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R. Walton Moore and Virginia Politics, 1933-1941

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R. WALTON MOORE AND VIRGINIA POLITICS, 1933-1941

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

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Abstract

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This study is a chronicle of the efforts of R. Walton Moore and the Roosevelt Administration to liberalize the conservative Virginia Democratic Party during the 1930’s. Moore was an elderly politician and amateur historian who had been in and out of politics in the state for over forty years. He was opposed at every turn in his efforts by state Democratic Party organization leader Senator Harry F. Byrd, and his conservative colleague Senator Carter Glass. Both Glass and Byrd opposed most New Deal legislation throughout the decade. Moore served officially as Assistant Secretary of State and Counselor to the State Department, but his unofficial role was an advocate for Virginia’s anti-organization Democrats. These Democrats were generally supportive of the New Deal and its programs, but wielded little political power because of the tight control with which Byrd and Glass distributed patronage. This essay traces Moore’s three major efforts to align the Democratic Party in the Old Dominion closer to the Roosevelt Administration.
Introduction

On September 19, 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Robert Walton Moore Assistant Secretary of State. Moore received the office largely on the strength of his relationship with Secretary of State Cordell Hull, whom he had known in the House of Representatives. In appointing Moore to the post, FDR gained not only an Assistant Secretary, but an experienced Virginia politician who would serve as a valuable ally and political emissary in a state dominated by the conservative Democratic Senator Carter Glass and Senator Harry F. Byrd, leader of the state’s political organization. Moore, a lifelong Fairfax, Virginia, resident, had been involved in state politics since he was elected a member of the state senate in 1887. He went on to serve as a member of Virginia’s constitutional convention in 1901-1902 and most recently as U.S. Congressman from the Eighth District from 1919 to his retirement in 1931. After his retirement from Congress, he served on the State Board of Education for Virginia for two years. In addition to these acknowledged political offices, he also maintained a large number of contacts in the state, due in part to his service as president of the State Bar Association of Virginia.

Prior to his service in the Roosevelt Administration Moore had not been openly antagonistic to the organization in Virginia but was viewed as strongly independent, one of several “mavericks beyond Organization control.” Despite this perception he was

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1 Ironically, the only condition that Secretary of State Hull placed on Moore’s appointment was the approval of Virginia’s two Senators, both of whom approved. R. Walton Moore unpublished autobiography, p.111-112, Box 2, Barbara L. Gellman Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY.

2 Memorandum, October 11, 1935, Box 11, R. Walton Moore Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
asked to run for Governor in 1929 by Senator Glass and Senator Claude Swanson, but declined because of health reasons at the time.\(^3\) While the possibility remains that their request that Moore run for Governor was legitimate, it was most likely a courtesy that was extended by the senators knowing Moore would refused the honor because of his age, seventy at the time. There is no evidence that Byrd, who had assumed control of the organization in 1924 and was currently governor, ever strongly considered anyone but John Pollard, his eventual successor. This episode demonstrates the organization’s perception of Moore in 1929 as a valued outsider, not a political enemy.

Moore was also a man with a deep sense of Virginia’s history and the history of the nation. He frequently gave public addresses on the Revolutionary Era or more specifically on one of the founding fathers. George Washington, whose home, Mount Vernon, was in Moore’s home county of Fairfax, was a favorite topic.\(^4\) He often mentioned to others that he was a descendant of Lewis Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. This background is important because throughout his tenure in the Roosevelt Administration Moore would repeatedly use history as a device for defending the Administration’s positions and assailing its critics in Virginia.

After his initial appointment in September 1933, the Assistant Secretary had little immediate involvement in Virginia politics, and his role in the administration was largely confined to his diplomatic responsibilities in the State Department. With the exception of

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Senator Glass, the Virginia congressional delegation had largely supported the emergency measures of 1933, including two of Roosevelt's staunchest future Virginia adversaries, Senator Harry F. Byrd and Representative Howard W. Smith, who had been elected to Moore's old seat in the Eighth District. This level of general support for the Administration's policies remained reasonably consistent from Smith and Byrd, who supported "all except three of the Roosevelt measures" at the 1934 congressional session prior to the mid-term elections. This relative solidarity was evident when on October 19, 1934, Roosevelt embarked on a brief whistle stop campaign tour of Virginia with Byrd, Glass, Representative Clifton Woodrum, and new Governor George Peery, an organization man. After the trip Glass wrote to FDR saying "it was inspiring to witness the tribute of personal affection by so many Virginians for their President. They seemed so eager to 'go all the way with you' whether their Senior Senator was so minded or not." Glass's letter to the President was an acknowledgment of the growing popularity of the New Deal in Virginia by someone who consistently voted against it. Enjoying this

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6 Byrd to Charles J. Harkrader, July 9, 1934, 1926-1936 Correspondence with Harry F. Byrd file, Box 9707, Charles J. Harkrader Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA. At the 1934 Session Byrd opposed "the St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty..., amendments to the Agricultural Adjustment Administration Act and the confirmation of Rexford Tugwell," Ibid., Dierenfield, "Congressman Howard W. Smith," 71.

level of widespread support Roosevelt and his subordinates felt little need to intervene in Virginia politics during the first two years of his presidency.

The little involvement Moore had in Virginia politics during his first year in office took the form, as it often would, of denunciations of contentions that the many of the founding fathers, including Thomas Jefferson, would not have approved of the administration’s policies. But by the time of the mid-term elections in the fall of 1934, the seeds of conflict that would draw seventy-five-year-old R. Walton Moore into an emerging political battle already had been sown. Harry Hopkins, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Agency, had forced a heated exchange with organization governor George Peery over the amount of state relief Virginia was providing its citizens. At the heart of the matter were competing political ideologies. Peery, who, like Byrd, “would tolerate no deficit spending” at the state level, had no problem making sure Virginia received her fair portion of federal funds if Washington chose to spend beyond its means. To the contrary, Hopkins insisted that as a result of the creation of Federal Emergency Relief Agency by Congress it “was understood that the states would utilize their own resources before Federal aid could be expected.” In the short term, Byrd’s and Glass’s political strength prevented the termination of FERA sponsored relief payments.

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8 Moore to FDR, July 6, 1934, President’s Personal File, Box 1588, Roosevelt Papers.

9 Hopkins to Peery, October 4, 1934, Peery to Hopkins, October 17, 1934, Hopkins to Peery, October 25, 1934, Box 151, Peery Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.


11 Hopkins to Peery, October 25, 1934, Box 151, Peery Executive Papers. Fry, “The Organization in Control” states that “From 1933 to 1935 the FERA has poured over $26 million into Virginia and paid over 90 percent of the state’s relief bill.” 270.
to Virginia. But viewing the conflict between Hopkins and Peery from a wider perspective it was perhaps the most visible signal of the difference in governing philosophy between the Roosevelt Administration and the organization-dominated state government of Virginia. The Roosevelt Administration could expect little state help from Virginia in financing its domestic aid programs. The dilemma was best summarized by Virginia historian Virginius Dabney, who wrote “Virginia limited its relief program to putting the unemployed to work on the highways, most of which [was] money that would have been spent on the roads anyway. The Old Dominion’s relief problem was less severe than almost any other, but it was bad enough, and the Commonwealth put almost all the burden on Uncle Sam.”

As the fall of 1934 turned into the winter and spring of 1935, it became apparent to some in the Roosevelt Administration that Virginia’s political support for its efforts to combat the effects of the depression was tenuous at best. As the administration launched a series of ambitious reform proposals called by some historians the “Second New Deal,” the growing opposition among many in Virginia’s congressional delegation, as well as the slow reaction of the state government in implementing landmark federal aid programs such as Social Security, led to a reappraisal of the political situation in Virginia by the administration. Chief among those examining the opposition of the majority of Virginia’s elected representatives to the New Deal was Moore. Confiding in fellow Virginian William E. Dodd, who was serving as Ambassador to Germany, Moore wrote

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13 For an example see Basil Rauch, The History of the New Deal, 1933-1938 (New York: Capricorn Books, 1944), 156.
that despite the opposition of organization Democrats to the New Deal, “the sentiment in Virginia seems quite otherwise.” Moore’s feelings were an accurate reading of the growing political dichotomy in Virginia where the electorate divided loyalties between Roosevelt’s New Deal and the security it helped to provide and the Virginia senators, “their favorite sons who were trying to protect them from high taxes and federal interference.”

By the summer of 1935, R. Walton Moore had assumed the role he played until 1941. In this role he served FDR as political adviser on Virginia and national politics, as an emissary to Virginia’s senators, who from 1935 onward both consistently opposed the administration’s domestic policies, and as a willing hand to those Democrats in Virginia who sought to support the administration. His first task: help assure that Virginia’s political elite stood united for Roosevelt in 1936.

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Chapter I

Into the Fray: The 1936 Presidential Election

By the fall of 1935 Virginia’s support of the president’s reelection in 1936 was R. Walton Moore’s top political priority. For Moore, this meant gaining the public support of Virginia’s two influential senators and seeking the help of other high-profile Democrats around the state. The fact that Glass, and later Byrd, had repeatedly voiced their philosophical objections to Roosevelt’s domestic policies made Moore’s task very difficult. He had four main objectives: assuring Glass of White House support for his reelection as senator, ensuring that Senator Byrd disavowed any third party movement, distancing the administration from anti-organization attacks made on Glass and Byrd, and, most important, having each senator publicly endorse the president’s reelection in a campaign speech.

In late August Moore had paid a visit to Senator Glass to begin what would be over a year-long effort to gain a public endorsement of Roosevelt’s reelection from both of the commonwealth’s conservative Democratic senators. According to Glass, “Moore spent an hour...assuring me of the President’s affection and his desire to have me reelected and also assuring me of his own personal and political devotion.” Glass told Moore that he was being opposed for reelection by people he felt were “friends” of the White House, including the publisher of the Portsmouth Star, Norman Hamilton. Moore, for the first of many times, disavowed any connection to Hamilton and turned to the

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subject of Byrd’s support for FDR. Moore encouraged Glass to have Byrd “go and assure the President of [his] support” which Glass declined to do.

