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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 27, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ED ROLLINS

SUBJECT: NEVADA - POLITICAL BRIEFING

I. SUMMARY

Republican U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt is the dominant figure in Nevada politics. Laxalt, a Nevada native, has served as Lieutenant Governor (1963-1967), Governor (1967-1971), and in the U.S. Senate since his election in 1974. Laxalt, while again serving as Reagan Campaign Chairman in 1980, was also re-elected to a second U.S. Senate term over Democrat Mary Gojack by a 59% to 37% margin. Both Laxalt and the President have favorable job performance ratings above 65% in Nevada, according to Frank Fahrenkopf, the state's Republican Chairman. Senator Laxalt is currently out of the country.

Three major races in Nevada have developed into highly competitive contests: the U.S. Senate race, the gubernatorial race, and the U.S. House race in Nevada's 2nd District (North-Carson City, Reno).

In the U.S. Senate race, Republican former state Senator Chic Hecht is attempting to unseat Democrat incumbent U.S. Senator Howard Cannon. Although Hecht trailed Cannon by a 51% to 35% margin, shortly after the September 14 primary, the gap has narrowed considerably since the President's visit to Nevada on October 7.

Wirthlin's most recent polling data shows that this race is a virtual dead heat. A factor in this race is the current trial of Teamster leader Roy Williams in Chicago. Williams is accused of attempting to bribe Senator Cannon.

Republican incumbent Governor Robert List, who faces an uphill battle in his race for a second term, has improved his position considerably during the past two weeks. List now trails Democrat state Attorney General Richard Bryan by approximately 7 points. This is a dramatic improvement from August polls which showed List trailing by 22 points. List has alienated many Nevadans with his tax program, (which raised sales taxes). Democrat Bryan, however, has just come forth with a long awaited tax program of his own. The program would impose heavy tax burdens on the business community, and has received widespread criticism from the media. It is characterized as a hurriedly constructed unworkable scheme which would severely cripple Nevada's economy. List seems to be benefiting from the negative reaction to Bryan's proposal.

Nevada gains a second U.S. House seat because of reapportionment. A very close race has taken shape in Nevada's 2nd District (Carson City, Reno), between Republican Barbara Vucanovich and Democrat Mary Gojack. Vucanovich, a longtime aide to Senator Laxalt, currently leads Gojack by 1 point in the polls.

In the 1st District (Las Vegas), Democrat former lieutenant governor Harry Reid is favored to defeat Republican former state Representative Peggy Cavnar.

In 1980, the Reagan-Bush ticket carried Nevada by an overwhelming 63% to 27% margin.

II. ELECTED OFFICIALS

GOVERNOR - Robert List - Republican - Elected in 1978  
SENATOR - Paul Laxalt - Republican - Elected in 1974  
SENATOR - Howard Cannon - Democrat - Elected in 1958  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - 0 Republicans 1 Democrat

III. THE STATE LEGISLATURE

UPPER HOUSE - 5 Republicans 15 Democrats  
LOWER HOUSE - 14 Republicans 26 Democrats

IV. REPUBLICAN STATE PARTY OFFICIALS

REPUBLICAN STATE CHAIRMAN - Frank Fahrenkopf  
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN - Ed Fike  
REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEEWOMAN - Eileen Schouweiler  
REAGAN-BUSH STATE CHAIRMAN - Reese Taylor

V. DISCUSSION

A. THE U.S. SENATE RACE - 1982

In one of the most nationally prominent U.S. Senate races in Nevada's history, Republican former state Senator Chic Hecht is challenging four-term incumbent Democrat U.S. Senator Howard Cannon.

Senator Cannon barely survived a bitterly contested Democrat challenge from Nevada's lone U.S. House member Jim Santini. Santini, a conservative Democrat who supported much of the Administration's economic legislation during the 1981 session, attacked Cannon as a Senator "mired by the politics of the past." He accused Cannon of trying to influence voters with "outmoded pork

barrel" politics, and questioned how the Senator became a millionaire during his years of Senate service. Cannon, in turn, called the Santini accusations "lies, smears, and distortions." The Senator highlighted his Senate seniority as an irreplaceable asset, and constantly reminded the voters of the federal projects he has helped gain for Nevada. In the September 14 primary, Cannon defeated Santini by a 50% to 45% margin.

