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Address at Senate campaign meeting on state finances

Strom Thurmond

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ADDRESS BY STROM THURMOND, CANDIDATE FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE, AT CAMPAIGN MEETING AT CONWAY
JUNE 22, 3 PM

STATE FINANCES

Throughout this campaign my opponent has talked a great deal about state finances. He has tried to make it appear that while he was Governor our state finances were in better shape than during my administration.

When the campaign opened at Lexington, he said that the state had a $12,000,000 surplus when he left the Governor's office. A few days passed and he said it was a $20,000,000 surplus and even distributed hand bills using this figure. I waited patiently to see just how far out on the limb he would go. Finally, he put an ad in the newspapers of the state in which he says, and I quote:

"Left $20,000,000 surplus in 1939."

Now I ask you to look at the record.

Governor Burnet Maybank succeeded my opponent as Governor at the time he says he left this big surplus. If my opponent left $20,000,000 surplus, Governor Maybank and the General Assembly could not find it. The General Assembly convened in January and adjourned July 1, 1939, after the longest session in state's history.

Now what caused this long session? Governor Maybank set forth the reason in his message to the legislature and I quote from it in the 1939 Acts of the General Assembly:
"When the General Assembly convened in January you faced an almost impossible task in continuing the operations of the state institutions and at the same time protecting the taxpayers. The state was finishing its fiscal year with a deficit of approximately $4,000,000 and an actual cash deficit of $1,000,000."

That is the statement of Governor Maybank.

Does that sound like my opponent left a $20,000,000 surplus to his successor in 1939? Actually there was a deficit; the state's finances had to be re-arranged; major financial problems were still unsolved after the legislature had worked on them for 100 legislative days; the public welfare program was endangered; and the schools could remain open only with the aid of a three mill property levy. This was the result of four years of my opponent's stewardship as Governor.

I ask you what dependence can you put in anything a candidate says, if that candidate will make and publish a statement of fact that he left a $20,000,000 surplus in the state treasury, when the official records show that he left the state in financial chaos.

Let me make some more comparisons between his record as Governor and mine.

During the four year term of my opponent as Governor, approximately $31,000,000 was made available as state support for public education. During my four year term, over $120,000,000 was made available from state funds, an increase of nearly 400%.

When my opponent completed his four year term as Governor, the
average teacher's salary was $750. Today it is $1,025, an increase of almost 300%. The state's annual appropriation for public education has increased nearly 100% since I have been Governor.

During my four years as Governor, $6,000,000 of state funds were given to counties to aid them in hospital and health center construction. During my opponent's four year term, no such appropriations were made.

During my term as Governor the state has rendered many new services to our people and has sent money to counties in aiding them in reducing their local property levies. We have met the cost and still kept state finances on a sound basis and the budget balanced. We have not left financial chaos to be solved by the next administration, as my opponent did.

During my opponent's term as Governor, this state was torn with strife—strife between labor and management, strife between the Governor's office and the legislature and the courts; strife between the Governor's office and the highway commission, and other departments of government.

During my term as Governor, we have had peaceful and progressive industrial relations, and our workers have lost less in wages from strikes and lockouts than in any other state in the union. We have had harmonious relations between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government.

In my opponent's term of office, he declared a state of insurrection and used the national guard to drive the duly elected highway commission out of the state capitol, he used the national guard to seize ballot boxes from Democratic Party officials, and he used the national guard to deal...
with industrial strikes in our mills. I have not called out the national guard a single time for such purposes, and since I have been Governor, we have not had bayonet rule in the government and elections in South Carolina.

During my opponent's four year term there was only $42,000,000 in new capital invested in this state for industrial expansion. During my term $425,000,000 in new capital has been invested or allocated for industrial expansion in our state, an increase of over 1,000 percent.