In a meeting the following day with the president, Glass told FDR that “his friends” had objected to the inclusion of Glass’s name with the formation of Roosevelt Clubs in Virginia. Just as Moore had done the day before, Roosevelt disassociated himself from those had who opposed Glass and then sought through him to obtain the support of Senator Byrd. Roosevelt told Glass that Byrd “should disavow all sympathy with a third party opposition ticket.”17 The third party the President referred to was that being launched by publisher William Randolph Hearst, who sought to establish a party of “independent conservative Democrats” to oppose Roosevelt’s re-nomination. Hearst had gone so far as to suggest Byrd as a running mate on a ticket headed by former Democratic nominee Alfred E. Smith.18 Byrd’s and Glass’s consistent opposition to the New Deal made them appear likely to be sympathetic to such a group. While Glass said little publicly about the meeting with FDR, the Richmond Times-Dispatch saw it as a presidential endorsement of Glass for reelection to his Senate seat.19

In relaying the highlights of his meeting to Moore a couple of days later, Glass wrote that he told the president that Byrd would come and see him to assure FDR of his support provided that he was invited. He also told Moore that both he and Byrd favored

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17 Ibid.
18 New York Times, August 29 1935
19 Richmond Times-Dispatch, August 29, 1935
an instructed Virginia delegation for Roosevelt at the Democratic National Convention.\textsuperscript{20} While Byrd had already publicly labeled the idea of his running on the independent ticket “absurd,”\textsuperscript{21} Moore continued to be bothered by the junior senator’s carefully chosen words supporting Roosevelt’s reelection bid. The phrase that most bothered Moore was printed in Byrd’s paper, the \textit{Winchester Star}, and read that “under present conditions” Byrd would support an instructed delegation at the Virginia Democratic Convention. The reservation in this statement bothered Moore so much that he asked Glass to intervene on his behalf in support of the president receiving an instructed delegation from Virginia despite Glass’s previous assurances. Moore feared that Byrd “might very well resent any suggestion from me, but you of all men are his friend…”\textsuperscript{22}

Moore’s actions in seeking to assure Byrd’s support for an instructed Virginia delegation at the national convention are revealing about his relationships with Byrd and Glass. Moore and Glass had a history spanning at least thirty-five years by 1935. Just a year apart in age, they had both served in the Virginia State Senate and were “desk mates at the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1901.”\textsuperscript{23} Moore had also served in congress in the 1920s while Glass was in the senate. Despite Glass’s consistent opposition to the New Deal, they remained on polite and even friendly terms. A similarly cordial

\textsuperscript{21} Richmond \textit{Times-Dispatch}, August 30, 1935
\textsuperscript{22} Moore to Glass, September 5, 1935, G Personal file 1936-1937, Box 24, Moore Papers.
\textsuperscript{23} Moore to FDR, February, 8, 1939, Roberts file, Box 17, Moore Papers.
relationship also existed during the first term between FDR and Glass, who would often address his letters to the President "My dear old friend."  

The same cannot be said for Moore's relationship with Byrd, whose correspondence indicates little contact with Moore other than some complaints about the Hoover Administration's handling of the federal loan program administered by the Agriculture Department while Byrd was governor of Virginia and Moore was in Congress. Later, according to Moore, when he asked Glass to support him for the position of Assistant Secretary of State in 1933 he "expressed his great pleasure, but without doing that Senator Byrd said that I would have his vote." The origin of the icy nature of the relationship between Byrd and Moore is unknown, but it is reasonable to infer that it derives partly from their difference in age (Moore was nearly thirty years his senior), their respective relationships to the organization and their historical outlook. Byrd was also not as cordial with Roosevelt as Glass, having been out maneuvered for the Democratic Nomination by FDR in 1932.

In addition to seeking a renunciation of any third term movement by Senator Byrd, Moore also sought throughout September 1935 to assure Glass that neither he nor anyone else in the administration was helping Randolph Leigh, a supporter of the New Deal from Fairfax, in his bid to unseat Glass in the Democratic primary. Moore advised

24 Glass to FDR, October 23, 1934, President's Personal File 1588, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers.


27 For a discussion of Moore's differences with Byrd on historical issues see for example a discussion on the doctrine of states' rights, Moore to Glass, September 17, 1935.
Glass that he felt his election "was as certain as in anything in the future can be," and that the Senator should not see Leigh’s candidacy as a threat.\(^{28}\) Glass wrote back several days later acknowledging Moore’s assurances, and letting him know that he had already been given some information on Leigh “and would attend to him should it seem desirable.” He also implicitly noted the president’s condemnation of Leigh’s candidacy, writing that publication of Roosevelt’s comments on the subject would immediately “dispose” of Leigh.\(^{29}\) Moore followed up several weeks later relaying to Glass the details of a meeting he had with Randolph Leigh. Moore had told Leigh “of the absurdity of opposing” Glass and speculated on the fact that his candor may have helped force Leigh’s early withdrawal from the race.\(^{30}\) The administration’s lack of cooperation with the challenger was made more evident when Moore told Glass that one of the President’s secretaries, Marvin McIntyre, had informed Leigh that he “need not expect any assistance from the White House.”\(^{31}\) In fact, several months later, Glass’s Democratic nomination petition included the signatures of “the four Virginians most conspicuously associated with Roosevelt,” Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson, Veterans Appeal Board Chairman John Garland, Special Assistant to the Attorney General Robert N. Anderson, and not surprisingly, Assistant Secretary of State, R. Walton Moore.\(^{32}\)

\(^{28}\) Moore to Glass, September 5, 1935, G personal file 1936-1937, Box 24, Moore Papers.


\(^{31}\) Moore to Glass, October 1, 1935, G personal file (copy) 1936-1937, Box 24, Moore Papers. Ibid., Moore to Glass, October 3, 1935.

The efforts of Moore and Roosevelt in the fall of 1935 reveal not only the delicate nature of their respective relationships with Virginia’s Senators, but also the enormous sway Glass and Byrd held over Virginia’s Democratic voters. While the New Deal remained popular in Virginia, so did Glass and Byrd, whose opposition was largely viewed as principled in nature. Historian Ronald Heinemann put forth the idea that Virginia voters while approving of the New Deal, sought to place a check on its excesses in the form of its conservative senators.33

This dual rationale proved to be valid because of the consistently high marks Roosevelt had received in Virginia’s early polls forecasting the 1936 presidential election and the fact that Glass was eventually unopposed for reelection to the senate in 1936. By the summer of 1935 it appeared likely that Roosevelt would once again enjoy the support of the commonwealth as he had in 1932. Beginning in July 1935, the Richmond Times-Dispatch published a serious of straw-poll updates culminating in a three-week tally in which Roosevelt had garnered an impressive 84.52 percent of the vote.34 Several months later the Times-Dispatch reported the results of a poll taken by the Literary Digest in which New Deal policies as a whole were approved in the state by 52.15 percent.35 Despite these positive signs, Moore would continue for much of the next year in both public and private to help assure not only victory in the commonwealth, but a majority for FDR that could be seen as nothing less than a full endorsement of the administration’s

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34 Richmond Times-Dispatch, August 4, 1935.

35 Richmond Times-Dispatch, December 6, 1935.
policies. While Moore hoped that an impressive Roosevelt majority in Virginia might help elect a more progressive governor in 1937, he had little reason to believe it would alter the opposition of Virginia’s senators to the New Deal.

The summer and fall of 1935 also saw the emergence of an openly pro-Roosevelt political faction in Virginia of anti-organization Democrats. The “antis” as they were sometimes known, included several prominent state politicians such as former governors Westmoreland Davis and E. Lee Trinkle, Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson, Secretary of the State Democratic Committee Martin Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor James H. Price, and newspaper publishers Charles J. Harkrader and Norman Hamilton. The group also included two of Virginia’s congressmen, John Flannagan and Clifton Woodrum.\(^{36}\) Moore used his quiet alliance with these men in order to ensure Roosevelt’s re-election in 1936. Along with the support of these high-profile politicians came the formation of Roosevelt Clubs in the summer of 1935, which this group of “antis” helped to organize and support as a means of advocating the president’s re-election.\(^ {37}\) On July 22, 1935, Lieutenant Governor James H. Price announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1937. The press immediately saw the New Deal as likely the main issue in a nomination fight almost two years away.\(^ {38}\) In time Price’s campaign for the governorship and his subsequent administration would serve as the backdrop for Moore’s efforts to aid anti-organization Democrats in Virginia. For now,

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\(^{36}\) The majority of this list is taken from Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia*, 140.


Moore concentrated on gathering support for the President’s reelection among the state’s political elite.

In late September 1935 Senator Byrd finally met with the president at the White House. While the senator said nothing publicly about the meeting, he presumably let FDR know that he would not endorse a third party ticket and would allow for an instructed Virginia delegation for the president at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia the following summer. Byrd’s private acquiescence to the president’s renomination left Moore with little to do politically for the remainder of the year.

The beginning of 1936 saw the first of many election-year conversions by organization members to Roosevelt’s cause. With the president likely to be re-elected, several prominent Virginia Democrats who had spent at least part of the past four years opposing his policies were quick to climb aboard the Roosevelt bandwagon. The first among these men was Representative Howard W. Smith. Smith, who had opposed several recent New Deal measures including Social Security in 1935, praised the president at the Democratic Party’s annual Jackson Day Dinner in January. In fact, the representative from the Eighth District criticized the Supreme Court’s recent overturning of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration Act and went so far as to place Roosevelt’s name along with those of Jefferson and Jackson in the pantheon of great Democratic presidents.

39 Richmond Times-Dispatch, September 24, 1935.

With Roosevelt facing no opposition within the Democratic Party for the nomination, Moore apparently felt he needed to make little effort on the President’s behalf until the summer’s state and national conventions. Meanwhile, National Democratic Party Chairman James A. Farley continued gathering forces for Roosevelt in Virginia. In March, he wrote to Governor Peery seeking a list of individuals to speak on Roosevelt’s behalf. Two weeks later Peery replied with a list composed of both anti-organization figures such as Price and former governor E. Lee Trinkle and organization stalwarts like future governor William Tuck.41

While Peery was certainly a key member of the organization and a Byrd ally, his assistance to Farley is not surprising. While disagreeing sharply with the administration on issues of policy and governing philosophy, he was a practical politician and a party man. In 1934 he had signed campaign material touting the New Deal’s relief efforts and despite some criticism even campaigned for anti-organization congressman John Flannagan, who both Glass and Byrd disdained.42

In June, Farley began an endeavor that Moore would lead for the next five months: to convince Senator Glass to endorse the President for re-election in a campaign speech.43 Farley’s June request, like many of Moore’s that would follow that summer and fall, received no reply. Foreshadowing the 1936 campaign, historian A. Cash Koeniger has described the middle course Glass had to take with respect to his own proud record of

41 Farley to Peery, March 9, 1936, Peery to Farley, March 23, 1936, Box 21, Governor George C. Peery Executive Papers, Library of Virginia.

42 Ibid. Peery to Flannagan, September 24, 1934, Flannagan to Peery, October 29, 1934, signed campaign material November 7, 1934.