In the Republican primary, Chic Hecht, who did not enter the race until July, won the U.S. Senate nomination over early favorite Rick Fore and three other challengers. Hecht's victory is largely attributed to his close association with Senator Laxalt and the help given him by Lyn Nofziger. Hecht won 39% of the primary vote to Fore's 25%. His primary challengers have quickly rallied behind the GOP nominee and the Nevada Party remains solidly united behind Hecht.

Chic Hecht has lived in Las Vegas for more than 30 years where he became a self-made millionaire through diverse business enterprises, including clothing and department stores, banking and hotels. Hecht served two terms in the state Senate (1967-1975) and was the Republican minority leader during Paul Laxalt's term as Governor (1967-1971). Before settling in Nevada, Hecht spent 18 months in East Berlin during the late 1940s as a U.S. counter-intelligence agent.

Hecht is running an issue oriented campaign, based primarily on his support for the President's economic program. He claims that Cannon is a "budget buster." Cannon voted against

tax-indexing and in favor of overriding the President's veto of the supplemental appropriations bill.

Hecht is pursuing the "sage-brush rebellion" issue. Eighty-seven percent of Nevada is owned by the federal government, and Hecht advocates a move towards greater state autonomy in controlling these lands. Senator Cannon voted in favor of the 1976 Organic Act which tightened federal control over U.S. Government lands. Additionally, Cannon voted in favor of the Panama Canal Treaty, an issue which still disturbs many Nevadans.

Although Cannon defeated Santini in the primary, and Santini formally endorsed Cannon "as the Democrat's nominee," Hecht will likely benefit from disaffected Santini supporters. Republican State Chairman Frank Fahrenkopf reports that many former Santini supporters have contacted him, volunteering their support for Hecht. Hecht is also attracting financial support from business political action committees. Hecht has received the maximum allowable contribution from the Republican Senatorial Committee, and the Hecht campaign is well-financed.

Hecht's campaign could indirectly benefit from the trial of Teamster Union President Roy Williams, which opened in Chicago this week. Williams and four others are being tried on charges of attempting to bribe Senator Cannon. Cannon has not been specifically charged with any wrongdoing, and Hecht has not personally made the matter an issue, but testimony in the trial could prove damaging to Cannon.

The President's visit to Nevada on October 7th helped spark momentum in Hecht's campaign, and it now appears that

the outcome of this race will be in doubt until election day.

B. THE GUBERNATORIAL RACE - 1982

Republican incumbent Governor Robert List, facing an uphill battle in his bid for a second term, appears to be gaining on his Democrat challenger, state Attorney General Richard Bryan.

List, a 46-year-old California native, served as a district attorney for four years before being elected Nevada's Attorney General in 1970. After serving two terms, List was elected Governor in 1978, when two-term Democrat incumbent Governor Mike O'Callaghan decided not to seek re-election. As Governor, List has generally followed a conservative approach. He is a strong advocate of the Administration's New Federalism and he supports adoption of the Balanced Budget Amendment. He has reduced the state government's workforce by 1,200 positions.

List, however, is facing major problems because of his controversial tax program, passed two years ago, which reduced state property taxes and raised the state's sales tax by 2.25%. List claimed that the tax shift would save Nevadans millions of dollars in taxes, while shifting a greater tax burden on out-of-state tourists who would carry much of the sales tax burden. While the List program has restrained Nevada's tax burden, a drop-off in tourism has caused a tremendous shortfall in state revenues. State income from Nevada's gaming industry has also been less than projected, and the Democrats claim that List has created a state budget crisis.

Bryan, however, who gained early political mileage by attacking Governor List's tax plan, has created his own problems



with this issue. Having promised to develop an alternative tax program last spring, Bryan came under media attack in early October when his long-awaited proposal failed to materialize. Finally, last week, Bryan unveiled a hastily conceived program which would greatly increase taxes on the state's business community. Press reaction to Bryan's tax program has been overwhelmingly negative, and the Democrat Majority Leader of the state Senate recently labeled Bryan's program "unworkable."

