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Party Switchers Event 6/26/89

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 26, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS  
CHANGING PARTIES

The Rose Garden

3:44 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. And all of you, greetings, welcome to the Rose Garden. To Lee -- Lee Atwater and Jeannie Austin -- delighted that the leaders of our party are here for this important occasion. And, of course, to our special friend, Congressman Bill Grant of Florida -- a great, great pleasure to see you again and have you here with us. And to state officials, key elected leaders, fellow Republicans all, welcome to the White House. And welcome officially -- you don't need it from me -- but, welcome to the Republican Party. (Applause.)

It was once said that some men change their principles for their party, while others change their party for their principles. And since the election, scores of elected Democratic officials -- men and women -- have made the right choice and joined the Republican Party -- and because the values and principles of the Democratic Party were not their values and principles. And I think many more will follow them.

The switch is on to the party in sync with the American principles. The switch is on to the Republican Party.

In February -- seems like just yesterday -- Bill Grant, Congressman, came to the White House to announce his switch from Democrat to Republican. And now he's with the party of opportunity, the party of ideas, the party of the future, because in the future, I honestly believe there will be many more Democrats joining our ranks.

And people say the Republican Party is on the move. Well, when I look around here today, I'd say that's true. We're moving in the right direction. But the Democratic Party is on the move, too -- to the left and out of the mainstream.

And as the greatest former Democrat of them all, President Reagan, once said, "I didn't leave the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party left me." The Democratic Party is leaving droves of voters behind as it moves over on to the more liberal side -- the left side of the political equation. And now many of those stranded voters have made a move on their own -- to the Republican Party, our party of family, faith and the future.

And each of you here has made a courageous decision, sometimes a very tough, political decision to join us -- taking considerable political risk in the process. But you've also made a move to be on the winning side in the contest of ideas and issues in America.

And when you made that bold choice to join us, we made a choice, too. We will support you, we will back you up in every way we can. You've made a tough decision -- the right decision -- and we're with you. And when you're out there on the front lines for us, you won't be fighting alone. This party will stand with you shoulder-to-shoulder.

As former Democrats, you are the most visible sign of the

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great sea-changes that are going on in the American political scene. I'm told that since 1984, the Republican Party in Florida has increased its voter registration by nearly half a million; and in the last 60 days, Republicans have been out-registering Democrats in that state by better than 3-1. And that's because mainstream Americans believe in peace through strength, and economic opportunity, traditional family values. And with the Republican Party, they're swimming with the current.

We know which party stands for a strong America and a growing economy -- and Americans know that too. And that's why with the able leadership of Lee Atwater, Jeannie Austin, the Party will become the majority party in America. We can do it -- I want to help -- we will do it -- because of the courage of you and thousands like you. On behalf of Republicans everywhere then, thank you, congratulations, welcome to the Republican Party.

Thank you all very, very much for coming.

END

3:49 P.M. EDT

**REMARKS: PARTY SWITCHERS EVENT  
MONDAY, JUNE 26  
THE ROSE GARDEN  
3:30 P.M.**

**THANK YOU. LEE [ATWATER] AND JEANNIE [AUSTIN],  
GOOD TO SEE YOU. CONGRESSMAN BILL GRANT -- IT'S ALWAYS  
A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU HERE WITH US.**

**- 2 -**

**STATE OFFICIALS, KEY ELECTED LEADERS, MY FELLOW  
REPUBLICANS ... WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE, AND  
WELCOME TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.**

**IT WAS ONCE SAID THAT SOME MEN CHANGE THEIR PRINCIPLES  
FOR THEIR PARTY, WHILE OTHERS CHANGE THEIR PARTY FOR  
THEIR PRINCIPLES. SINCE THE ELECTION, SCORES OF  
ELECTED DEMOCRATIC OFFICIALS -- MEN AND WOMEN -- HAVE  
MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE ... AND JOINED THE GRAND OLD  
PARTY.**

- 3 -

BECAUSE THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WERE NOT THEIR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES. AND I THINK MANY MORE WILL FOLLOW THEM.

THE SWITCH IS ON ... TO THE PARTY IN SYNC WITH AMERICAN PRINCIPLES. THE SWITCH IS ON ... TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

- 4 -

IN FEBRUARY, CONGRESSMAN BILL GRANT CAME TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO ANNOUNCE HIS SWITCH FROM DEMOCRAT TO REPUBLICAN. NOW HE'S WITH THE PARTY OF OPPORTUNITY, THE PARTY OF IDEAS, THE PARTY OF THE FUTURE ... BECAUSE IN THE FUTURE, THERE WILL BE EVEN MORE DEMOCRATS JOINING US.

PEOPLE SAY THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS ON THE MOVE. WELL, WHEN I LOOK AROUND HERE TODAY, I'D SAY THAT'S TRUE. WE'RE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. BUT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS ON THE MOVE, TOO -- TO THE LEFT AND OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM. ((PAUSE))

AS THE GREATEST FORMER DEMOCRAT OF THEM ALL, PRESIDENT REAGAN, ONCE SAID, "I DIDN'T LEAVE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEFT ME." THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS LEAVING DROVES OF VOTERS BEHIND AS IT MOVES FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO LEFT FIELD. NOW MANY OF THOSE STRANDED VOTERS HAVE MADE A MOVE OF THEIR OWN ... TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, THE PARTY OF AMERICAN VALUES: FAITH, FAMILY AND FUTURE.

- 7 -

**EACH OF YOU HERE HAS MADE THE COURAGEOUS DECISION TO JOIN US -- OFTEN DESPITE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL RISK -- BUT YOU'VE ALSO MADE A MOVE TO BE ON THE WINNING SIDE IN THE CONTEST OF IDEAS AND ISSUES IN AMERICA.**

**AND WHEN YOU MADE THE BOLD CHOICE TO JOIN US, WE MADE A CHOICE, TOO. WE WILL SUPPORT YOU, BACK YOU UP IN EVERY WAY WE CAN. YOU HAVE MADE A TOUGH DECISION ... THE RIGHT DECISION ... AND WE'RE WITH YOU.**

- 8 -

**WHEN YOU'RE OUT THERE ON THE FRONT LINES FOR US, YOU WON'T BE FIGHTING ALONE. THIS PARTY WILL STAND WITH YOU SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER.**

**AS FORMER DEMOCRATS, YOU ARE THE MOST VISIBLE SIGN OF THE GREAT SEA-CHANGES GOING ON IN AMERICAN POLITICS.**

**((I'M TOLD THAT SINCE 1984, THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN FLORIDA HAS INCREASED ITS VOTER REGISTRATION BY NEARLY HALF A MILLION AND IN THE LAST 60 DAYS, REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN OUT-REGISTERING DEMOCRATS IN THAT STATE BY BETTER THAN 3-1.)) THAT'S BECAUSE MAINSTREAM AMERICANS BELIEVE IN PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES ... ((PAUSE)) AND WITH THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, THEY'RE SWIMMING WITH THE CURRENT.**

**WE KNOW WHICH PARTY STANDS FOR A STRONG AMERICA AND A GROWING ECONOMY ... AND AMERICANS KNOW, TOO. THAT'S WHY, WITH THE ABLE LEADERSHIP OF LEE ATWATER AND JEANNIE AUSTIN, THIS PARTY WILL BECOME THE MAJORITY PARTY IN AMERICA. WE CAN DO IT ... AND WE WILL DO IT - - BECAUSE OF THE COURAGE OF YOU AND THOUSANDS LIKE YOU. ON BEHALF OF REPUBLICANS EVERYWHERE, THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS.**

**WELCOME TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.**