

*Known as the Policy  
Committee as "Reedy's  
Creedy."*

STATEMENT BY SENATOR LYNDON B. JOHNSON of TEXAS  
at the Senate Democratic Conference -- January 2, 1953

My Democratic colleagues have accorded me the great honor of Party floor leadership in the 83rd Congress. I accept the position in a spirit of gratitude for their generous support and with a prayerful hope that I can be worthy of their trust.

I believe that Democrats can all work together in harmony. One of my deepest convictions is that there are more vital issues to hold Democrats together than there are issues to divide them. We have had our differences in the past and we will have our differences in the future. I do not believe in suppressing those differences. Unity achieved by muffling dissenting voices is a cheap unity which serves neither our Party nor our Country.

My voting record is open to all. Regardless of whatever position I may hold in the Democratic Party, I will not change the principles which have guided me in the past nor will I ask any other man to change his principles.

There may be times when I will be in a minority -- not just in the Senate but among the Senate Democrats themselves. This I believe is unavoidable and would be unavoidable regardless of any selection that could be made by this conference. No man of integrity can live constantly in the majority.

We have all been sent here by our respective states and we all owe a primary allegiance to our constituents. Since this is a nation made up of states, I have never felt any conflict in loyalty between my State and my Nation. I have represented Texas to the best of my ability in the past. I shall continue to do my utmost to safeguard the interests of my native State in the future and I don't think there is another Senator who will disagree with that thought.

I respect and sympathize with the problems of all of my colleagues. I know they will be generous and extend the same understanding to me.

Wherever possible -- and I sincerely believe this will be true in a majority of issues -- I will seek to state the position of my colleagues as forcefully and ably as I can. In those instances where we may disagree, I will state and vote my disagreement. But I will do my utmost at the same time to protect the rights of those with whom I disagree.

We must frankly face the fact that the Democratic Party, as well as the Nation, is stepping out into new and untried courses. Twenty years of Democratic administrations have come to an end. New issues are arising and new issues will arise which we cannot foresee.

I have a great faith in the Democratic Party. I am a Democrat of conviction -- not out of habit. I believe that the Democratic Party is now -- and always has been -- the party that is best for America. I believe there are forces holding our party together greater than the issues over which we may squabble for the moment.

We are now in the minority. I have never agreed with the statement that it is "The business of the opposition to oppose." I do not believe that the American people have sent us here merely to obstruct.

I believe we are here to fight for a positive program -- a program geared NOT just to opposing the majority but to serving America. I think that is the real desire of every Democrat -- even though we may disagree as to methods.

Working together, I think we can do more than merely preserve the gains of the past twenty years. I think we can go forward with a positive program -- a program that is pro-American and not just anti-Republican. And if we go forward as positive Americans -- and not negative oppositionists -- I am convinced that the time is not too far distant when the Democratic Party will again be in the majority.

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