43 Farley to Glass, June 6, 1936, Correspondence A-J, Glass Papers.
opposition and the avoidance of any overt opposition to FDR, as one that “would be not
an easy road to travel.” While Glass did attend the 1936 Democratic National
Convention in Philadelphia, he refused a place on the resolutions committee for the first
time in twenty years and was replaced on the committee by Governor Peery. The
message could not have been any clearer to Moore and the administration, Glass might
go along with the re-nomination but he did not have to be happy about it.

On July 4, 1936, with the presidential campaign getting into full swing, R. Walton
Moore accompanied the president and Mrs. Roosevelt, as well as other members of the
presidential party to Monticello. Senator Glass’s speech introducing the president was
largely devoted to Jefferson, but he did take time to make a couple of favorable
comparisons of Roosevelt to Jefferson. He finished the speech by saying that it was “with
infinite pleasure” that he introduced the president. Glass’s stiff opposition to most of the
New Deal over the last four years almost certainly would have never have been detected
from his remarks at Jefferson’s home.

After the president spoke on Jefferson and the ceremony had ended, Moore rode
with presidential party to Richmond and boarded the presidential yacht the Potomac and
headed down the James River. Senator Byrd and his wife then came aboard at Upper

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Quarterly 80 (Winter 1981), 104.
45 Richmond News-Leader, June 23, 1936.
47 Washington Post, July 5, 1936.
Brandon to join the party for dinner.\textsuperscript{48} Despite the outward appearance of harmony, which Glass’s introduction and the Byrds’ arrival on board the Potomac suggested, this was merely a façade that owed more to history, than any real political reconciliation.

What Moore, FDR, Glass, and Byrd did have in common was great esteem for the legacy of Thomas Jefferson and the origins of the Democratic Party. In fact it had actually been Howard Smith who originally invited the president to speak at Monticello, hoping to use Jefferson’s status as the founder of the party to convince FDR to make the trip.\textsuperscript{49} For Moore, at the house of one of his heroes, it must have been heart warming to hear even mild praise of Roosevelt come from Glass. But his warm feeling would not last long and before the summer was over Glass’s interpretation of American history would collide with Moore’s current aims.

On July 15, 1936, Assistant Secretary of State William Bullitt, who, like Moore, shared the title with Sumner Welles and Wilbur Carr, made a speech at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, at a festival commemorating the bicentennial of Patrick Henry’s birth. In the speech Bullitt had implied that if Patrick Henry were alive in 1936 he would have supported the New Deal. Moore, who was a close friend of Bullitt and who was perhaps more watchful than anyone over Virginia’s history thought it was “a good address and admirably delivered.”\textsuperscript{50} Several days later Senator Glass delivered an address at Ashland that his biographer and friend, Rixey Smith, later described as meant to

\textsuperscript{48} Ickes, Secret Diary, 629.


\textsuperscript{50} Moore to Roosevelt, July 31, 1936, R. Walton Moore file 1934-1936, Box 75, PSF.
“correct inaccuracies in Bullitt’s speech.”51 But the actual speech was perceived as going far beyond any mere corrections. In fact, major newspapers across the country highlighted the speech and once again speculated that Glass might bolt the Democratic

Glass defended his speech at Ashland both in private and in public saying that it had not been an attack on Roosevelt. Responding to an editorial in Charles Harkrader’s 

_Bristol Herald Courier_, Glass wrote that the idea that his Ashland speech was a denunciation of the president was “totally without truth.” He explained that he had spoken out because Bullitt had used “the name and fame of Patrick Henry” for political purposes.53

After acknowledging Glass’s explanation of his remarks in his reply, Harkader joined the growing chorus of Roosevelt supporters, lead by Moore, who felt Glass “could render the party a most valuable service by making some speeches during the campaign.”54 Just as in dealing with Farley before, Glass did not acknowledge Harkrader’s request in his reply to his letter.55

Moore felt Glass’s remarks “a fool speech which had furnished ammunition to the enemy” in the campaign. The speech seemed to mark a turning point in his personal view of Glass. He now described him to Roosevelt as a “thoroughly egotistical and garrulous

52 New York Times, July 18, 1936
53 Glass to Harkader, August 3, 1936, Harkrader Papers.
54 Harkrader to Glass, August 8, 1936, Harkrader Papers.
55 Glass to Harkrader, August 10, 1936, Harkrader Papers.
old man, who does not deserve to be taken seriously." moore privately derided glass as "mentally unbalanced." roosevelt shared with moore his annoyance over glass’s speech at ashland and the senator’s general reluctance to aid his campaign. in a memo to moore, the president commented if “carter wants to do the right thing he will make a radio address, as in the 1932 campaign, but i would not want it done unless i could approve it first. one foolish statement might destroy the good effect of all the rest of it.” despite his displeasure with glass over the speech, he continued to seek the aid of virginia’s senior senator both personally and through moore.

on august 25, 1936, glass met with the president at the white house. in a press conference afterwards the president denied any discussion about glass making a campaign speech. the idea that the topic did not come up in the meeting between the two seems highly unlikely for two reasons. first, roosevelt had moore and others entreatiing glass to make a campaign speech for the next month. second, glass quickly endorsed roosevelt again publicly after the meeting despite his reluctance to make a speech on his behalf. insight into glass’s pessimistic view of the 1936 presidential election can be found in an editorial by his newspaper, the lynchburg news. the editorial

56 moore to roosevelt, july 31, 1936, psf box 75, r. walton moore file, 1934-1936.
57 moore to alexander sands, august 6, 1936, box 17, moore papers. sands was a strong supporter of the president from richmond with whom moore occasionally consulted on virginia politics.
59 franklin d. roosevelt, the complete presidential press conferences of franklin d. roosevelt conferences (new york: de capo press) 1972, viii, 96-97.
60 fdr: his personal letters, 1928-1945, 607.
proclaimed that Glass’s support of Roosevelt was simple because “to him Democrats at their worst are better than Republicans at their best.”  

A week later, Moore resumed his pressure on Glass to make a campaign speech for the president. “Without being prompted by anyone to do so,” he told Glass, “I think a speech by you, and better at this time than later would be of great assistance to the administration.” Flattering Glass, he continued, “The opposition has made a great use of your recent comments on the New Deal, because of the weight that attaches to any opinion you express.” The idea that Glass’s anti-New Deal statements would help the opposition is something that was a consistent theme for Moore. Moore’s correspondence continually makes allusions to Republican utilization of Glass’s anti-New Deal comments and their potential effect on the outcome of the election. This factor, more than any other, seems to have been Moore’s primary motive to continue to push for a radio address by Glass.

Over the next several weeks Moore continued his quest to have Glass speak, but heard little from the senator himself. Moore did get in touch with Glass’s secretary only to be told to hold off contacting Glass until Cary Grayson could speak with him, which

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61 Lynchburg News, September 6, 1936.


63 Moore to Sands, August 6, 1936, Moore to Roosevelt, September 7, 1936, Moore to FDR, September 22, 1936, Moore Papers. Moore to Roosevelt, September 19, 1936, Box 75, PSF.
Moore agreed to do. Grayson was a “close friend” of Glass who had served as the personal physician to several presidents, most recently Woodrow Wilson.

While Moore struggled to get Glass involved in the campaign, other members of the organization were proving a little more helpful in making the president’s case around the commonwealth. When Moore wrote Peery complaining about his perceived lack of involvement in the presidential campaign, Peery strongly rebutted Moore’s suggestion writing “I am not indifferent to the result of the election in Virginia. I very much desire the reelection of the President.” He continued by promising to make future speeches, which he did. In the coming weeks Peery spoke across the state “selectively praising Roosevelt’s banking and farm policies.” Peery had also written to Moore noting the presence of a breakaway political faction known as the Jeffersonian Democrats, who he believed would “stir up our workers so that we will get a larger Democratic majority than usual.” The Jeffersonian Democrats were a fringe group of anti-Roosevelt Democrats who attracted little support even among the President’s detractors in the commonwealth. Moore was certainly aware of the group, but paid it little mind throughout the campaign, focusing most of his efforts on Glass and Byrd.

In addition to Governor Peery, Senator Byrd also joined in the campaign in October, making a radio address and later speaking in Lynchburg and Staunton. Byrd

64 Moore to Roosevelt, September 19, 1936. Ibid.
65 Smith and Beasley, Carter Glass, 228.
66 Peery to Moore, September 5, 1936. Box 30, Peery Executive Papers.
68 Peery to Moore, September 26, 1936, Box 30, Peery Executive Papers.
mustered what praise he could for Roosevelt, citing the New Deal bills he had supported and defending his opposition to those measures he did not favor. His most lavish praise for Roosevelt was given in generalities, the senator exclaiming “In those the dark days of 1933….He met the crisis with a calm courage that won the applause of the nation and restored confidence.”69 While faintly praising Roosevelt, Byrd was also sure to defend his own record of opposition to a number of New Deal measures.70

While neither Peery’s nor Byrd’s speeches could be called overwhelming in their support of the President, the fact that they occurred showed their support for the party’s ticket and that they were not indifferent to the outcome of the election in Virginia. When Moore mentioned to Roosevelt the lackluster and belated campaign effort of organization members, he was also quick to assert that it did not bother him too much because “antis” such as Price, Woodrum, and Trinkle “were exerting themselves to the utmost.”71 The significance of this statement should not be overlooked. Here, Moore is telling the President three weeks before the election that his victory in Virginia will be owed in much larger part to the efforts of anti-organization Democrats in the state.

The same week that Moore noted the division of political labor in Virginia, there began a brief debate within the administration about the effectiveness of Moore’s efforts to encourage Senator Glass to speak. A memo to the president from Stephen Early, one of his private secretaries, detailed Early’s phone conversation with Cary Grayson. Grayson told Early that Glass’s wife was seriously ill and that Moore, Jesse Jones, and others

69 Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 14, 1936.
70 Heinemann, Harry Byrd of Virginia, 176-177.
71 Moore to Roosevelt, October 7, 1936, Box 17, Moore Papers.
pushing the senator to make a campaign speech should “lay off.” Early’s memo to FDR said there are only four men the senator “likes and will listen to. They are yourself, Jim Farley, Cary and me. Others only muddy the waters.”

Moore’s absence from the list is conspicuous given how long he and Glass had known and presumably liked each other. Part of the reason for this exclusion is detailed later in the memo. Apparently, “one of Walton Moore’s sisters made the statement that the Senator was in his dotage. This statement has reached him and there is decided bad feeling on that score.”

