

**Post-re-election campaign press conference, Philadelphia,
November 3, 1982 (22:07)**

>> Critchlow, Press Secretary: A brief opening statement, and then we'll take one question. Any questions.

[Laughter]

>> Thornburgh: Good morning. Many of you, I think, will recall that I said throughout the campaign, particularly to those of you who were with us on a daily basis, that there was only one poll that counted in an election, and it's the one that's carried out on election day. And that poll, we're pleased to note, gave us the opportunity to serve an additional four years as governor of this great commonwealth, and we're very grateful to the voters across the state, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, who provided the margin of victory. It's quite apparent, I think, from all that we have learned in the last 24 hours, that there was a concerted effort made across the United States, and effective in many areas, to induce voters to vote simply the straight Democratic ticket and to ignore the differences in programs, performance, and personalities when it came to individual candidates. And I believe that where successful, it cost us some very good public servants who were rolled up in this effort to induce straight-party voting. Pennsylvania was an exception, and we're pleased and proud of that. We devoted most of our campaign efforts to getting people to concentrate on the record of performance that we had compiled here in Pennsylvania and to ascribe to the traditional Pennsylvania way of looking at elections that called for examination of the candidates and their performance. And I think Pennsylvania voters provided an exception to those states where the straight-party line-voting effort was successfully carried out. We have almost 3/4 of a million more registered Democrats in this state, and the fact that we were able to secure re-election in the face of that registration deficit confirms what I've just said, that Pennsylvanians continue, by and large, to look at the candidate and the record of performance, even in the face of a concerted effort to induce conduct otherwise.

We are looking forward to the next four years and continuing the effort that we've made to provide an appropriate level of services for all the citizens of this state without running the state out of competition for economic growth and job development by increased taxes and without increasing the tax burden on our citizens. Careful management and the attention to our needs on a balanced basis will be the hallmark of this administration during its second four years, as it was during its first four years. We

are extremely pleased that we have the opportunity to serve once again. Somewhat a unique experience for a Republican governor, because I guess I'm the first Republican governor in over a century to have even the opportunity to serve a second term, and I think I'll take it slowly, carefully, methodically, and not attempt to solve all the state's problems overnight. We look forward to the support of our fellow Pennsylvanians, in particular during these troubled 1980s times, the kind of patience and forbearance that I think is characteristic of this state. I'd be glad to answer any questions you have.

>> Reporter: Governor, since the Republicans have lost the majority in the state house -- I think it's 103 to 100 -- how do you think that's going to affect the next term?

>> Thornburgh: It's difficult to say. We are used to dealing from a minority position in the General Assembly. During the first two years of my administration, we had a Democratic majority in the Senate of Pennsylvania. We had razor-thin margins during the second two years in both houses. Now it looks as if we will be facing a majority of Democrats in the House. Let me say this. My hope would be that the leadership of the Democratic Party in the House will be forthcoming with an attitude that bespeaks a desire to cooperate and to make common cause where we can. We won't agree on everything. We don't always agree with all the Republicans in the House or the Senate. But I hope that their motivation and their goal is to serve Pennsylvania and to restrict our differences to those matters of principle that we have an obligation to differ upon and not to be obstructionist or to, in any way, seek to create the highly charged partisan atmosphere that was the unfortunate characteristic of our relationship between the Executive and Legislative branch for so long.

>> Reporter: State-store system, Governor -- the chances of changing the state-store system with the legislative makeup?

>> Thornburgh: I don't know that the legislative makeup is going to affect that. I haven't had a chance to run down and put a check mark beside all those who agree with me that the state ought to get out of the liquor business, but I do know that every public-opinion survey I've seen indicates an overwhelming desire on the part of the citizenry to get the state out of the retail liquor business. My guess would be that was not and will not be a partisan issue as much as it is an issue of philosophy of what the proper role of state government is. We're going to put that on the agenda, high on the agenda, for the next administration, and we expect to have bipartisan support for that in both Houses.

