't think of anything to fight about but by 5:00 we'd landed on something and we were ripping each other apart. And that's because in a democracy there's always something to debate about and discuss in our great state, in our great nation. And may it always be so, may we always be the focal point of debate and controversy. We take our candidates seriously. Ours is one of the few political parties in the country that endorses candidates. Not because it's binding on the people of Minnesota, because it isn't, nor should it be, but because we feel a responsibility not only to take a position on issues but also to recommend, and it's only a recommendation, to the people of Minnesota as to which

candidates we believe are best suited to discharge the platform and the principles that we adopt. From this process of openness and debate and endorsement and principles has come a record and a tradition that is unmatched in the country. We saw it in our beloved Hubert Humphrey. And we've seen it again in these past few months with the dignified and loving and magnificent bearing of our first lady in our land, Muriel Humphrey. We see it in our outstanding governor, Rudy Perpich. I'm proud of Rudy. He's a people's governor. As a matter of fact, I've never met anybody in the Iron Range that wasn't a people's person. Ever. And that's the kind of person Rudy is. I remember a few weeks ago, I believe I was in Maine, and the picture on the front page was a huge picture of Governor Perpich visiting various parts of the state capital in a wheelchair. That picture went all around the world. And although some might say it's a small thing, I think it says everything about Rudy Perpich. Because he realizes that in order to understand the problems of others, you have to live it and be a part of it and know it and feel it. And there are millions of Americans, regrettably, who are handicapped, who see the world as he saw it in that wheelchair, who've been trying to tell us, really since the beginning of nationhood, the difficulties of the handicapped. And in just that one act, I think our Governor helped show Minnesotans and the nation the need for basic reforms in that issue as he has in so many others. And I believe deeply in Wendy Anderson. He was a great governor. He may be, probably is, the governor who delivered more for quality education than

any governor in a history of a state that's had great educational governors. And he's brought that same kind of drive and commitment to the Senate. I know the Senate well. I've served there for years. I often preside. And among the new Senators there isn't a single Senator that has made a better impact, who is better received and respected and who has a better future in order to effectively serve his state and his union than Wendy Anderson. And send him back there with the largest margin that a Senator ever had. And with Wendy in the Senate will be a man who perhaps holds the highest reputation in the Congress for integrity, for intelligence and courage, Don Fraser. I think that's a good place for me to make a point that I wanted to make with all the seriousness that I can muster. As I said earlier, you've permitted me to serve in the Senate for 12 years, as a junior Senator, as a senior Senator alongside one of the most marvelous men ever to serve in public life, Hubert Humphrey. And I've learned a lot I hope. And I've had an awful lot of experience in government. And now I've had a year and a half experience in the White House. And I think I've been closer to a President than any Vice President's ever been. I'm with him often, hours a day. I serve with him and with others on all the crucial policy committees, and I'm with him constantly. And it's been a sobering experience to see what a President must go through in leading this country, and to compare it with one's role in the Senate, and to look at the Senate and its importance to this country. John Kennedy once said that he

didn't know how important the Senate was until he became President. And I might say that I didn't know how important it was until I became Vice President. I always knew it was important, but I didn't know how much. Next to electing a President of the United States, the most fateful and sacred choice you make as a citizen is your selection of your senators. They will help decide and indeed may decide issues of war and peace, issues of employment and unemployment, issues of whether we're going to have a quality of life or not. Issues that affect the trust and the faith, the honesty, the law obedience of the American people. Every aspect of American life is touched by every Senator. And Senators of ability and commitment can have a profound influence, not just one percent of the Senate, but clear beyond that. And what I wanted to say is this. Don't trifle with that judgment. And don't ask that our candidates be perfect. I want to let you in on a secret. For 12 years, although I didn't tell you, I can now tell you I wasn't perfect. I was not. I made some mistakes, I made plenty of them. And together Hubert and I made a couple. But the important^{thing} is, ask who you want to entrust such a sacred and far-reaching aspect of your life as a free citizen. Who do you want? Look for people of intelligence. You can't work in the Senate or in the House unless you can follow those issues and understand them. Look for people of commitment who are believers in public service. You can backslide in any public job. You need people who love it, want to make it work, want government to succeed,