List is taking the offensive against Bryan, charging the state Attorney General with inconsistency on issues such as the death penalty, pornography, and gun control. List is a strong advocate of greater "home rule" over federally owned lands - 87% of Nevada is owned by the federal government. Bryan has remained relatively quiet on the federal lands issue. List believes that the issues are on his side, and is conducting a campaign to better publicize his record as Governor, while demonstrating his challenger's inability to propose any viable alternatives to the state's problems.

List is now trailing Bryan by 7 points, which is a 15-point improvement from August polling data which showed List down by 22 points.

#### C. THE U.S. HOUSE RACES - 1982

Nevada has gained a second U.S. House seat because of reapportionment. The 1st District lies totally within Clark County, taking in all of Las Vegas. The 2nd District geographically takes in the remaining 95% of Nevada.

Republicans have placed their best hopes for a Nevada House

victory on the 2nd District race. The Republican nominee is Barbara Vucanovich, who has served as an aide to Paul Laxalt since 1962. She resigned her position as manager of Senator Laxalt's Reno office last year to run for Congress. Vucanovich has lived in Reno for more than 30 years where she has operated a travel agency and a small business. She is a past President of the Nevada Federation of Republican Women.

Vucanovich's Democrat opponent is Mary Gojack, who served six years in the Nevada state Legislature, and challenged Senator Laxalt in the 1980 U.S. Senate race. Laxalt won by an impressive 59% to 37% margin. Gojack won the Democrat nomination over a crowded primary field which included her estranged husband.

Polls show that Vucanovich and Gojack are virtually even, and that there remains a large bloc of undecided voters. Approximately 60,000 voters in this district reside in the northern portion of Clark County (Las Vegas), and almost half of these voters remain undecided on the race. The President's visit in Las Vegas could give Vucanovich's campaign the needed impetus in the final week to defeat Gojack on Tuesday.

In the 1st, Las Vegas dominated Congressional District, Democrat former lieutenant governor Harry Reid has long been considered the likely winner in November. He won the Democrat nomination with a strong 78% showing over three challengers.

However, the upset victory of former state Representative Peggy Cavnar in the Republican primary over Dr. Jay Lyman, has thrown a wild card into the race. Dr. Lyman had been supported in the primary by the state GOP and was well-financed.

Peggy Cavnar and her husband Sam, who was an unsuccessful candidate this year for the GOP U.S. Senate nomination, have long been involved in tax-reduction initiatives in the state. Mrs. Cavnar, a nurse by profession, served in the state legislature for one term, 1979-1981; she was defeated in her 1980 bid for the state Senate by 28 votes. However, her past political involvement has made her well-known in the Las Vegas area. Although a Tarrance poll, conducted just after the September 14 primary, showed Cavnar trailing Reid by only 5 points, subsequent polls have shown Reid with a substantial lead.

VI. NEVADA - MISCELLANEOUS

POPULATION - 799,000

NICKNAME - The Silver State

MOTTO - All For Our Country



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 27, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ED ROLLINS

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE AT GOP RALLY FOR REPUBLICAN  
CANDIDATES IN NEVADA  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1982  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the rally is to help generate popular support for Republican U.S. Senate nominee Chic Hecht, Republican incumbent Governor Robert List, and the state's two Republican U.S. Congressional candidates.

II. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Senate contest between Republican challenger Chic Hecht and Democrat incumbent U.S. Senator Howard Cannon is virtually a dead heat.

Republican incumbent Governor Richard List is in an uphill battle against state Attorney General Richard Bryan.

In Nevada's 2nd District, Republican U.S. Congressional nominee Barbara Vucanovich is in a close race against Democrat Mary Gojack. In the 1st District, Republican U.S. Congressional nominee Peggy Cavnar has only a slight chance of defeating Democrat Harry Reid.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Governor Robert List

Chic Hecht, Republican nominee for U.S. Senate

Barbara Vucanovich, Republican nominee for U.S. Congress,  
2nd District

Peggy Cavnar, Republican nominee for U.S. Congress, 1st District

Wayne Newton

7,000 people admitted by ticket

IV. STAFF CONTACT

Ed Rollins

V. PRESS PLAN

Open Press

VI. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

5:15p.m. The President arrives at GOP rally  
The Las Vegas Convention Center  
Las Vegas, Nevada

The President is introduced by Wayne Newton

The President makes brief remarks

5:45p.m. The President departs rally