

Ford Plans to Change Congressional Liaison Staff

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 14—President Ford, faced with a Congress heavily dominated by the opposition party, will make major changes in the staff on which he relies for politically sensitive relations with Senators and Representatives.

The planned shifts, expected before the new 94th Congress convenes in January, will include the departure of at least three of the top White House lobbyists whom Mr. Ford inherited from President Nixon.

Among those who will be leaving, according to White House sources, are William E. Timmons, chief of the Congressional liaison team, and two of his assistants, Tom C. Korologos and W. Eugene Ainsworth.

The three men, according to these sources, plan to establish a public relations firm in Washington.

Max L. Friedersdorf, a fourth member of the liaison staff, may succeed Mr. Timmons as chief White House lobbyist.

Mr. Timmons, in a statement today, did not confirm his plans to leave the White House, but did concede that he had discussed the matter with the President.

Post-Election Session

"I have no definite plans at the moment," he said. "I had hoped that I could finish 22 years of Government service at the conclusion of the lame-duck session. However, I have submitted no resignation but I have discussed it generally with the President."

The expiring Congress will reconvene Monday for a post-election session. The new 94th Congress will convene in January, but a definite date has not yet been set.

Congressional sources said today that Mr. Ford had expressed interest in naming one or more Democrats to his Congressional liaison staff to provide a more effective link with the Democrats who control both houses of Congress.

The President, a veteran of 25 years in the House, appears far more aware of the need for

good relations with Congress than Mr. Nixon.

Relations between the White House and Congress in the Nixon years were often stormy, primarily because Mr. Nixon frequently bypassed his own liaison team by relying on other top aides, such as H.R. Halde- man and John D. Ehrlichman, in dealing with lawmakers.

Fears Ties Will Suffer

While Mr. Ford has frequently expressed admiration for the work done by Mr. Timmons and his team of professional persuaders, the President also is known to feel that his relations with the new Congress might ultimately suffer if he retained a staff so closely associated with the Nixon Administration.

Lobbying is perhaps the least visible operation within the White House, so far as the general public is concerned. Yet, the work of White House lobbyists is highly crucial to any administration.

Now that Democrats have strengthened their control of Congress in the recent elections, the White House lobbying effort will assume even greater importance.

By picking up 43 new seats, Democrats now control the House, 291 to 144. Democrats also picked up three seats in the Senate to outnumber Republicans 61 to 39.

White House lobbyists work long hours, often seven days a week, monitoring the progress of legislation and maintaining close relations with members of Congress.

Duties of Liaison Staff

They take vote counts, develop strong position papers reflecting Administration views, line up members to off Administration amendments in committee or on the floor, draft legislation, and coordinate the work of legislative liaison officers from various agencies and departments.

They also perform more routine chores, such as producing Administration speakers for fund-raising events, supplying information sought by Congressional staffs, and providing

White House tour tickets for constituents of members of Congress.

Lawrence F. O'Brien, who was chief Congressional lobbyist for President Kennedy, once described his job as one with "heavy emphasis on human relations."

Mr. Timmons was named chief of White House Congressional relations by President Nixon in early 1970, succeeding Bryce N. Harlow. He had been

an aide to the late Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin and administrative assistant to Bill Brock, Republican of Tennessee, who was then in the House but is now a Senator.

Mr. Timmons's possible successor, Mr. Friedersdorf, is a former Indiana newsman who was once a House staff aide to Richard L. Roudebush, an Indiana Republican. Mr. Friedersdorf is now the White House's chief lobbyist for the House.