>> Reporter: Governor, you made much ado about the so-called "concerted effort" about straight-ticket voting. Are you trying to tell me or tell us that Republicans don't also urge that and that you didn't also urge that?

>> Thornburgh: No, I think what I'm saying, Lee, is that the usual dialogue about issues and personalities and principle was subsumed to a great extent across the nation this time by an effort to deal with the straight-ticket voting on the Democratic side almost to the exclusion of who the candidate was or what his or her program was.

>> Reporter: Republican ads saying that very thing -- "Vote Republican. Stay the course." That meant straight-ticket voting.

>> Thornburgh: I don't think those were my ads. My ads were a review of our four years in office. That's the point I'm trying to prove, the point that we carried out a campaign that was directed to what the accomplishments of the Thornburgh/Scranton team had been during four years. We were not making a partisan appeal. What we felt we had carried out was a program that served all Pennsylvanians. Let me give you an example. I saw in the 8th Ward of this city sample ballots. The sample ballot that our people were passing out said, "Dick Thornburgh, Bill Scranton, John Heinz." The sample ballot that the Democrats were passing out said, "Send Ronald Reagan a message. Vote straight Democratic," in the big letters. That's the difference, I think, between the effort. And I'm not downgrading that. I'm saying that that was a characteristic of this campaign that made it difficult for us to get our message out as well as we might have if we were on a head-on one-to-one with an opponent and a set of principles that differed markedly from what we were up to.

>> Reporter: Governor, there are many who think your narrow escape there last night sort of dashes your national political ambitions of getting on a ticket. Would you assess what you will do now on a national level?

>> Thornburgh: This business of national political ambitions is more amusing to me than it is serious. I expect the president to run again in 1984, I expect to support him, and I expect he'll be elected. I expect that Vice President Bush will be his running mate, and I have no aspirations for the national ticket. My heavens, I've got enough job to do in Harrisburg. I think people often think they're doing me a favor and flattering me by mentioning those kinds of ambitions, but you've never heard Dick

Thornburgh, and you never will have, take on one job -- do more than take on one job at a time.

>> Reporter: You're out as a potential national candidate?

>> Thornburgh: If I was ever in!

[Laughs]

[Reporter speaking indistinctly]

>> Thornburgh: Well, I think that I know the most about my race, Larry. It was the one that I paid a little more attention to than the others, and I know what we tried to do. Let me just reiterate. What we tried to do was, in the face of what we perceived to be an effort to induce straight-ticket voting without regard to who the candidate was or what his record was, to tell people who this candidate was and what our record was in a way that reflected our responsibility to govern the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. That was a strategy that we consciously adopted. I think that what you saw in a lot of cases was the Democratic strategy emerging, as being successful. You see the loss of seven -- a net loss of seven Republican governors' races and the possible -- the uncertainty in Illinois, and these are major figures in the Republican Party. And I've got to tell you, I'm darn glad to be among the survivors when you look at that kind of a situation.

>> Reporter: Don't you think the strategy was also successful to a degree in Pennsylvania?

>> Thornburgh: Well, no, I think we -- At last count, we picked up a Senate seat, and we lost control of the House, but, again, I go back to where we were during the first two years of the term. There's was no wipeout in Pennsylvania, let me put it that way. I think you saw some real wipeouts taking place.

>> Thornburgh: Because of the substantial vote that Mr. Ertel did receive, will your administration stay the course in terms of your economic policies?

>> Thornburgh: Well, I think that the reason we were able to swim against the tide is because people approved of our programs.

>> Reporter: But not as many as you thought approved, if you use that as a standard.

>> Thornburgh: Well, I'm not sure that's true. I think what we were looking for, as I said, was to get our record out, what we had performed, and what we held as hopes and vision for the future, and it was because we were successful in doing that that we didn't go the way of Ohio or Wisconsin or Minnesota or Nebraska or Texas, those states where Republican governors did not prevail over this effort. And again we're, on the conventional arithmetic, a heavily Democratic state. We needed a lot of Democrats and a lot of Independents to support us --

>> Reporter: I'm reading these figures a little bit differently than you are.

