

Kean University

Kean Digital Learning Commons

Florence Dwyer Report to the People Newsletter 1959 Florence Dwyer Report to the People Newsletter 1959

1-15-1959

Report to the People Vol. 3 No. 2

Florence P. Dwyer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.kean.edu/cp_dwyer_newsletters_1959

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



Volume III, Number 2

FOR RELEASE:
Thursday, January 15, 1959

The 86th Congress is off to a rousing start.

All but four of the 436 Members of the House of Representatives took the oath of office in a mass ceremony on opening day-- including, for the first time in history, a Member from the State of Alaska.

Three new women members - all Republicans - also took their places in the House, boosting our feminine ranks to an all-time high of 17.

It was a simple affair, familiar to many generations of those who have sat in this chamber. But in the depths of its meaning, as an oath to serve the people of America honestly and selflessly, it was a deeply moving experience-- the kind of experience that must bring fresh inspiration to the most venerable of our colleagues.

For me-- as for many others here-- opening day was made even more memorable by the presence of so many old and dear friends who came down from Union County just for the day. We saw a lot of each other, and I am most grateful for the effort they made to be with me here. I appreciate, too, the many telegrams and other messages which kind and thoughtful friends sent me on this occasion.

These first few days have not been without their moments of high drama. Most of you have read of the sudden switch in the Republican leadership in the House-- the 74 to 70 margin by which our minority members replaced former Speaker Joseph W. Martin of Massachusetts with Congressman Charles Halleck of Indiana.

Those who supported Halleck made it clear what they had in mind. No matter how small our minority-- and we are fewer than we have been in 20 years-- they want the most vigorous and articulate leadership possible.

More important than that, however, will be the programs and the causes embraced by Republicans in the day-by-day activities of the Congress. Worthy and constructive ideas, designed to meet the needs of the American people, are what is required today.

If we can combine these ends with the means of a dynamic new leadership, then Republicans will have real cause to rejoice. It will mean we have made new progress toward responsible representative government.

Democrats, too, have their problems. Chief among them will continue to be civil rights.

One of the most revealing-- though least reported-- of opening day incidents was the swearing in of Rep. Dale Alford of Arkansas, the extreme segregationist who defeated one of the finest, most respected men in the House, Brooks Hays.

Alford, whose election is under investigation because of the use of allegedly illegal means, took the oath of office separately, and was permitted to take his seat temporarily pending the results of the investigation.

But as he walked down the aisle to take the oath, the entire bloc of Southern Congressmen, gathered in the rear of the chamber, stood up and vigorously applauded him-- the symbol of their stubborn resistance to the law of the land, and the promise of troubles to come.

The broader picture, the outlines of a bold and challenging future, were persuasively sketched by President Eisenhower in his State of the Union message to a joint session of the House and Senate.

If Republicans and Democrats alike will join together to achieve the high goals of national growth and world peace outlined by the President, the 86th Congress can be one of the most fruitful and productive assemblies in our history.

There will obviously be differences between many of us as to the specific means of meeting the country's needs in the fields of defense, education, and agriculture, of eliminating the remains of the recession in places like Union County and of holding back inflationary pressures.

But if we can focus our national attention and mobilize our immense resources for the tasks worthy of a free people, then history will record that we entered the Age of Space ready for any challenge.

It's a job for all, because it requires that we recognize the right values and set the proper goals, and then do everything necessary to secure them.