Given Moore’s previous correspondence regarding Glass’s age and mental health it is reasonable to assume his sister’s comments most likely originated from him. For all practical purposes this event ended the polite correspondence and formal relationship between Moore and Glass. From this point onward their relationship became increasingly adversarial, and their private correspondence was also decidedly more negative about each other.

Several days after receiving Early’s memo, Roosevelt wrote to Moore and reiterated Grayson’s suggestion that Moore “lay off” Glass for awhile. Moore’s reply to the president suggests that Grayson was gullible to believe Glass about his wife’s health. Drawing on his long relationship with Glass, Moore said that the senator often used his own health or that of a relative to make excuses. Despite his protestations, Moore

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72 Early to Roosevelt, October 2, 1936, R. Walton Moore 1934-1936 file, Box 75, PSF. Jesse Jones worked in the Roosevelt Administration as Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation at this time.

73 Ibid. “Dotage” means advanced age or declining years.

74 Roosevelt to Moore, October 6, 1936, Moore Papers.

75 Moore to Roosevelt, October 12, 1936.
certainly adhered to the president’s instructions and did not attempt to contact Glass for the remainder of the campaign.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1936 what Moore and others in the administration probably did not realize was Glass’s rationale for not wanting to make a campaign speech. Not only did Glass oppose most New Deal legislation on practical grounds, deeming some of it unconstitutional, but more importantly he felt betrayed. The source of this betrayal was the result of the 1932 campaign when Glass had made a speech castigating Hoover on Roosevelt’s behalf. Yet Glass felt Roosevelt once in office had “repudiated every word of it,” making him feel “ashamed for having made the speech. He [Roosevelt] has done everything and more, for which I literally flayed Hoover…”76 According to Glass, he made the president aware of his rationale, but it is clear the message was never communicated to Moore or anyone else in the Democratic Party. Despite the efforts of Roosevelt, Moore, and a host of others, Glass had confided to Byrd on October 5th that “I hate the New Deal just as much as I ever did and have not the remotest idea of making any speeches for it.”77

Moore’s efforts to convince Glass to speak for Roosevelt were completely misguided. It is evident from Glass’s correspondence that Moore did not accurately conceive of the depth of Glass’s genuine opposition. The day after Glass’s comments to Byrd, the senior senator unleashed a written tirade against Moore and others in the administration who sought his assistance, writing to friend, “I opposed the New Deal in

76 Glass to Tydings, October 9, 1936, Glass Papers.

77 Glass to Byrd, October 5, 1936, Box 139, Harry F. Byrd Papers, University of Virginia Library. Letter quoted in Heinemann, Depression and New Deal in Virginia, 143.
the Senate, nearly every measure of which has since been declared unconstitutional, and I have not the slightest idea of going on the stump, even if I were physically strong enough, to advocate things against which I spoke and voted and which I very much fear are going to wreck the country. I intend to preserve my party regularity by supporting the nominees of the party at the election, since I have never in my life scratched a Democratic ballot; but that’s all.”

With his efforts to convince Glass to make a campaign speech cut off by FDR, Moore turned to what he himself could do to aid the President’s reelection. On October 14, 1936, Moore drove to Richmond to deliver a radio address endorsing Roosevelt’s reelection. The address was simple and to the point, drawing numerous historical references and sharp comparisons to the Republican ticket. In it he compared current conditions to those that existed in 1932, noting improvements in “industry, agriculture, with respect to labor, in foreign trade and every other direction.” Moore went on to tout the “relief of agriculture and old age pensions.” He also went on the attack, describing a recent statement by Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Frank Knox that the banks were unsafe, as “criminal.” Moore closed by invoking the history of his beloved commonwealth proclaiming “like some immortal Virginians of old days, the President comes within the only reliable definition of greatness....The President is great because in truth he is a President of all the people.”

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78 Glass to R.L. Ailworth, October 6, 1936, Glass Papers, Box 380.
The press comment on the speech focused primarily on Moore’s rebuttal of Republican charges that the New Deal was not responsible for the country’s economic recovery since 1933. He debunked these charges by noting that the GOP had been unwilling to re-nominate Herbert Hoover to test their theory. Moore’s disdain for Hoover’s leadership did not pass with time. Three years later he still believed the former President “shortsighted, and that if he and his tribe had remained in control of the government there might have been a revolution....”80

The fact that Moore injected himself personally into the campaign at this stage is indeed noteworthy. It marks the only time in his service in the State Department that he made any political speech or provided any extensive public commentary meant to influence domestic politics or policy. The speech clearly shows the enormous importance Moore placed on securing a substantial majority for Roosevelt in Virginia.

Asked by a member of the press to give his forecast of the election, Moore summarized his views succinctly, discounting more extreme elements in the election such as the Jeffersonian Democrats and Liberty Leaguers and basing his prediction of Roosevelt’s victory on “the common sense of the American people.” In listing his reasons that this common sense among the electorate would prevail Moore cited a reluctance to return to the “reactionary spirit” of the Hoover years, the economic recovery “which we feel...will soon be complete” and the desire for government to be conducted “in the liberal spirit according to Mr. Jefferson’s fundamental conception.”81 Moore’s election

80 Moore Autobiography, p. 103, Box 2, Gellman Papers.

81 Moore 1936 election statement, undated, Box 11, Moore Papers.
statement perhaps tells more about his views than the election itself. Opposing extremes on either side, he had sought a progressive middle ground, which he felt Roosevelt embodied. In doing so he had drawn upon not only Jefferson, but fellow Virginian Woodrow Wilson for confirmation of his current political views.  

On November 4, 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt was resoundingly reelected to the presidency by one of the largest margins in American history, winning the electoral votes of all but two states. The outcome was also overwhelming in Virginia, where Roosevelt received 70 percent of the popular vote, the largest majority in the commonwealth’s history. This outcome which gave the president a more than 100,000-vote majority in the commonwealth greatly outstripped the estimates Moore had been receiving from Richmond of a 60,000-vote majority. Glass, who had steadfastly refused to speak for Roosevelt was also re-elected by a huge margin garnering 91.7 percent of the vote.  

Virginia’s support of Roosevelt in the 1936 election was of course no surprise given the commonwealth’s staunchly Democratic history and organization control. While Moore labored in the year preceding the election in order to align Virginia’s political elite in Roosevelt’s column he never really doubted that Roosevelt would carry the Old Dominion. Moore could take solace in the large majority the president enjoyed in

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82 Ibid.
84 Hall to Moore, August 25, 1936, Hall to Moore, September 12, 1936, Box 17, Moore Papers.
Virginia despite the perpetual criticism of its two most powerful figures, Byrd and especially Glass.

This majority also gave Moore the confidence to become more assertive on behalf of anti-organization Democrats. Like the “antis,” in the aftermath of the 1936 race he was no longer willing to accept organization control of all facets of Virginia’s government. Given the commonwealth’s endorsement of the president and his policies, Moore now sought to help secure support for those Virginians seeking a small New Deal of their own. Having helped in his own way to ensure a victory for Roosevelt in Virginia, he now made the cause of anti-organization Democrats his own. Moore’s remarks to Roosevelt regarding the lackluster efforts of organization members were the beginning of this effort. The extent to which Roosevelt would also adopt their cause over the next two years would ultimately determine whether Virginia would adopt reforms similar to the New Deal or largely maintain the status quo.
Chapter II

1936-1939: Aiding the ‘Antis’

The enormity of Franklin Roosevelt’s re-election victory in Virginia emboldened R. Walton Moore to assert himself more actively on behalf of the anti-organization faction of the Virginia Democratic Party. Over the next three years, Moore served primarily as the chief liaison between the president and a number of ‘antis,’ most importantly soon-to-be Governor James H. Price. Moore’s actions during this period were focused on influencing the allocation of federal patronage in Virginia. The rationale he used to encourage Roosevelt to aid the “antis” through patronage was to remind to him that failure to do so could lead to a conservative Virginia delegation being sent to the Democratic National Convention in 1940. Presumably, such a delegation would join with other southern conservatives to block the re-nomination of FDR or any other candidate advocating the continuation of the New Deal. While Moore would increasingly labor to help the ‘antis’ wrestle control of federal patronage from the Byrd organization, as time and circumstance would show, his ultimate loyalty lay with Roosevelt.

In the immediate aftermath of the presidential election, Moore had little involvement in Virginia politics. This is due in part to the fact he was appointed acting Secretary of State by President Roosevelt on November 6, 1936, and would remain in the post for the next couple months while Secretary of State Cordell Hull was attending the

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Inter-American Conference at Buenos Aires.\textsuperscript{87} It was not until the end of the year that Moore’s political activities on behalf of the ‘antis’ began again.

Meanwhile other developments had already begun to shape the nature of Virginia’s political scene for 1937. On December 22, 1936, Lieutenant Governor Price, a declared candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor and the overwhelming favorite, issued an open letter to two Richmond Democrats that essentially “removed all doubts of his conservatism in economic matters.” The open letter echoed, just enough, the conservative economic philosophy for which Senator Byrd was so well known. The publication of the letter quickly led to the endorsement of an avalanche of organization officials. Although Byrd did not formally endorse Price, he issued a statement that implied he would not oppose him and praised him in general terms.\textsuperscript{88} Moore had followed the development of the early stages of the governor’s race in Virginia closely, asking Price a year before “whether Representative Burch,” Byrd’s preferred candidate, would oppose him. A week after the endorsements began, Rep. Thomas Burch, to whom Moore had referred the previous year, dropped out of the gubernatorial race.\textsuperscript{89}

While Byrd may have been forced by Price’s statement to acquiesce to the latter’s ascension to the governor’s mansion, he did not relent. Byrd quickly resumed his role as administration critic in January 1937 by informing Roosevelt that he would not support

\textsuperscript{87} Executive Order, November 6, 1936, Box 11, Moore Papers. Draft of Statement on Appointment, Box 10, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{88} Alvin L. Hall “James H. Price and Virginia Politics, 1878 to 1943,” (Ph.D.diss., University of Virginia, 1970), 128-129.

the president’s first major initiative of the New Year, the Executive Reorganization bill.\textsuperscript{90} In fact, his opposition “played a decisive role in the eventual defeat of the bill.”\textsuperscript{91} Byrd’s opposition to the measure, which lasted for more than a year, further widened the gap between organization leaders and the administration.

