

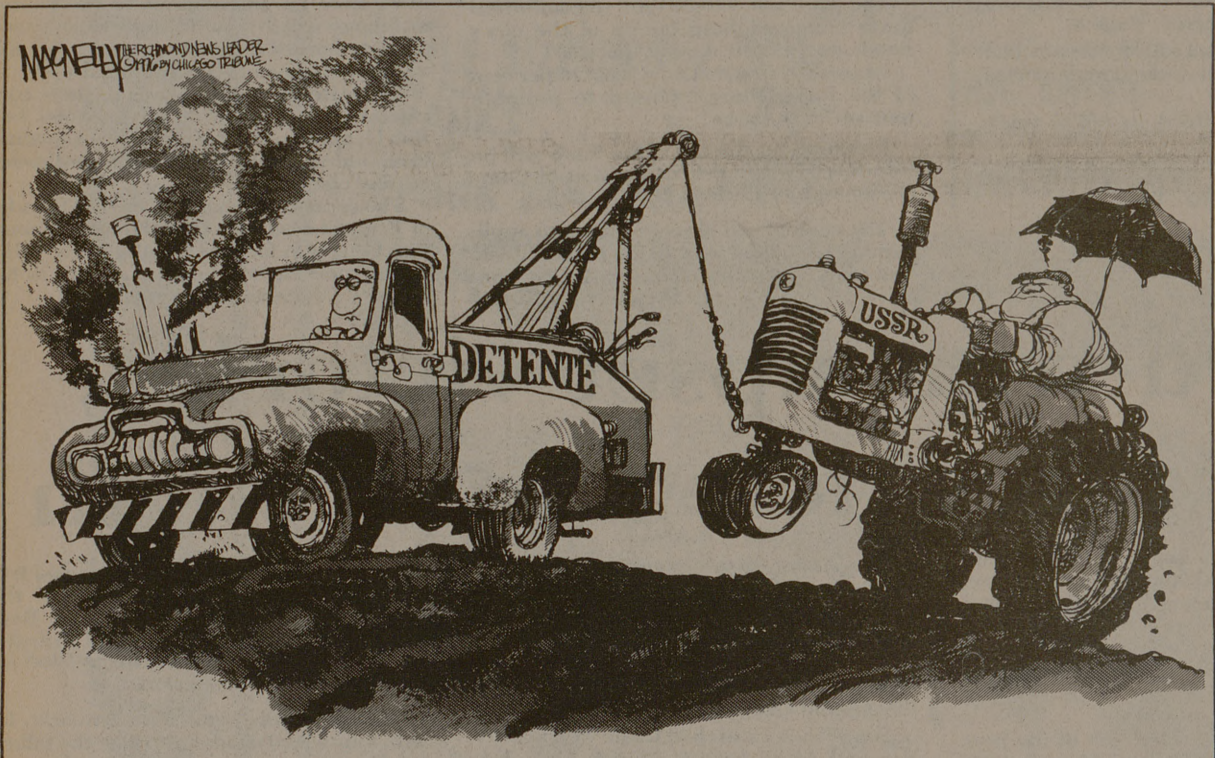
'Temporary' federal agencies must eventually be abolished

By JOHN TOWER
U.S. Senator for Texas

WASHINGTON — One of the more cynical — but regrettably more accurate — maxims of politics is that there is no such thing as a "temporary" government agency. The National Commission on the Standardization of Screw Threads, for example, was established in 1919 for a three-year study. Though modified, it is with us yet today. The latest and perhaps most lamentable example of the permanence of "temporary" government agencies is the Federal Energy Administration (FEA). Only a gleam in a bureaucrat's eye two years ago, FEA has since mushroomed into an agency of 3,400 employees with an annual budget of \$142 million. Like the National Commission on the Standardization of Screw Threads, it seems destined to long outlive the purpose for which it was created. The FEA was created in early 1974 as an emergency means to deal with the Arab oil embargo of 1973-

74. FEA was to develop and implement a program of controls to carry the U.S. through the embargo crisis and put us back on the road to self-sufficiency. The oil embargo which spawned its creation is now over, but there are no signs of retrenchment at FEA. A bill presently before Congress would extend the life of this "temporary" agency for three more years, and nearly triple its budget. It is difficult to find any justification for the continued existence — much less the expansion — of the FEA. When the Arab oil embargo struck, Americans were dependent upon foreign sources for nearly 40 percent of their energy. Today, after two vigorous years of FEA activity, we must import more than half of all the oil and natural gas we have. FEA's chief contribution during this period seems to have been "Energy Ant," a cartoon character that has provided passing amusement to third-graders across the country.