want people to trust us, want government to fulfill its sacred functions. Pick people of compassion, now I'm talking to Democrats, the other side never worries about that. Pick people who care, and who are unashamed of helping others who need help. And pick people of courage. Increasingly, the issues that we face in our political time are complex, are controversial, and often what needs to be done is initially unpopular. When we assumed office we faced a number of them. And once you face them and you go up on the Hill and you want the Senate to respond, every single Senator with those qualities is a mountain of gold for America. And without them, a great risk and hazard to the future of this country. The examples are many, but let me just pick one that's unpopular, but in which we succeeded, in part, because of the help of Wendy and Muriel. And I bring up the Panama Canal. We didn't propose the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties because we thought it was popular. We knew it was unpopular. But we also knew it needed to be done for the interests of this country. That's why we did it. Four Presidents of both political parties since 1964 who have looked at this issue have come out with the same decision. All members and the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported the Panama Canal treaties' ratification because it enhanced this nation's security. But the polls were against us, overwhelmingly. And a Senator had to ask himself, or herself, what's more important, the country or myself? Will I stand up on this issue and try to explain it and bring the American people with me, or will I just follow the public opinion polls, and that's the real test. As Edmund Burke once said,

"A legislator owes his constituents more than his industry. He owes them his best judgment." Pick people of good judgment and of strength and of courage. Our candidates for the Senate together have had 45 years of public experience. Their opponents have had none. They are men of intelligence, of commitment, a record. And what I am asking you as Democrats and Minnesotans to do is to think carefully and soberly about the serious choice you make in selecting your U.S. Senators, and when you do we will elect Wendy Anderson and Don Fraser overwhelmingly. You can see this tradition as well in our outstanding congressional delegation. In Jim Oberstar who's soon going to be the senior member of the House delegation from the Democratic side, and who's doing such fine work. In Rick Nolan, our fine Congressman from the sixth congressional district, and in Bruce Vento who's doing such a marvelous job representing his district. And this year we have as fine a slate of new candidates for the Congress as I've ever seen. Jerry Sikorski in the first, Bob Conscience in the second, Mike Freeman in the third, and our great speaker of the House and soon to be congressman from the fifth district, Marty Sabo. And Gene Wenstrom, who's doing such a remarkable job as our candidate from the seventh. We can see this tradition at the state level, with Lieutenant Governor Alec Olson, a leader of experience and integrity. We see it in Warren Spannaus, if he'll stop talking, the finest attorney general bar none in the history of this state, and we see it in our other state constitutional officers shortly to be endorsed. And don't forget the legislature. We make a mistake

when we forget the legislature. The heart and the spirit of this state will always be determined by that state Senate and that state House. Give them the support that they need and keep that kind of control in the Democratic Farmer-Labor party. I spoke to you a moment ago about the sobering experience of working first-hand on a daily basis with the President. When we were elected we spent days and literally weeks asking ourselves what kind of an Administration we wanted. How we could best fulfill the trust that you and the American people placed in us in that election. The decisions we had to make were complex and covered a broad range of issues. We've tried to fulfill the trust that you placed in us in all respects. First of all, we decided we were going to de-imperialize the White House. I've heard some people say we need a more imperial presidency. And I say, every time that we've had a President who thinks he's a King, we get in trouble. You don't need a limousine, and you don't need to hear Hail to the Chief to be a good President. What you need to do, is to listen to the American people, and to your conscience, and serve the American people as best you can. The issues we faced were not much fun. First of all, we saw an economy with the highest unemployment and the highest inflation for many, many years. The previous Administration took the position that there was no way of putting people back to work in the numbers that we asked for. So one of the first things we went to work on was the issue of employment. Putting people back to work. And I'm proud to say that in the first year and a half of our Administration 5.1 million Americans have been added to the workforce, more people added to the work rolls in America

than in any other comparable period in American history. In Minnesota the unemployment rate has dropped from over 6 percent to 3.7 percent. And we're not done yet. We stood up to the energy crisis. And that's another example of the kind of concern that we must deal with. Not because we thought it was popular but because we thought it was necessary. This year alone we imported \$45 billion worth of foreign oil. It has reduced the value of the dollar, it has caused doubts about American strength, and it's a major source of international financial stability. We stood up to the issue, and we proposed an energy package which will solve the problem. We stood up to the problem of social security reform. When we took over, if you can believe it, the Disability Fund upon which hundreds of thousands of Americans depend, was going broke in 1979. And the Old Age and Survivors Fund, on which 33 million Americans depend, was going to go broke in 1982 or 1983. The Republicans had done nothing about it. And we stood up to that issue, not because it was popular, but because it had to be done. In this country, when you work a full lifetime, and when you raise your family, and when you stay off welfare if you can, and when you're a good citizen, when you're through with your life's work you ought to be able to retire and be just as sure of that social security check as you are of the sun and the moon and the American flag. We have restored the integrity of that fund. And we have sought to fulfill the progressive traditions of our party. In the Senate I perhaps worked harder on education than any other issue. I'm an education nut. I think education is one of