R. Walton Moore, noting this quick succession of events around Christmas that virtually assured a Price victory, wrote the lieutenant governor “very confidentially” that he would be invited to a luncheon at the White House in the next few weeks.\textsuperscript{92} The reason for the confidentiality Moore invoked had to do with the delicate state of Virginia politics. Throughout his first term and through 1937, Roosevelt did not want to be seen as openly aiding the ‘antis.’ This is one of the reasons he had denied any connections to Norman Hamilton’s criticism of Glass in 1935. While he was certainly in favor of a more progressive state government for Virginia along the lines of the New Deal, he did not want to incite even greater opposition from Glass, and especially Byrd. It had been Moore’s belief that Glass “rarely concerns himself about appointments.” The patronage strategy Moore initiated is seen through his recommendation of a Virginia judgeship candidate to FDR in 1935. Moore wrote, “I hope for the appointment of some liberal-minded, high class lawyer to whom Senator Byrd could find no ground for objection, but who nevertheless would not represent his choice.”\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} Byrd to Roosevelt, January 13, 1937, Box 7, official file 285C, Roosevelt Papers.


\textsuperscript{92} Moore to Price, December 31, 1936, Price file, Box 16, Moore Papers.

\textsuperscript{93} Memo for the President, July 9, 1935, Eastern Judgeship file, Box 6, Moore Papers.
When potential problems arose over appointments, the president normally deferred to Byrd and Glass.\textsuperscript{94} This strategy would largely remain in place until the summer of 1938 when Roosevelt, frustrated with Byrd, Glass and other conservative Democrats, publicly challenged their control over Virginia’s patronage. But until then, Moore continued to aid the “antis” in private without antagonizing the organization. He had conducted a similar balancing act in advocating Roosevelt’s re-election in 1936. He admonished one political supporter that, “Care should be taken, however, not to conduct the work so as to make the lines so definite between the pro-Roosevelt Democrats and the facing-both-ways Democrats…”\textsuperscript{95} The key for Moore was to encourage and aid the “antis” without drawing too much of the organization’s attention, until the President was willing to openly to take up their cause.

Before a meeting that Moore had arranged between Price and Roosevelt could take place, another controversy erupted over Roosevelt’s plan to expand the number of justices on the Supreme Court. This “court packing” plan set the retirement age for justices at age seventy and would have added a justice for every one on the present court who were over seventy and refused to retire. The effect of this legislation would have been to add six new Roosevelt justices to the high court. The plan presented to Congress in February 1937 was not shared with legislators until shortly before hand because Roosevelt feared it would be leaked to the press if he disclosed its existence.\textsuperscript{96} At the brief meeting prior to the public announcement, Roosevelt “solicited no opinions from


\textsuperscript{95} Moore to Sands, August 6, 1936, Box 17, Moore Papers.

\textsuperscript{96} James A. Farley, \textit{Jim Farley’s Story: The Roosevelt Years} (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), 73.
his party’s leadership” and “presided like an impresario.” The president’s failure to feel out Congress cost him in terms of political support especially in Virginia. Both of Virginia’s senators opposed the plan, with Glass doing so immediately in public.98 Further, the plan helped to solidify a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats who would continue to obstruct Roosevelt’s domestic program for the next two years.99

Six weeks later, Virginia’s senior senator made a national radio address in which he derided Roosevelt’s “court packing” plan proclaiming that “We would be better to abolish the Supreme Court and, by regular process, do away outright with the Constitution if they are to be made the playthings of politicians.”100 Senator Byrd initially remained silent about the plan, but by mid-summer he was predicting the certain defeat of the court bill.101 While some ‘antis,’ such as Congressmen John Flannagan and Clifton Woodrum spoke up in support of Roosevelt’s plan, the overwhelming sentiment in Virginia and that of the nation was with Glass.102


100 Ibid., March 30, 1937

101 On Byrd’s silence see Heinemann, Harry Byrd of Virginia, 178. Richmond Times-Dispatch, July 21, 1937. Byrd predicted the defeat of the court bill as a result of the election of Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky as Senate Majority Leader.

Reflecting on the controversy over two years later Moore dictated the following recollection and analysis to his secretary:

"Incidentally, I may say that before the President's court plan was promulgated, I said to the President that in my opinion the court would be inclined to follow the elections, Mr. Roosevelt had just been reelected...and with his approval I had a long talk with the Chief Justice, which I reported to the President, and if the latter had then taken my advice and himself talked with Hughes, he would have found that the court was about to become very liberal, and consequently I feel that the court plan never would have been an issue and a tremendous controversy would have been avoided."103

While Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes's *Autobiographical Notes* makes no mention of a meeting with Moore, he did defend the court against the assertion that it reversed itself on several cases dealing with New Deal measures as a result of Roosevelt's plan. Hughes's notation that the court's change of heart on two of the cases began before the court plan was announced meshes with Moore's recollection.104 In addition to Moore's recollection of being told of the high court's imminent political shift to the left, there may have been other historical considerations at the time. Moore's penchant for justifying Roosevelt's actions and most New Deal policies in historical terms may have been shaken on this occasion. It is inconceivable that Moore, a lifelong lawyer, would not have had a definite opinion of the plan. Despite this likelihood, his correspondence at the time contains no reference to the plan. Given his affinity for and

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103 Moore unpublished autobiography, p. 130, Box 2, Gellman Papers.

104 I have found no detailed record of a meeting between Moore and U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes occurring after Roosevelt's election and before the public announcement of the court plan February 5, 1937. This is not to say definitively that it did not happen. Moore almost certainly had met Hughes before, the latter having served as Secretary of State from 1921-1925, while Moore was on the House Foreign Relations Committee from 1923 to 1931. For Hughes's defense of the court's integrity see Charles Evans Hughes, *The Autobiographical Notes of Charles Evans Hughes*, eds. Daniel J. Danelski and Joseph S. Tulchin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 159.
knowledge of American history it is more likely that he quietly concurred with Glass’s historical assessment of the plan. This historical assessment of the plan, was best summarized by one student of Virginia’s opposition to the court plan who believed:

"The parallel between the action contemplated by President Roosevelt and the relations of Washington and Jefferson with the court was meager. Washington had picked an entire court, and had yet taken pains to see that his choice was guided by statesmanlike considerations, rather than by the demands of expediency. Jefferson likewise had had it within his power to pack the Court and had refrained."105

For Moore, the historical considerations of the “court packing” plan were by no means trivial. He prided himself not only on his ancestry, but also his knowledge of Virginia and U.S. history. It had been the guide for his own political life, which he felt embodied the Revolutionary-era ideal that men do not seek office, but are called to it by their constituents. This is evident in Moore’s description of how he came to occupy virtually every office he held from the Virginia State Senate to the State Department.106 Equally important is the underlying meaning of this recollection with its implied criticism of the president. This instance marks the only time that he recorded criticism of FDR.

In the midst of the public uproar over the president’s “court packing” plan Lieutenant Governor Price met with Moore and the president for a luncheon at the White House. While it is unknown what transpired at the meeting, the Virginia press noted the absence of Virginia’s Senators and described it “as an event that [might] have profound


106 Memorandum on Moore’s professional life, October 11, 1935, Box 11, Moore Papers.
political consequences in Virginia." The meeting, which Moore helped to arrange, was clearly a nod of political recognition from President Roosevelt to candidate Price.

A month later Roosevelt meet with another "anti", the congressman from the Second District, Norman Hamilton. Hamilton’s victory over organization stalwart Congressman Colgate Darden in the August 1936 Democratic primary was seen by newspaper publisher and anti-organization leader Charles Harkader as evidence of Virginia’s strong support of the New Deal. Within the year Hamilton would be pressuring the White House for greater patronage commitments. This trend would continue throughout Hamilton’s single term in the House of Representatives.

At the end of April, Roosevelt also met with Harkrader, now a state senator, at the White House. Harkrader, “one of Price’s most avid supporters,” met with FDR to talk Virginia politics and no doubt also solicit future patronage commitments. The meeting alarmed Senator Byrd who immediately reported it to Glass, writing that Roosevelt “is actively supporting in Virginia all the forces hostile to us.” In the letter he also implied that Moore’s support of the ‘anti’ candidate for lieutenant governor, Robert Daniel, of Hopewell, had influenced Price’s decision to endorse Daniel after reportedly privately

107 Richmond News-Leader, February 28, 1937. Roosevelt said little about the meeting simply commenting that they “Just had a nice visit.” Transcript of Press Conference #349, March 2, 1937, in Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers.


supporting the organization’s candidate for lieutenant governor, Saxon Holt.\textsuperscript{110} Price’s biographer, Alvin Hall, contends that his subject’s remarks at Hopewell, which were interpreted by some (like Glass) as an endorsement of Daniel, were “meant to be no more than a compliment of Daniel before a hometown crowd.” Further, one student of the Virginia campaigns for governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general emphasized that in the latter two, which Price was not personally involved, he “consistently maintained... benign neutrality.”\textsuperscript{111} The historical record vindicates these interpretations, but at the time organization leaders began to feel alarm over what they felt was a subtle endorsement by Price of another anti-organization candidate.

A week later Glass replied to Byrd’s alarming note with a written tirade of his own that denounced Harkrader as “doing everything he possibly can,...to undermine the organization in Virginia and do you and me all the harm he can in conjunction with Hamilton and Flannagan.” Glass then went on to assail both Price and Moore. He agreed with Byrd that “Price has little capability.”\textsuperscript{112} This assessment is contrary to the support he had conveyed for Price in a letter to Harkrader the year before, an indication of his growing suspicion of the all the ‘antis’ and their dealings with the president.\textsuperscript{113} Moore, Glass’s acquaintance of more than thirty-five years, was derided by the senator as

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Glass to Byrd, May 3, 1937, Box 345, Glass Papers. Letter also quoted in Koeniger, “The New Deal and the States,” 882.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Glass to Harkrader, August 10, 1936, Harkrader Papers.
\end{itemize}
“unstable as water and, being on the federal pay list, he may be expected to do us any harm he can.” Glass’s harsh denunciation of Moore is not surprising given the negative comments from Moore’s sister that had reached him the previous year and the obvious challenge to his power he felt Moore and the ‘antis’ presented. In addition to political challenges and personal snipes, Glass was also undoubtedly suffering emotionally from the illness of his wife, who died a month later.114

The senator’s shift into an even more vigorous opponent of the administration in the aftermath of the court fight and his realization of the emerging alliance between Roosevelt and the ‘antis’ is important to note. For the remainder of Roosevelt’s second term, it was Glass, more than any other member of the organization, whom Moore would have to outmaneuver in order to aid the ‘antis,’ if there was to be any hope of altering the organization’s political dominance of Virginia.

