

STATEMENT

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BEFORE

TEMPORARY COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS  
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

It is indeed a pleasure to appear before you this morning as you undertake the momentous and exciting task of drafting the 1972 Republican Party Platform. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss briefly the accomplishments and goals of the Nixon Administration in the area of consumer affairs.

In this area -- as in so many other important respects -- this year's committee need not venture out upon uncharted waters as did your predecessors four years ago. Four years of demonstrated commitment and solid achievement by this Administration in advancing the interests of the American consumer now point the way.

Our 1968 Party Platform promised fairness for all consumers, the creation of new information and protection programs, encouragement for consumer education at the State and local levels, vigorous enforcement of existing consumer protection laws, and active support for the pro-consumer initiatives of private businesses and organizations. We have done all this, and much more.

For the consumer, the past four years have been a period of unparalleled access to government. Through a series of innovative actions, President Nixon has done more to give the consumer a voice in top level policy-making than any other President.

He wants his food and drink to be safe, he wants to be protected against unnecessary product risks, and he wants his government to take swift action against those who would cheat and mislead.

To insure that the voice of the consumer is direct, articulate and forceful -- a permanent part of the government's decision-making process -- this Administration has established new consumer offices not only within the White House but also in a number of operating departments and agencies. Never before have there been designated consumer representatives within the Department of Transportation, the Justice Department, the U. S. Postal Service, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Civil Aeronautics Board.

To insure maximum availability to the public of the product information obtained by the government's purchasing agents, the President directed me to develop a program for the dissemination of such information. The result was an Executive Order creating a Product Information Coordinating Center in the General Services Administration. Through this agency, thousands of publications on such useful topics as automobile tires and batteries, fibers and fabrics, and ways to conserve energy in both heating and air conditioning have been prepared and distributed. Never before has the Federal government taken such steps to share its buying and research expertise with consumers.

designed to provide important new safeguards, both to protect the consumer and to reward the responsible businessman.

He proposed enactment of a Consumer Product Safety Act, which would provide broad Federal authority for comprehensive regulation of hazardous consumer products. This bill would empower the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, acting through a newly organized Consumer Safety Administration, to establish mandatory safety standards, and to suspend or ban from the marketplace those products presenting an imminent hazard or incapable of being rendered reasonably safe by imposition of standards.

He also submitted a Consumer Fraud Prevention Act, designed to prohibit a broad but clearly defined range of practices which are unfair and deceptive to consumers, and to give the Justice Department additional powers to enforce these prohibitions. This legislation would authorize civil penalties of up to \$10,000 for each offense, and would afford consumers who had been victimized by such practices the right to seek damages in the Federal Courts upon successful termination of a government suit under the Act.

Another important element of his proposed "Bill of Rights" for the consumer was the Fair Warranty Disclosure Act of 1971. This bill would authorize the Federal Trade Commission to require full disclosure of the terms of

proposals. I also testified before the Congress in support of legislation which would provide a statutory basis for the Office of Consumer Affairs in the Executive Office of the President, and create a new Consumer Protection Agency with authority to act as a formal advocate of consumer interests in Federal agency proceedings and before Federal courts. This agency would also be empowered to receive and act upon consumer complaints, to initiate and conduct programs of consumer information, and to study and disseminate information regarding the safety of consumer products.

Each of these legislative proposals addresses an important consumer problem, and none is unreasonable or burdensome to other interests, yet not a single one has been enacted by a Congress which, as we all know, is controlled by the opposition.

This Administration has demonstrated and acted upon its concern for the consumer. It has shown that his goals are the goals of the Republican Party. American consumers are asking no more than is just:

- . . fair value for their money.
- . . competent representation and a voice in decisions which affect their interests.
- . . protection against fraud and deception.
- . . a reasonable choice among goods and services, and sufficient honest information to make an intelligent selection.