>> Thornburgh: It's everybody's prerogative.

>> Reporter: If you look at them a little bit straight, if you hadn't taken the hometown-candidate personality in Southwestern Pennsylvania, where the Democratic majority is about 300,000-some votes, and you held Ertel down to about 15,000 in four counties -- Allegheny, Westmoreland, Cambria, and Washington. If the normal Democratic majorities were there, 100,000 or less, you would have lost. So, you were getting a hometown support, which has been traditional in the last decade in Western Pennsylvania. They vote Pittsburgh no matter what label they have.

>> Thornburgh: And we love them, boy, I'll tell you.

[Laughs]

>> Reporter: Well, don't you think that that was not a voice on your program but a voice because you're their Pittsburgh guy?

>> Thornburgh: Lee, you can look at a lot of things that could give you some iffy thing. Look at Philadelphia. While we did not run as well this time as we did in 1978, we did not lose Philadelphia by the 300,000 that a Ted Kennedy carries it or that Bill Green carried it against John Heinz in 1976. I think you can look around the state and gather together a lot of figures that can give you a number of differing conclusions. What I'm saying is that my perception is that the reason that Pennsylvania bucked the national trend was that we were able to get across to voters -- Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- the fact that this administration had been its own administration, had addressed the needs of Pennsylvania, had programs, had performance and a vision for the future that we felt comported with what Pennsylvanians would approve, and they gave that approval yesterday.

>> Reporter: Will you comment on your apparent erosion of support in the black communities?

>> Thornburgh: I don't think there was any community, any group of voters in this state, where a more concerted effort was made to get that straight-ticket vote than in the black communities, and it apparently was successful.

>> Reporters: Democrats and not for candidates?

>> Thornburgh: That was the effort that was made, quite clearly, and I think it's a shame, because I think many leading leaders in the black community have pointed out that the straight-ticket voting has not always served the interests of black voters, that the competitive nature of politics dictates that you look at the candidate and the programs and not just the party label. Senator Street said last night that there is no candidate named Democrat.

>> Reporters: What should blacks do about that?

>> Thornburgh: I think the kind of thing they did in 1978, in sending the kind of signal that they were unwilling to be taken for granted by black professional politicians. But there was no question that a lot of the animosity toward Republicans came from a national black perception of shortcomings on the part of the national administration.

>> Reporter: Here in the city, Bill Green has announced that he's not going to run.

>> Thornburgh: I'm not going to move here and run for mayor. I want to make that clear.

>> Reporter: I'd like to know, as a Republican, whom you would like to see run in Philadelphia as a Republican?

>> Thornburgh: Oh, I know better than to fish in those troubled waters. I think there will probably be a number of people who will express an interest in that candidacy.

>> Reporter: Do you think Dougherty is qualified?

>> Thornburgh: I don't know. I haven't talked to Mr. Dougherty or anyone else about the mayor rally. You take them one at a time in this business.

>> Reporter: Governor, was there anything in the negative, any message that you got about your record in the numbers? Is there any program you feel now you have to make a --

>> Reporter: Specifically welfare reform, Governor, because a lot of black people said that that is the issue that...support in the black community.

>> Thornburgh: I don't think that's true. I think that the issue of welfare reform was long since put to rest. My view is that the vote in the black community was a reflection of a very concerted and apparently effective effort carried out by black political leaders to induce a straight-ticket vote. And, Dave, I think what I said earlier bears some repeating. My view is that the reason that this governor survived where many of my counterparts did not is that we effectively communicated to the people of Pennsylvania enough good reasons for them to re-elect this administration -- reasons that were embedded in the principles and policies that we had followed during the first four years of my tenure in office -- to pay little heed to the straight-ticket voting message.

