

Executive Speech  
of  
Isaac Tichenor  
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*Speech of Gov. Tichenor – 1797*

FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE COUNCIL & GENERAL ASSEMBLY.<sup>1</sup>

Accustomed to regard the public voice with sentiments of respect, I now appear before you to resign the Office of Senator of the United States, and accept the more arduous & difficult task allotted to the Chief Magistrate of this State. While I acknowledge, with gratitude, this token of the public confidence, it is with diffidence and anxiety that I contemplate the difficulties which I shall have to encounter, in discharge of the Duties attached to it; and nothing but a firm reliance on your candour, friendship and support, under the present existing state of things, would have induced me to hazard an acceptance of the important trust: but however uncertain may be the Success of my administration, no endeavours shall be wanting on my part, to discharge my Duty with fidelity to the public, and satisfaction to my own Conscience.

The general prosperity which attends the public affairs for this State, cannot but afford us much encouragement and satisfaction. — Freed from the embarrassments which attended us in the infancy of our government — Favored with the blessings of an excellent Constitution — Zealously attached to the Interest, prosperity & Glory of our Country — Free from the alarms and Distresses of War, from foreign manners, influence & Connexions; depending on agriculture, the most certain of all resources; perhaps few States in the Union, can be considered in a more favourable situation, or have fairer prospects of deriving substantial benefits from a judicious regulation of their internal affairs.

It has become our Duty to consult and promote the interest of our fellow Citizens, by a faithful discharge of the different offices and trusts which have been assigned to us; and in the performance of this Duty, we ought invariably to be governed by the Constitution of this State, which, designating our various powers, while we adhere to it, in every Legislative & Executive act, we shall proceed on established & just principles. And in all our deliberations upon measures calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of the state with which we are more immediately connected, we ought to have a constant view to the great Interests of the Nation, of which this State constitutes, though not the greatest, yet a very respectable part.

All the burden of national concerns is by the Constitution of the United States, deligated to the national Government; to *that* government it belongs to regulate our intercourse with foreign Nations, – to secure their friendship by every mean, consistent with our national dignity, our national happiness and prosperity; or, in Cases of the last necessity, with the combined powers of these States, to repel all hostile invasions of our rights.— From this same Government we derive an additional Guarantee of our internal tranquility & the freedom of our Laws & Governm<sup>t</sup>.

The wisdom with which that Gov<sup>t</sup> has been administered, in the times of the greatest Difficulty and danger — success which has hitherto attended the national measures — the known experience, firmness, & integrity of those who are placed at the head of its Administration, ought to inspire us with a proper Degree of Confidence in the future, & to excite us to every patriotic exertion, in support of those measures, which, under *Providence*, may secure the national prosperity. Happily the Constitution of this State & that of the United States, tho' embracing different objects, are founded in the same republican principles, & coincide in the same important end, the security of the Rights & happiness of the People; Constitutions thus coincident, & confirming each other, leave no room for a difference of principle, but only for a diversity of sentiment respecting measures, best suited to promote the public Interest. There cannot, therefore, be any just occasion among us, for the spirit of party & faction, the greatest evil to which republican Governments are subject; it is only in judging of the tendency & Utility of the measures of Gov<sup>t</sup> that there can be the prospect of a diversity of Sentiment; while principles are the same the freest debates & the most critical examination of every subject that may come before you will be of the greatest use; and on every subject while the majority must in all cases decide, temperance & candor will best conduct the Debate.

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<sup>1</sup> This speech is copied from the original manuscript in Ms. *Vermont State Papers*, Vo. 38, p. 31.

The necessary business of the session will come before you from a variety of sources. From the sudden transition of an appointment in the federal Government to the Office & Duty on which I now enter, it cannot be expected, that I should be prepared to detail to you the public business, which will demand your consideration. Any communications which may have been made to my deceased Predecessor, Gov<sup>r</sup> Chittenden, shall be laid before you; and while I mention his name, permit me to pay a respectful tribute to his memory. It must be a pleasing reflection, not only to his particular friends, but to your fellow Citizens at large, that under his administration, this Gov<sup>t</sup> has flourished & obtained a respectable Character among her Sister States. The public good unquestionably was the chief object, to which his political conduct was directed.

*Gentlemen of the House of Representatives.*

The state of the public expences & Revenues is an object which most properly belongs to your Department, & cannot fail to engage your careful attention. The Economy that will prove eventually the most favourable to the People, is to guard ag<sup>t</sup> the introduction of a public Debt; nothing of this nature ought to exist in a time of prosperity & peace; and in whatever form a public Debt may exist, it cannot fail, in its operations, to prove unfavourable to the People. While the public expences are managed with Economy, the easiest way to support them, will be to make the annual provision always adequate to the necessary expenditures.

*Gentlemen of the Council and General Assembly,*

In any measures which may tend to the promotion of education, & the progress of useful knowledge, in this State, — to the encouragement of industry & frugality, so necessary to the happiness & prosperity of a People, — to insure uniformity & stability to our Code of Laws, without which justice cannot be impartially administered, & to give an extensive & lasting influence to the principles of Virtue & Religion, I shall be happy to co-operate in your Councils & Labours.

As, by our Constitution & Laws, the powers of the different branches of our Gov<sup>t</sup> in appointment, in many respects, are to be as well jointly as separately exercised — you will permit me to observe, that it is from among Men of Principle, Virtue and integrity you will find the best public officers; and it is from [the influence of] such men that the wisest measures of Gov<sup>t</sup> are adopted, and a steady conformity to the Constitution Laws of our Country is secured; — By a faithful discharge therefore of the Duties, as well joint as separate, thus deligated, you will exhibit to the good people of this State, an example worthy of their confidence.

[Signed            ISAAC TICHENOR.]<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See printed *Assembly Journal* for 1797, pp. 22-27, where the speech is slightly changed — probably by the governor.