On May 21, 1937, R. Walton Moore was appointed as the Counselor in the State Department, the position he would hold until his resignation in 1941.115 Moore was passed over by FDR for the higher position of Under Secretary of State in favor of another Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles. This happened despite Cordell Hull’s support of Moore’s candidacy for the position.116 In terms of his involvement with Virginia politics, Moore’s title change is noteworthy because it did not diminish his political efforts. Perhaps more importantly, despite being passed over the Under

114 Roosevelt to Glass, June 5, 1937, PPF 687, Roosevelt Papers.
115 Executive Order, May 21, 1937, Box 11, Moore Papers.
Secretary’s position by FDR, he continued to remain loyal to the president. While speculation over Moore’s health and possible retirement began as early as the summer of 1937, the 78-year-old apparently took little notice of it, remaining content to serve out the remainder of Roosevelt’s second term. 117

Several months after Moore received his new title to no one’s surprise, Lieutenant Governor Price won the Virginia Democratic gubernatorial primary over State Delegate Vivian Page in overwhelming fashion. The general election that followed in November proved to be a mere formality in staunchly Democratic Virginia, with Price easily defeating Republican J. Powell Royal.118 While Moore was certainly an ally of Price, the lieutenant governor’s personal popularity and the acquiescence of the organization’s leaders in December 1936 to his nomination, had all but assured his victory. With victory nearly certain, Moore took no active role in the campaign and instead focused on building alliances between anti-organization leaders and the White House throughout 1937.

Moore did not attend the new governor’s inauguration in January 1938, but the administration was represented by Roosevelt’s military aide, Virginian Colonel Edwin M. Watson, and Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace.119 As previously noted, Moore’s involvement in Virginia politics did not extend to specific policy initiatives at the state level.


119 Richmond Times-Dispatch, January 20, 1938.
What little involvement that did come from the Roosevelt Administration in terms of state policy came from the president himself. For example on March 1, 1938, Roosevelt wrote Price urging that he push the General Assembly to enact a “low-rent housing and slum clearance program” in Virginia. Federal legislation passed the previous year had made loans and subsidies available for this type of construction.\(^{120}\) Price quickly lobbied the House Finance Committee where the bill had been stuck. The bill was soon voted out of committee and passed by the whole house. Next, the new governor sent a personal message to the state senate urging the law’s enactment. The measure was quickly passed by the upper house.\(^{121}\) The slum clearance act was but one of several pieces of moderately progressive legislation, including minor reforms in education and passage of an “Old Age Pension Act” that Price was able to get the legislature to pass in 1938 as Virginia briefly enacted its own “little New Deal.”\(^{122}\)

While the President was no doubt pleased with Price’s early legislative successes, he could claim few of his own thus far in his second term. Upset over congressional defeats in 1937-1938 over the court plan, executive reorganization, and the wages-and-hours bills, President Roosevelt set out to “purge” certain Democrats who had consistently opposed these and other New Deal measures by opposing them in party primaries in 1938. Neither of Virginia’s senators, both strong critics of the New Deal, was up for re-election in 1938. In time Roosevelt would challenge them on another front.

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\(^{120}\) Roosevelt to Price, March 1, 1938, James H. Price Papers, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia.

\(^{121}\) Hall, “Price and Virginia Politics,” 177

\(^{122}\) Ibid., 204. Heinemann, The Depression and New Deal in Virginia, 122.
For now, Congressman Howard W. Smith, who sat on the House Rules Committee, was the only Virginian the administration tried to "purge." Earlier in the year his committee had defeated the administration’s wages-and-hours bill. The administration believed the defeat of Smith and two other committee members, John J. O’Connor, of New York, and committee chairman Edward E. Cox, of Georgia, would "have a very salutary effect in the House" by giving the administration greater "control of the Rules Committee."¹²³

Moore’s involvement in this aspect of the "purge" is difficult to discern, but from all indications he took no active role in trying to unseat Smith. Two factors lead to this conclusion. First, while Moore resented Smith for announcing his congressional candidacy early in 1931 before it was entirely clear that the former would retire,¹²⁴ he understood that Smith had the organization’s support and thus he would be difficult to defeat in 1938 irregardless of who the administration supported. Second, as both Moore and Smith noted, Smith’s opponent, academic William E. Dodd Jr., son of the former ambassador to Germany, “had been an infrequent resident” of Virginia because of his extensive schooling at the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and the University of Berlin.¹²⁵ Moore, who had lived in Fairfax his entire life and represented the district in Congress, no doubt felt that Dodd was a bit of an interloper. This was Moore’s political


¹²⁴Moore autobiography, Box 2, Gellman Papers, 109. In this recollection Moore noted that he felt could have defeated Smith if he had chosen to run against him, but thought it might have had an adverse effect on his health.

reality despite his close friendship with the former ambassador with whom he corresponded regularly.

From the beginning of the campaign Dodd sought to portray himself as the favored choice of the president. This desire was furthered by a newspaper report printed June 24, 1938, that discussed Dodd “leaving the White House after a high level political conference.” While Roosevelt met with Dodd, he never did formally endorse his candidacy. Roosevelt’s reluctance to back Dodd did not deter Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. Ickes injected himself into the campaign on Dodd’s behalf by criticizing Smith’s opposition to the Public Works Administration. The secretary’s comments seem to have hurt Dodd more than they helped him, by arousing negative press commentary around the state about federal interference in local elections. Both Moore and the president may have stayed out of the race after seeing Governor Price’s refusal to endorse Dodd’s candidacy and hearing his intimation to James A. Farley that “Dodd hadn’t a prayer.” Price’s assessment proved to be correct when on August 2, 1938 Smith defeated Dodd by 19,734 to 6,555.

Overall the entire “purge” was almost a complete failure. It registered as its only victim Congressman John O’Connor, who was from Roosevelt’s home state of New York. The recognition of its failure has been so frequently noted by scholars and the public that Roosevelt’s “use of primary endorsements has never been attempted by any

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126 Ibid., 198, 213.

succeeding president."128 While Roosevelt had refused a formal primary endorsement of Dodd, the administration’s involvement in the contest was apparent and so it was still saddled with his losing effort. In the aftermath of the election, the President did not want to dwell on the failure of his “purge” and resisted attempts by Dodd’s father, the former ambassador to Germany, to meet for a discussion of Virginia’s political situation.129

Roosevelt biographer James MacGregor Burns’s keen analysis of the overall “purge” attempts aptly described the administration’s efforts as “hurried, inadequate and amateurish maneuvers at the last minute.” In fact, his feeling that “in some states the White House interfered just enough to antagonize the opponent, but not enough to ensure his defeat”130 could easily apply to Virginia. While Dodd may have at best been a long shot, Ickes’s entrance into the race certainly served to “antagonize” Smith and galvanize his supporters.

In addition to Dodd’s huge loss, ‘anti’ Congressman Norman Hamilton, of the Second District, lost a close primary race to former Congressman Colgate Darden, whom he had defeated two years earlier. The Hamilton campaign had contacted the White House during the final stages of the race seeking an endorsement from Roosevelt, but none was forthcoming. While Roosevelt may have wished to limit his personal involvement in Virginia congressional primaries, it probably did not help Hamilton that some of the President’s closest aides had become annoyed with the congressman’s


constant pressure for patronage commitments earlier in the year.\textsuperscript{131} Further, a post-primary analysis of the race by James A. Farley revealed that Hamilton had not been as supportive of the New Deal as he might have been “voting to recommit four out of five of the President’s bills.”\textsuperscript{132} The administration fared no better in the mid-term elections in November 1938. The Republicans “picked up eighty-one seats in the House, won eight in the Senate, and captured a net of thirteen governorships.”\textsuperscript{133} This mammoth election defeat helped to mark the unofficial end of the New Deal.

Despite the electoral setbacks anti-organization candidates suffered in Virginia’s Democratic primaries, Roosevelt and Moore continued to try to strengthen the “antis.” To do this President would have to cut directly into the organization’s source of power in Virginia: patronage. As previously stated, Moore took a cautious approach to patronage issues when quietly assisting the “antis” throughout Roosevelt’s first term and the first year of his second term, while being careful not to antagonize Byrd and Glass. The first signs of a change from the White House came several months prior to the failed purge attempts. In March 1938, Charles Harkrader printed an editorial in his paper, the \textit{Bristol Herald-Courier}, which indicated that the president had given veto power over all federal appointments in Virginia to Governor Price. This announcement came a few days after

\textsuperscript{131} Stephen Early to Marvin McIntyre, August 1, 1938, PPF 2467. McIntyre to Farley, January 19, 1938, Virginia file 400, PPF.

\textsuperscript{132} Farley memo, September 6, 1938, Virginia 300 H file, PPF 2467.

Harkrader met with the president in Washington, and it was soon printed in newspapers all over the state.\textsuperscript{134}

Senator Glass delivered a quick rebuke of the story and noted that as far as patronage was concerned “I am inclined to be... confident that the Virginia Senators will be completely capable of attending to such matters in the future, just as they have always done heretofore.”\textsuperscript{135} While Glass derided the article in public, in private he inquired about its authenticity by writing to Roosevelt. While Roosevelt acknowledged the senate’s role in advising on appointments he refused to make any commitments to Glass. After a series of evasive answers from Roosevelt regarding the article’s contention, Glass concluded that the substance of the article was true and that veto power on appointments had been granted to Price.\textsuperscript{136} There could be little mistaking the senator’s intention not to give up his patronage powers without a fight. According to his biographer, Senator Byrd, however, kept a lower profile in the aftermath of the announcement because of his upcoming reelection campaign in 1940 and his uncertainty over the strength of the “Roosevelt/Price coalition.”\textsuperscript{137}

There is no specific evidence that Moore directly contributed to Roosevelt’s more aggressive approach in aiding the “antis” through patronage, but it is reasonable to assume his work on their behalf helped lay the groundwork for this decision. As many


\textsuperscript{135} Glass press statement, March 17, 1938, Box 6, Glass Papers.

\textsuperscript{136} Glass to Roosevelt, March 17, 1938, Roosevelt to Glass, March 18, 1938, Glass to Roosevelt, March 19, 1938, Box 6, Glass Papers.

