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4-2-1959

Report to the People Vol. 3 No. 13

Florence P. Dwyer

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**REPORT TO THE PEOPLE
FROM YOUR CONGRESSWOMAN**

FLORENCE P. DWYER - 6th District, New Jersey



1631 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

**FOR RELEASE
Thursday, April 2, 1959**

Volume III, Number 13

Seldom if ever in recent years has the general public indicated such an intense interest in the details of Congressional office organization -- payrolls, staff, office space, etc.

The highly unorthodox way in which some members of Congress have used the funds entrusted to their care has, of course, been responsible for the continued insistence on full disclosure. Here in the House of Representatives this has been easy, since House rules have required for years that such details be available to the public. Since the Senate continues to insist on its right to secrecy, it is understandable that public pressure for the facts has shifted toward that side of Capitol Hill.

I suspect, too, that a major reason for this interest stems from the people's concern with Government spending in general. But the incredible complexity of a Federal budget which approaches the astronomical figure of eighty billions of dollars makes it difficult to pull it apart and decide which items are not justified.

This problem doesn't exist in the case of a Congressional office. One doesn't have to be an expert to question the practice of paying young sons big salaries for part-time work, or renting a front porch to the Government, or using a payroll to take care of relatives or political associates who somehow can't be found when there's work to be done. And doing all these things with public money -- money you and I pay in taxes.

No Need for Secrecy

I think this interest is a good thing. People tend to distrust what is kept secret from them especially when there's no good reason for the secrecy. And rightly so, since there is always a temptation to abuse a public responsibility when there is no public check or control.

Public confidence in their Government and in the people who represent them

in the Government is an essential element in our political system. It is important to strengthen this confidence by dealing frankly and honestly with the people we represent.

I feel very fortunate in having this kind of relationship with the people of Union County. Many thousands of you have seen at first hand how our Congressional office functions and who the people are who help me serve you from it. But for those other thousands who have not had occasion to see it in action, this may be an opportune time to explain how things work here.

All Congressmen are entitled to the same salaries, allowances and assistance: \$22,500 a year (before taxes), \$2,500 to cover office expenses, and not more than eight staff assistants to whom are paid salaries totalling between \$35,000 and \$40,000 a year, depending upon how the salaries are divided.

In addition, all Congressmen are assigned offices in the House Office Building here in Washington and are authorized to obtain no more than two offices in the District they represent -- either in a Post Office or other Federal Building, if space is available; otherwise an allowance of \$1200 a year is provided for rental of office space. For expenses of the District office -- supplies, telephone, equipment, furnishings, etc. -- an expenditure of \$600 annually is authorized.

Nothing Fancy

In my own case, I would have preferred to follow my predecessor and use the rooms he had in the Elizabeth Post Office, which were larger and better furnished than any available for \$1200 a year. But the Post Office had urgent need of the space, so I was forced to find something in a private building. As those who have been there know, there's nothing fancy about Room 227, 286 North Broad Street, Elizabeth (Telephone: Elizabeth 5-0400), but there's room enough for desks, filing cabinets, and work -- for this is a working office. It's open and staffed six days a week throughout the year, except holidays, for one purpose: to make it as convenient as possible for people to get the help or information they need from their Congresswoman.

It isn't a political headquarters, a law office or an insurance company. It's your office, conducted exclusively in your interests. It's open to everybody -- regardless of the condition of your politics or your purse.

But an office without people would be barren and useless. And the best thing about our Congressional office is the people working with me. I know of no Congress-

man with people more capable, loyal and interested, or with people who work longer and harder for their District.

The problems of a Washington office are multitudinous. They require people who know the Federal Government, how it operates, who is responsible for what, and where to go for answers -- in any of the hundreds of agencies here. They range all the way from providing hospitality and information for visiting constituents to the conception and execution of complex legislation.

Wanted: Skillful People

The skills and talents an office needs are endless. Stenography, typing, filing, the use of office machines -- these are the obvious but essential ones. Other hard-to-find skills are these: the ability to write well; a knowledge of law and administrative procedures, a facility for analyzing legislation, an awareness of the economic and social problems of our country which requires a background of history, political science, economics and international affairs, a wide acquaintanceship with top officials of Government departments and agencies, and the kind of reliable judgment that can separate the worthy case from the unworthy, the possible from the impossible, and the kind of experience that can find the way to obtain results.

No brief survey such as this can do justice, I realize, to the varied demands that are made on a Congressional office and its staff: covering immigration tangles, veterans' problems, tax matters of all kinds, the specialized subjects of two Committees, the problems of a Congressional District as they relate to the Federal Government, and the whole range of legislative issues concerning labor, business, agriculture, foreign affairs, defense, and so many others.

A staff must be capable of providing a Congressman anything he needs to do his job -- from taking dictation to persuading the White House of the importance of a request. The more seriously a Congressman takes his job -- in this complicated civilization of ours -- the more important a good staff becomes.

As I have said before, I have many reasons to be proud of my staff and the work they have done for me and the people I represent.

Questionnaire Deadline

Returns from our legislative questionnaire are coming in fast. If you or your friends haven't yet received your copy, please write or call me at either office. Deadline for receiving completed questionnaires is April 14.