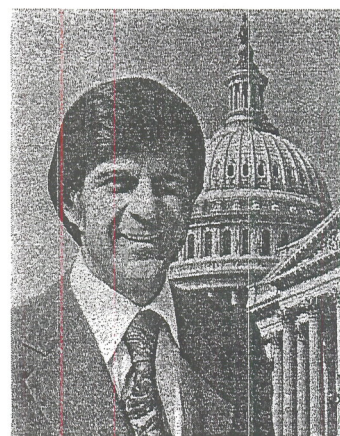


congressman
**PETE
STARK**

COMMITTEES
Banking and Currency
District of Columbia

newsletter

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Pardon: Ultimate Watergate Coverup

What equal justice means to Americans

President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon tells a lot of Americans the law favors those who are rich and powerful.

The argument is persuasive. Mr. Ford has perpetrated the ultimate Watergate coverup.

For awhile, it looked as though our Constitutional system was working beautifully, that there was, indeed, equal justice under the law. But now the question arises — what about the thousands of persons serving prison terms for crimes far less degrading or damaging to society?

Compare the act of "compassion" for a corrupt public official to the ostracism of a young American who refused to participate in an immoral and illegal war.

Who is more deserving of compassion?

In the Watergate affair, the inexorable movement toward justice that is built into our system was working. It will work, if allowed to. When Nixon finally realized he could no longer evade the ultimate truth, he quit to avoid impeachment.

Gerald Ford's appearance was refreshing. I was among those who, while recognizing philosophical differences between Ford and myself, was overjoyed over finally having a President who appeared open, honest and dedicated to preserving our Constitutional democracy.

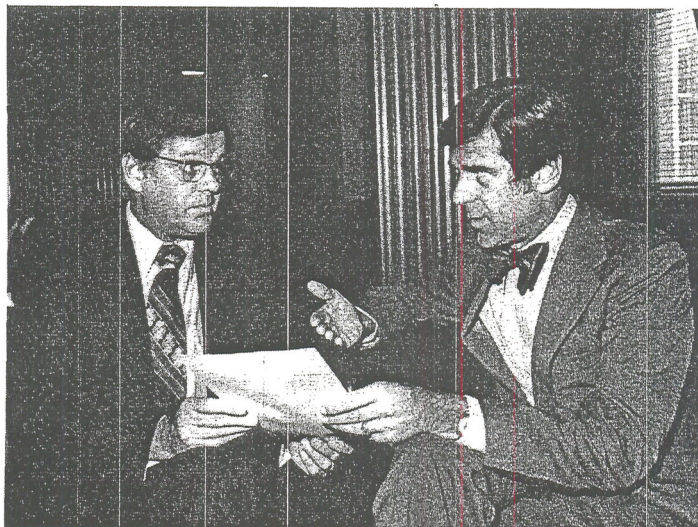
He seemed a nice change from Nixon, who assumed the worst in people and distrusted the American system.

Ford surprised me. I believed in his integrity and intellectual strength. Apparently, the pressures of long-time cronyism were too much. He backtracked, ap-

parently made a deal with Nixon and ended the search for truth.

In my mind, the issue was not whether Nixon should go to prison. The issue was the law. Which should prevail, the law or the executive?

By his action, Gerald Ford has said it's more important to protect the executive from embarrassment than the Constitution from erosion. He has said the law



Congressman Stark and Congressman Jerome Waldie of the Judiciary Committee discuss Congressional response to the pardon.

is meant for almost all Americans, but not a chosen few. It is not meant for someone like Nixon, and Ford stopped the judicial process before Nixon was fully exposed.

Obviously, Ford thinks Nixon is guilty of crimes. He didn't want further revelations so he granted full pardon without requiring a word of confession.

The worst part of the Ford-Nixon coverup is that it deals a crushing blow to the great chance we had to restore people's faith in government and the ability of the American system to function fairly.

All of the people I work with in government are honest and dedicated to making the country a better place to live. But these aren't the people many Americans think of when the subject of government comes to mind. They think of the Mitchells, Agnews and Nixons. . . and now, perhaps, Ford.

9th district residents participate in governmental process

Questionnaires are one of the best ways of learning the thoughts of my constituents. The large response from the last questionnaire (over 20,000 and they're still coming in) is a strong indication that people aren't as apathetic about government and politics as some would have us believe. Indeed, many people are eager to participate in the governmental process, but aren't given the opportunity except at the ballot box.

I have attempted to bring government closer to home through questionnaires, frequent Constituent Days, and by being as open, responsive and accessible as possible through my district and Washington offices.

As the representative of nearly 500,000 persons in the 9th District — which stretches from Alameda to Livermore — I want to know what the people are thinking. Answers to the questionnaires help me decide how to vote on legislation and determine the direction my efforts take in Congress.

INFLATION

Ninth District residents reported overwhelmingly (93.5%) that inflation has been harmful to their way of life. The best way to cure inflation, they feel, is through cuts in government spending (92.4%) and wage-and-price controls (71.2%).

Who is responsible for inflation? Congress is blamed by 57.3% of the people, the President by 31.4% and the Federal Reserve Board chairman by 11.2%.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- 74.3% want to widen Interstate 580 to full freeway standards between Dublin and Castro Valley. (In Livermore, where there has been some vocal opposition to the widening, 70% of the people favor the project.)
- 83.8% want provisions for rapid transit.
- 84.7% oppose a Constitutional amendment outlawing all abortions.
- 80% favor creation of a ridgelands Urban National Park in the hills between Richmond, San Jose and Livermore.
- 85.3% believe taxes are too high.
- 51.4% feel draft evaders should receive amnesty if they fulfill alternative service; 31.1% think they should stand trial, and 17.5% think they should be freed.
- For deserters, 33.4% believe in alternative service, 55.1% in trial, and 11.5%, set free.



Congressman Stark discusses mood of our district with Speaker of the House Carl Albert.

- 82.2% favor outlawing "Saturday night specials," cheap handguns frequently used by criminals.

By far, inflation was considered the most serious problem facing the nation. People also commented on the need for honesty in government, better crime control, and solutions to unemployment.

Some of the respondents showed a sense of humor. The last question asked for an opinion on the most serious problem facing the country. One answer, "The price of a Big Mac." Another, "Lack of pistachio ice cream."

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