\textsuperscript{137} Heinemann, \textit{Harry Byrd of Virginia}, 193.
historians have noted in relation to Roosevelt’s purge attempts, the President was in a combative mood in the spring and summer of 1938. Roosevelt’s formal extension of patronage power to Governor Price, in order to punish Senators Glass and Byrd for their consistent opposition to New Deal programs, fits well within the context of his other actions during this time.\(^\text{138}\)

By May 1938, a newly created federal judgeship in the Western District of Virginia set the stage for a patronage battle that would test the president’s resolve to help the anti-organization members of the party and that would place Moore at the center of the action. When the vacancy arose “Senators Byrd and Glass, at the request of the attorney-general, submitted the names of Circuit Judge A.C. Buchanan, of Tazewell County, and Assistant United States District Attorney Frank Taverner.” The “antis” the lead by Congressman Flannagan also put forth a candidate, Judge Floyd H. Roberts of Bristol.\(^\text{139}\) Flannagan collected references for Roberts from other anti-organization leaders across the state and then sent them to the White House in early June.\(^\text{140}\) From the beginning, it was clear there would be a fight over the appointment as Glass privately confided to Byrd that he “would regard the appointment of Roberts as an intentional affront to the two Virginia Senators and would oppose confirmation accordingly.”\(^\text{141}\) The subsequent power struggle over this appointment became known as the “Roberts Affair.”

\(^{138}\) Hall, “Politics and Patronage,” 338.

\(^{139}\) Hall, “Politics and Patronage,” 337.

\(^{140}\) McIntyre to Flannagan, June 6, 1938, OF 208z, Roosevelt Papers.

\(^{141}\) Glass to Byrd, May 31, 1938, Box 345, Glass Papers.
On July 6, 1938, Roosevelt sent a brief note to Senator Glass informing him that "after mature consideration I have concluded that I should appoint Judge Floyd H. Roberts." Roosevelt emphatically told Farley afterwards that he was "not going to let Glass or Byrd make any appointments in Virginia." The next day Glass sent "both a telegram and a letter" letting the president know that he and Senator Byrd would oppose the appointment. For their part, the "antis" could not have been happier with the president's bold departure from his patronage balancing act. Flannagan wrote Roosevelt declaring that you "will never know how happy the Roosevelt Democrats are all over the state." He continued proclaiming "I want to thank you for giving us such signal recognition. We have all taken new hope down here in Virginia." Roberts's appointment was a recess appointment because congress had already gone home for the summer. He would have to be confirmed by the senate the following year in order to be permanently installed in the position. In the meantime, Roberts would sit on the bench while R. Walton Moore led the administration's effort to secure his appointment.

Moore was the natural choice to lead the effort for Roberts's senate confirmation because he had the greatest access of any "anti" to the president and was the most vital link between FDR and his Virginia supporters. The underlying rationale that Moore used to press the case for the importance of Roberts's nomination at the White House was purely political. From the beginning he told Governor Price, with whom he plotted strategy on the nomination, of a discussion within the administration that the governor's

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142 Roosevelt to Glass, July 6, 1938.

patronage power must be used "to maintain Virginia in a fairly liberal attitude relative to the contest of 1940. Without that there will be another story of the Virginia vote being tied up in control of a reactionary delegation." While in July 1938, no one within the White House, including Moore, knew for sure of Roosevelt's intentions for the 1940 race, he was certainly aware of Roosevelt's insistence on nominating a party liberal who would continue his New Deal policies if he chose not to run again. Hence, it was out of a perceived political necessity, rather than any other altruistic motive to help the "antis" that drove the president and other administration officials to support Roberts's nomination. Roosevelt proceeded with the nomination despite the advice of Vice President John Nance Garner who counseled FDR saying, "There is no sense in playing with the Governor down there because he won't control the delegation in 1940. It will be controlled by the Glass-Byrd crowd." 

Beginning in October, Moore began actively to strategize with Price and Roosevelt administration officials, including Tom Corcoran, who had been behind the failed effort to purge Smith, about the best way to conduct the nomination fight. He quickly determined that the "best and safest plan was to organize on [Roberts] behalf" and felt that Alexander Sands, of Richmond, a prominent supporter of the president, should help gather evidence in support of Roberts from within the commonwealth. That same week Moore reiterated to Price his efforts at the White House on behalf of Virginia "antis" and other party liberals stating, "I have tried to impress upon important people


here that the Virginia situation will become worse instead of better unless early and effective attention is given to the work that needs to be done in anticipation of the election year in 1940.” He continued by emphasizing, “My interest in the [Roberts’s nomination] situation is that of a citizen.” Moore’s private contention that his political machinations were only the impulses of an interested citizen is simply unrealistic given his record as such a strong Roosevelt partisan and supporter of the “antis.” But throughout the nomination process Moore justified his involvement in state politics as just that of an interested citizen. Why he felt the need to qualify his involvement in the nomination process is unknown, but it most likely stems from to his belief in the Revolutionary ideal of being called to service that he had cited throughout his own career. After all, intervening in a patronage battle within your own party hardly meshes with this noble ideal of a bygone era, and is more the action of a modern politician than that of revolutionary era statesmen.

In any event, Moore and Price continued to plot their confirmation strategy over the next month. Just prior to Thanksgiving, Moore encouraged Price to “try to persuade Virginia newspapers, in spite of their general attitude, to urge the confirmation of Judge Roberts’[s] appointment.” While the opposition of Byrd and Glass’s respective newspapers was to be expected, if Price appealed to other papers around the state over the summer it had “no significant effect.” A week later, Moore again wrote Price

146 Moore to Price, October 15, 1938, Price file, Box 16, Moore Papers.

explaining that the opposition of Virginia’s senators to Roberts’s nomination “is perhaps at this time more or less doubtful.”

Moore could not have been more wrong about the certainty of their potential opposition. Since Roberts’s recess appointment in July, Glass had been lining up members of the Senate Judiciary Committee to oppose his confirmation.148 Despite Moore’s erroneous contention about the certainty of Glass’s opposition to Roberts, he countered it by admitting that the potential for opposition was there and confided to Price that “It would not hurt our cause in Virginia for the Senators to succeed in blocking the nomination....” This is the first instance, but certainly not the last, in which Moore expressed doubt about the likely success of his strategy to confirm Roberts and attain a greater share of federal patronage. He continued the letter, changing his tone dramatically, by essentially “suggesting that certain organization sympathizers holding federal jobs either be fired or transferred out of Virginia.” He concluded by reiterating his reluctant involvement in the matter declaring, “I hope you realize that I do not wish to be in the Virginia political picture.”149 Once again Moore sought to balance his competing need to be both an effective agent for Roosevelt and the “antis,” yet try to preserve the image he had so carefully crafted as an elder statesmen whose motives were guided by history and duty.


149 Moore to Price, November 28, 1938, Price file Box 16, Moore Papers. Two days later Price sent a list of unfriendly organization officials in federal jobs that could be removed or transferred. The list covered a wide array of organization-picked federal appointees. Among them was Harry Byrd’s political lieutenant E.R. Combs. After being fired by Price as state comptroller and chairman of the compensation board, Combs was working at this time “with a company controlling concessions in the Shenandoah National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway.” He was the most high-profile target on this list submitted by the governor. Moore to Price, November 30, 1938, with memoranda, ibid. Koeniger, “The New Deal and the States,” 889.
By the following week, Moore was no longer “doubtful” about Glass’s opposition, noting the senator’s public prediction that the nomination would fail. He expressed frustration with the Virginia press’s refusal to acknowledge the variance between Glass’s opposition to Roberts’s appointment and his “repeated boasts that he does not concern himself about patronage matters.” Moore had also come to an important conclusion about Roberts’s confirmation, confiding to the governor that “whether it can be done effectively depends on the course the President will now take, relative not only to appointments and removals, but upon his general attitude in dealing with Congress.” Moore’s conclusion would prove correct on both fronts, but it would several months before this would become completely clear.

As 1938 came to a close, Moore once again began to doubt Roberts’s potential for success in the upcoming confirmation fight. Price replied to Moore’s most recent letter on the subject by saying that he was “disturbed” over Moore’s advice that Price should decide on a replacement candidate should Roberts’s appointment fail. While Moore had by no means given up on the Roberts’s nomination, he undoubtedly realized the power Virginia’s senators would wield in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

As the year 1939 began, Moore was still plotting with Price about ways to advocate Judge Roberts’s confirmation and alter Virginia’s political picture. He suggested a number of measures that might “lessen the influence of our pretty tyrannous

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151 Price to Moore, December 29, 1938, ibid.
Virginia political machine.” Moore mentioned specifically to Price the idea that the governor select a “young newspaper man of marked initiative and courage” to do “publicity work” on behalf of the “antis.” He contended that such a person would be valuable in rebutting the organization’s attacks on Judge Roberts. Moore had heard that Glass would soon “unreservedly attack Flannagan” in a speech on the Senate floor, which would cite Flannagan’s support of Judge Roberts. Moore also informed Price that he would also try to meet with the president after Roosevelt’s annual address to Congress the following day.152

On January 9, 1939, the Senate Judiciary Committee was informed by Senator Glass that the appointment of Judge Roberts was “utterly and personally offensive to the Virginia Senators.” Byrd soon after quickly announced his public opposition to Roberts’s nomination as well.153 Since both of Virginia’s senators were now on record as opposing the nomination it formally brought forth the issue of senatorial courtesy. Roosevelt biographer James MacGregor Burns has perhaps most aptly described senatorial courtesy as a system in which “senators agree, in kind of unwritten mutual defense pact, to hold up a presidential nomination when the nominee is ‘personally obnoxious’—i.e. a member of a hostile political faction.”154 The relative infrequency of such a dispute led the

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153 Glass to Henry F. Ashurst, January 9, 1939, Box 332, Glass Papers. Koeniger, “The New Deal and the States,” 890. Ashurst was the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

154 Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, 370.
subcommittee to report the nomination to the whole Judiciary Committee without recommendation.

Throughout the month of January leading up to the subcommittee’s consideration of Roberts’s nomination, Moore had continued to reassure Price of his support, urging the governor to “make use of me any way you think desirable.” He also speculated on Glass’s health and intentions, writing that “a friend...tells me that [Glass] looks very badly but nevertheless it is still believed he will make a desperate attempt to block Roberts.”

Continuing his effort to publicize the Roberts nomination, Moore contacted Assistant to the Attorney General Joseph B. Kennan to ascertain how exactly the Roberts nomination came about. He sought this information in case he needed to speak with the press to combat Glass’s version of events publicly at the upcoming hearing. Moore once again acknowledged the possibility of Roberts’s rejection and the need to have a replacement candidate ready, but noted “I think a very strong showing should be made in his support, and all the publicity possible be given to the antagonistic attitude of the Virginia Senators as that will certainly help us in Virginia.” He later mentioned to Price his intention to give the Associated Press an interview once he had gotten all the facts of the case from Kennan. Moore’s desire to acknowledge publicly his role in this political controversy is in sharp contrast to his high-minded statements the previous year about wanting to stay out of the political picture. With even the optimistic Price

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155 Moore to Price, January 10, 1939, Price file, Box 16, Moore Papers. Glass, who was only a little more than a year older than Moore, had celebrated his eighty-first birthday the previous week.