the greatest sources of economic and political strength, of social mobility, of political health, of anything that we do. It's our best investment. For 8 years my old friend Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford vetoed practically every education bill, impounded so many educational funds we couldn't find them anymore, and the real level of federal help to all education went down and down and down. I'm pleased to report that in the first year and a half of our Administration, we have increased federal aid to education by historic levels -- over 30 percent -- and already in my opinion President Carter goes down as the most pro-education President in the history of the United States. We've added funds for the handicapped, funds for the disadvantaged, funds for children needing bilingual education, and massive new amounts of money to help young men and women to go on to college and vocational school. And we've done the same in housing. When we took over we had a housing depression in America. And today we have one of the highest levels of housing construction in history. We've made great progress in Head Start, in health, with the elderly and mental health. And what I'm saying in short is that we have not forgotten that when you're a Democrat, and when you run on this ticket, and when you're elected, you are expected to show compassion and concern for people in American life who are not going to have a decent life without your help. We have worked in farm legislation, farm income is up 23 percent in one year. We passed the highest minimum wage law increases in history. We've strengthened job safety, and before this year is out we're going to pass long overdue labor law reform to protect the rights of workers in the plants of this country to organize and bargain collectively. We have worked for tax

reform. We are working every day in foreign policy, to fulfill the values of the American people. When we took over, there was a theory around that somehow there was a disconnection between the values of the American people and our foreign policy. That the interests that we have, commercial or military or other, always had to take first priority in dealing with other nations. President Carter and I decided that if there was one thing we would do in foreign policy it would be to make the expression and the pursuit of American values, of human rights and human liberties the centerpiece and the focal point of American values. We have done that in Africa. I was privileged to represent the President in negotiations with the Prime Minister of South Africa. We have done it in Latin America. And it was my privilege recently to go to Southeast Asia to represent the President, and one of the main points was our desire to see more progress in the field of human rights. We do not claim that America can have its way every time in every country. We know better. But we think it's absolutely crucial that America never lose its way. And if we don't stand for human liberty, if we don't stand for freedom, if we don't stand for human rights we don't have an American policy that reflects this country. We are working together to bring about further controls on this hideous danger of nuclear proliferation and nuclear weaponry. Nothing worries me more, not just about the next generation, but our own, than the fear that somehow nuclear warfare would break out. We've had an effort from the beginning of our administration to turn the clock back on nuclear proliferation, so that we don't enter

this new age of plutonium that will permit every crackpot and nut in the world to get his hands on a small amount of plutonium and threaten the rest of mankind. We have been under intensive negotiations, not only to put limitations on the buildup of strategic armaments, but over the long run to dramatically diminish the number of strategic nuclear armaments in the world. These are some of the things that we've been doing to try to fulfill your trust and your faith. Not a day goes by but we don't work all out toward that objective. The days in which we live are difficult, and complex, and controversial. A President often has to do things in that Oval Office because he is the President, that he might not want to do if he weren't. As Harry Truman once said, "The buck stops here." And boy does it. He's got to decide. He's the person who has to decide against competing interests. Against conflicting points of view, against competition for a limited amount of dollars. A President has to lead. And he has to decide the tough ones. And he has to stand up for what's right, even though from time to time it may be unpopular. And I'm proud to serve a President who is doing just that. And now it's our turn again in the great Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, to serve that function that we've served so well in the past, to lead the way on issues and to provide the candidates with the capability of fulfilling them. We have those candidates. In Governor Perpich and the state ticket. In our candidates for the Senate and for the House. And our candidates for the legislature. All we have to do today is decide that we want to win. We can do it if we want

state of the union are those principles more at issue than today and in the November elections. And I'm asking you to do what you've done in the past. Get together. Work together. Forget your differences. And fight from today right through that November election, and let's have one of the greatest Democratic Party victories that we've ever had in our life. You know how to do it. Thank you very much.



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