Aside from the third graders, FEA is most popular with lawyers who have mastered its 700 pages of rules, with contractors who will share in the \$300 million FEA will pass out this year, and with a few companies which have profited from disparities in FEA regulations. FEA is not so popular with oilmen who find their drilling operations hamstrung by foolish FEA regulations, by working men and women who are laid off their jobs when the drilling rigs are stacked, and by consumers who are forced to pay higher prices for energy than they would have to pay on a free market. Its first Administrator, Treasury Secretary William Simon, has described FEA as an "outrage" and a "potential monster" which ought to be abolished. I agree. Along with Sens. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Dewey Bartlett (R-Okla.), I've introduced a bill to abolish FEA. Perhaps we can prove that there is such a thing as a temporary government agency after all.



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What do you know about Carter?

PORTLAND, ORE. — With the latest round in the unending presidential primary battle, it is both tempting and dangerous to exaggerate the importance of the Republican returns and to misread or minimize the message from the Democratic results.

President Ford's handsome victories in Michigan and Maryland saved the dinner party at the French Embassy and spared Rogers Morton from filling those empty bottles on his shelf with hemlock. They also shot holes in the always shaky theory that the "crossover vote" was the source of Mr. Ford's problem. But they did not do much else.

Maryland and Michigan are states with a well-established habit of nominating moderates in Republican primaries, and the fact that Mr. Ford won there should have surprised no one — even after five losses in the previous six tries. They imply that he should survive the challenge from Ronald Reagan in Oregon this Tuesday, in Rhode Island on June 1 and in New Jersey and Ohio on June 8.

But that says nothing about the odds in the other eight states that are still to vote, including California, where the makeup of the Republican party is more conservative and the odds for Reagan more favorable.

The promised shift of some 130 New York delegates from the uncommitted column to Mr. Ford's support on Monday will restore the President to the lead in the delegate race for the first time since the Texas sweep by Reagan on May 1. But unless he can defeat Reagan in Reagan's home state of California, he may still



David S. Broder

wind up the primary season with fewer delegates than his challenger.

And that would raise an interesting question: Would the Republican convention in which the conservative candidate has the larger number of elected delegates permit the nomination of an alternative candidate whose key support was furnished by Nelson Rockefeller and his allies?

Mr. Ford might be able to negotiate such an arrangement, but not without incurring conservative bitterness. The memory of Richard Nixon's 1960 "Treaty of Fifth Avenue" with the same Nelson Rockefeller is burned deep in the memory of those who attend Republican conventions. That agreement, which ended Rockefeller's 1960 platform rebellion and assured Nixon's nomination, was the starting point of the 1964 Goldwater movement. And the conservatives who took power in 1964 have never relinquished it. It would be surprising if they acquiesced peaceably in Rockefeller maneuvering to dictate the 1976 ticket.

By winning Michigan and Maryland, Mr. Ford prevented his own premature extinction. But he left

himself with huge political problems, so the headlines greeting his revival are probably exaggerated.

On the other hand, less attention than it deserves has been paid to what has happened in the Democratic race. The warning flags are flying for front-runner Jimmy Carter. He has simply not been able to consolidate his position in the way a genuinely strong candidate should, and his failure suggests that a fundamental reevaluation of his position may be imminent.

When Carter came roaring out of his "breakthrough week," the week in which he won Pennsylvania, Texas, Georgia and Indiana and eliminated "Scoop" Jackson and Hubert Humphrey as active opponents in the primaries, he seemed quite literally on the verge of nomination. Since then, however, his record shows defeats by newcomers Frank Church in Nebraska and Jerry Brown in Maryland, and close escapes from Morris Udall in Connecticut and Michigan.

The lessons of May are plainly that the voters seeking a new fact in the White House can be beguiled by others than Carter and those whose concerns are bread-and-butter issues still have serious doubts about him.

To this reporter, the second finding is even more significant than the first. Both the Church and Brown campaigns play off the same theme of disillusionment with big-spending, bureaucratic Washington that Carter exploited so effectively himself earlier in the spring. If the Democrats choose to nominate such a candidate, Carter, with his big delegate

lead, is still likely to be their nominee.

But Udall stopped Carter in Connecticut and Michigan, not by his message, but by challenging Carter, despite the strong support by political and labor leaders there. Carter, despite the continuing fumbling of his own organization, Udall achieved unexpected success by his persistence in asking, "Do you really know about Jimmy Carter that makes you so sure you want to nominate him?"

That less than half the voters of those two industrial states could satisfy rationalizations for supporting the presumed nominee is a story as underplayed as the victories in Michigan and Maryland may be exaggerated.

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