We knew when I ran in 1978 what was on the minds of the people of Pennsylvania, and we worked hard throughout four years, in cooperation with our legislative counterparts, to meet those needs. And I think we made great progress in that respect, and those same commitments will follow through in the next four years -- a continued level of integrity in government, an effort to provide the maximum amount of services to Pennsylvania citizens without increasing the tax burden to the point where it makes it unattractive to live or invest in Pennsylvania and deprive us of the opportunity to create jobs, a continued effort to building the infrastructure that we need to serve our citizenry and our desire for economic growth, a strong, tough position against violent crime, a continued effort at good management in government to do the best job we can with the taxpayers' dollar. Those are the messages that, as you know, we tried to get out to the voters, and I think it accounts in large part for the fact that Pennsylvania, with a heavy Democratic registration advantage, did not turn a Republican governor out of office.

>> Reporter: Governor, you had women's groups opposing you because of the Abortion Control Act that you signed into law. You had the largest teachers union opposing you because of your debate over the subsidy for education. You had a good number of blacks opposing you because of the welfare bill that you put into line. Could this be a factor involved in the close margin here? Or is

that part of the straight-ticket voting? Do you think those three groups also were working for the straight-ticket vote of the Democrats just as a way to defeat the incumbent?

>> Thornburgh: It's hard, and I don't think it's fair to generalize, attitudes of voters or groups of voters. I respect their right to take a position individually or as a group. But what I'm saying is that the overpowering effort that was made by our opposition in this state was to induce a straight-ticket vote without regard to whether it was Dick Thornburgh or Gifford Pinchot or James Buchanan or whomever at the head of the ticket. And our job was to take that on by inducing people to say, "Hey, wait a minute. You've got a governor who has a record, and we want you to take a look at it." And I think they did take a look at it, and they found it to be to their liking, and that's why I'm here today as a victor rather than as a vanquished.

>> Reporter: You didn't suggest to any of the voters while you were campaigning that they should vote for a Democrat because he was a good member of the House or a good member of Congress.

>> Thornburgh: No.

>> Reporter: You said vote for the Republican, didn't you?

>> Thornburgh: No, Lee, I --

>> Reporter: When you went to speeches and made speeches at dinners, at Republican dinners, in any county, all the candidates were there.

>> Thornburgh: Yes, they were.

>> Reporter: You said, "Vote Republican." So the Democrats said, "Vote Democrat." Why are you making such an issue of straight-party voting?

>> Thornburgh: What I was saying was --

>> Reporter: You make it sound like it's bad for a Democrat --

>> Thornburgh: No, I didn't say that. You're...You're misreading completely what I'm saying. It's a rare occasion that you would do that, Mr. Linder.

[Laughter]

I am -- I am not crit--

>> Reporter: I've been turned down by...

[Audience groans]

>> Thornburgh: I'm not being critical. I'm trying to be analytical, Lee. And what I'm saying is that tactic did succeed in a number of states, and I think that what you had was an attempt to capitalize on people's uncertainty and concern and, in some cases, fear about national economic conditions and to translate that into a straight-ticket vote. Where it was successful, as a practicing politician, I have to admire it. What I'm saying is that it wasn't successful in Pennsylvania because I think what we did was to break through that shell that would otherwise have produced a strictly partisan vote and a \$750 million -- or 750 million vote -- 750,000-vote wipeout and accomplish a victory. And, no, I don't mean to be critical of that at all. What I'm saying is that we took a tack that said, "Look, let's focus on the candidates, let's focus on the issues, and on the accomplishments of what this administration has done over the last four years." So saying, having vanquished Mr. Linder, who is an easy shot -

[Audience laughs and groans]

No, you're not. No. Listen, let me say something to you before we break up here. Most of you have covered this campaign and this administration for a considerable period of time. And we've had our differences. I know you'd like to just waltz in to see the gov and even Critchlow once in a while at your convenience, but I want you to know that I respect the Pennsylvania news media. You've been fair to us. We'll continue to have our differences. But I also want you to know something about the people who serve me. I don't think there's a finer professional in the business today than Paul Critchlow, who served me as a press secretary and as a friend for many, many years. And he and his staff are going to be there. They'll be your targets, but they'll also be there to try to do the professional job that they're capable of. And I want to say to you, Paul, that it's been a pleasure doing business with you, if you'd just answer my phone calls every once in a while.

[Laughter]

Thank you.