High school students write letter about national debt

4-4-1957

Strom Thurmond

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Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, 'High school students write letter about national debt' (1957). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1453. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/1453

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STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) IN THE SENATE ON LETTER FROM SCHOOL PUPILS REQUESTING BUDGET REDUCTION, APRIL 4, 1957.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I have received a letter from students of St. Johns High School in Charleston County and I would like to read the following three paragraphs from that letter at this time because it deals with a very important subject:

"We, the students of St. Johns High School and future voters, have a complaint.

"On December 26, the New York Daily News reported that our national debt was approximately $280,800,000,000. The combined debt of 26 countries of economic importance was $153,738,000,000. The United Kingdom, France, and Germany were included among the countries named.

"Why should our country pay off the national debts of other countries at our expense? In our opinion most of the foreign aid we give is doing just this. The budget which the President has proposed is entirely too large and outrageous. We believe that YOU as our elected representative, should and will do something about the waste and extravagance of the Federal Government. In our opinion the budget must be cut drastically."

Mr. President, the people of this country are seriously concerned over the size of the Federal Budget and the size of the public debt.

Every day I am hearing from the people of my State on this subject. They want to see Congress reduce the proposed budget for 1958 and they want to see a start made on reduction of the public debt.

The thing that impresses me with this particular letter is that the young people of this country are becoming aware of the vital import the budget has for them in the future.
They are looking to the Congress collectively and the members individually to do something about economy in government. These young people, who will be the voting citizens of tomorrow, realize that excessive spending today by the Federal Government means that they will have to pay the bills tomorrow. We know this is true because today we are paying the debts of the post-war days of World War II, as well as World War II obligations.

The young people who wrote this letter state that their faith is being quite shaken, with reference to Congress. I can well understand their view if we fail to make some reductions in the budget.

We must restore the faith of these young people who recognize the evils of foreign aid and the stupendous size of the public debt.

Non-essential spending must be stopped. I intend to do everything in my power to help renew the faith of these South Carolina students, and of all the people, in the Federal Government. I hope there will be a majority in the Senate and in the House of Representatives who recognize the necessity for facing this task and wielding the economy axe.

Dollars today will only be worth dimes tomorrow if we do not stop spending more each year in times of prosperity and thus adding to the spiral of inflation.

I am confident the American system of government cannot be destroyed from outside. I do not want to see it destroyed from within by prodigal spending.

There would be no generous godfather in some foreign land to take Uncle Sam's place -- if Uncle Sam's money should run out.
The Government of the United States must first be true to the people who pay the bills. Then we can help where help is really needed and where we know the people are not mere green-back friends who would turn to other sources when the American dollars run out.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the names of all of the students who signed this letter to be printed in the Record at the conclusion of my remarks.

The names are as follows:

John E. Harris
Wade Elsay
Walter C. Richter
Rodney Barnwell
F. W. Glover, Jr.
Laney Ayer
Edward H. Townsend, Jr.
Richard R. Limehouse
R. Hugh Davis
George R. Jenkins
Perry Koger, Jr.
Mary Jean Ansaldo
Merita Eadie
Ann Hilton
E. L. Brinson
Grayce Ramsey
Ruth Spain
Bonnie Humbert
Berrnell Higgs
Penny Pye
Virginia Brown

Robert Grimfall
H. L. Biering
English Harrison
Ben Walpole, Jr.
Alicia Seabrook
Francis Hills
Townsend Price
Joseph Clyde Fish
Betty Ann Koger
Boone Jenkins
Katherine Wallace
Marion Mitchell
Lewis Mitchell
John A. Hampton, Jr.
R. Boyd Hayes
Tommy Davis
Julie Ann Smoak
Bissell Anderson
Roddy Lyman Jeffers
Joanne Suggs
Andrew R. Jackson, Jr.