156 Moore to Joseph B. Kennan, January 13, 1939, Roberts File, Box 17, Moore Papers.
acknowledging that things did not look good for Roberts, Moore had begun increasingly to view the hearing on Roberts’s nomination as a public relations event at which to expose Glass and Byrd’s “dictatorial attitude.”

The day before the Roberts nomination went before the subcommittee Moore wrote Price to update him on its prospects. Moore had been warned by Senator Key Pittman, chairman of the sub-committee, “that the Virginia Senators are making a very heavy fight.” Pittman’s assessment would also hold true when the Senate Judiciary Committee considered the matter. In an open hearing on February 1 with “face flushed and eyes blazing, he [Glass] spoke of a conspiracy involving the president, the attorney general, and the governor of Virginia to humiliate him and his colleague.” Glass cited newspaper reports of Price’s alleged veto power over appointments as evidence. In a dramatic impromptu exchange the governor denied that he had initiated Roberts’s appointment and rebuked the idea that he had been given veto power over appointments. Glass responded by essentially repeating his charges about the governor’s veto power. After the exchange, Price and former governors Westmoreland Davis and E. Lee Trinkle testified on Roberts’s behalf. Glass’s testimony opposing Roberts’s confirmation took the form of recounting his correspondence with Roosevelt, whose evasive answers regarding Price’s alleged veto power, confirmed the senator’s conspiracy theory. For his part in the hearing, Senator Byrd simply repeated Glass’s well-worn assertion that “this nomination

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157 Price to Moore, January 21, 1939, Price file, Box 16, Moore Papers.
158 Moore to Price, January 17, 1939, ibid.
159 Moore to Price, January 25, 1939, ibid.
was made for the specific purpose of being personally offensive and personally obnoxious to the senators from Virginia."\textsuperscript{161} In a closed meeting that "lasted hardly five minutes" the committee voted 15-3 to report the nomination unfavorably. After the vote Congressman Flannagan, who first put forth Roberts’s name for consideration, issued a statement reaffirming his support.\textsuperscript{162} Noticeably absent from the throng of Roberts’s supporters at the hearing was R. Walton Moore. Despite his intimate involvement in promoting Roberts’s nomination, Moore did not speak or appear on Roberts’s behalf. On February 6, Roberts’s nomination was officially defeated 72-9 in a senate vote. The margin of Roberts’s defeat was reported to be the worst ever for a White House nominee.\textsuperscript{163}

While Moore may have sensed beforehand the strong possibility of defeat in the Roberts matter, his indignation in its aftermath would not have revealed it. This sense of indignation was shared by the president himself, who in the aftermath of this embarrassing defeat on such a public patronage matter, struck back by making public a letter he sent to Judge Roberts. The letter was meant to reaffirm Roosevelt’s confidence in Roberts, challenge Glass’s sequence of events and rebuke the practice of senatorial courtesy.\textsuperscript{164} Moore responded to Roosevelt’s action by deriding Glass as “autocratic and bitter.” Further, he complimented the president’s letter to Judge Roberts and suggested “that great care should be taken in selecting a high class lawyer of irreproachable

\textsuperscript{161} Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 2, 1939.

\textsuperscript{162} Washington Post, February 2, 1939.


\textsuperscript{164} Hall, “Politics and Patronage,” 348.
character who is friendly to the administration” to succeed Roberts. Moore’s suggestion hints at reverting to the middle course he and FDR had successfully employed in dealing with Virginia appointments prior to the Roberts affair. This suggestion seems to have been the lone rational moment Moore enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of Robert’s defeat. Glass’s response to Roosevelt’s letter, which among other things challenged the accuracy of much of the president’s statement, not surprisingly did not sit well with Moore.

In a rambling four-page memo marked “confidential,” Moore unleashed a tirade of pent up frustration that among other things condemned Glass’s and Byrd’s actions in seeking an opposition candidate to Price in the 1937 gubernatorial race. Moore felt this was the Virginia senators’ own attempt to “purge” their opposition. He further contended that the senators, who claimed to be Jeffersonian Democrats, had acted in a way in the Roberts affair that “is wholly inconsistent with Jefferson’s conception” of appointments. Once again Moore had retreated to history to justify his current point of view. The counselor continued his written tirade by condemning Glass’s refusal to answer his letters during the 1936 campaign and contended that the senator’s silence had helped the opposition. The end of Moore’s memo gave way to more thoughtful analysis of the political power structure in Virginia. Moore declared that “One difficulty in Virginia is

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165 Moore to Roosevelt, February 8, 1939, Box 75, PPF.
166 Glass Press Release, February 9, 1939, Judge Roberts File, Box 332, Glass Papers.
that while the President is very strong, most of the leading daily papers are favorable to Byrd."\textsuperscript{167}

Moore’s analysis of the public-relations aspect of the struggle between the “antis” and the organization was indeed correct. For Moore and Roberts, this conclusion had come too late. Throughout his planning in support of Roberts’s confirmation, Moore had confided to Price the public-relations benefit that would accrue from a hearing. He could not have been more wrong on this score. While some Virginia papers, like the \textit{Richmond News-Leader}, criticized the senators’ actions, the majority of those papers not associated with Glass or Byrd were either neutral or sided with Virginia’s senators. For example, both the \textit{Richmond Times-Dispatch} and the \textit{Washington Post} (which enjoyed a large circulation in Northern Virginia) were highly critical of the administration’s handling of the Roberts’s nomination.\textsuperscript{168} Despite this evidence to the contrary, in the immediate aftermath of the debacle, Moore confided to Price “from what I hear the controversy over the Roberts’s nomination had not been the least bit helpful to the Virginia Senators.”\textsuperscript{169} While Moore may have clung to this hopeful sentiment, the moment had passed.

The failure of the Roberts’s nomination should be shared amongst many including: Flannagan, who initially led the movement for Roberts; Price, who acquiesced to his nomination; and Moore, who promulgated the misguided belief that the controversy would damage Virginia’s senators and strengthen the “antis.” Indeed,

\textsuperscript{167} Moore “confidential” memo, undated, Judgeship of Western District of Virginia file, Box 6, Moore Papers.


\textsuperscript{169} Moore to Price, February 11, 1939, Price file, Box 16, Moore Papers.
“Virginians had not looked favorably on the ‘court packing’ or the purges, and they saw the Roberts matter in the same light.”

But, ultimately its failure must lie with Roosevelt, who made the decision to nominate Roberts in order to discipline Glass and Byrd for their consistent opposition to the New Deal and in an effort to assure a friendly Virginia delegation to the 1940 Democratic convention. What Roosevelt didn’t realize was that “the court fight and the purge had pushed many legislators too far, and rejecting Roberts became one of the ways of telling the president that in the future he would have to work with and not above the other branches of government.”

Roosevelt’s heavy handed attempt to discipline Glass and Byrd by appointing Roberts failed and the public embarrassment over the defeat would continue to sting even as the president began to change course. While Roosevelt certainly took political advice from others such as Tom Corcoran, Jim Farley, and Harold Ickes about dealing with Virginia’s senators, he had especially leaned on Moore because of his prior history with Glass. When Moore’s judgment about the means to strengthen the Virginia Democratic Party proved faulty, Roosevelt did not cut him out of his circle of influence entirely, but he no longer entrusted him to do any of his bidding with the Virginia’s senators. Much of Moore’s last two years of service to the president was spent on foreign policy issues. The president, realizing the now tenuous nature of Moore’s relationship with Glass and Byrd,

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170 Ed. Moore and Young, The Governors of Virginia, 285

171 Koeniger, The New Deal and the States, 891.
began to increasingly rely upon his aide and Virginian Edwin M. Watson in dealing with them on patronage issues.\textsuperscript{172}

With their challenge to senatorial courtesy soundly defeated, both Roosevelt and Moore would emerge from the wreckage of the Roberts affair more cautious in their approach to altering Virginia’s political culture. Over the next two years, personal circumstances, as well as political events on the state, national, and, international stage would shape the future of Virginia’s Democratic Party. While Moore’s judgment about the impact of Roberts’s nomination proved to be flawed, the aging Virginian was without question correct about one thing: the course Roosevelt chose to take not only decided Judge Roberts’s fate, but over the next two years the president’s choices would help permanently to determine the fate of Virginia’s anti-organization faction.

\textsuperscript{172} For an example of Watson’s involvement in patronage issues see Glass to Watson, November 3, 1939, Box 9, Edwin M. Watson Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.
Chapter III

1939-1941: Retreat and Retirement

A continued longing to help the “antis” take control over the state Democratic Party marked the final years of R. Walton Moore’s tenure in the Roosevelt administration. For Moore and the “antis” it was unfortunate that in the aftermath of the Roberts affair the president would pay little heed to their cause. While the “antis” could still expect small favors from the White House, any outright challenge to the patronage powers of Virginia’s senators lay in the past.

For the next two years Moore’s political activities were focused in two directions: aiding the president and the “antis” in securing a Roosevelt-friendly Virginia delegation at the 1940 Democratic National convention and constructing a valid historical argument supportive of the president seeking a third term should he chose to do so. While garnering the support of Virginia’s political elite for FDR’s nomination had been Moore’s objective before the Roberts affair, it took on a singular importance afterwards and shaped virtually every communication he would have with Virginia’s anti-organization leaders.

The administration’s outlook towards challenging Virginia’s senators’ control of patronage was no doubt altered by Roosevelt’s newly conciliatory approach, but it was not the president alone who advocated this approach in the aftermath of the Roberts affair. More than any administration official, the State Department Counselor cautioned

173 A full examination of Roosevelt’s change in political outlook and tactics in 1939-1940 is beyond the scope of this work. Historians have given many explanations for the shift in strategy including concerns over a myriad of foreign policy problems and the need for Democratic votes on wartime preparedness. This essay will examine this change only as it relates to Roosevelt and Moore’s political dealings with Virginia’s senators.
those within the administration and many of the “antis” of the necessity of including Glass and Byrd in consultations on appointments.

In the months after the Roberts’ affair, Governor Price sought to have the appointment to the highly contested judgeship vacancy “lay over for a while.” Moore relayed this request and it was accepted. While Moore assured Price that “nothing hasty” would be done on the appointment, he also informed the governor that none of Rep. Flannagan’s choices to fill the position would be made because he doubted “whether the Virginia senators would allow the confirmation of anyone so strongly supported by him.” Charles Harkrader continued to harbor ambitions of getting Roberts another shot at the post, but the moment had passed. By May 1939, Roosevelt had publicly acknowledged that he had sought consultation from the senators on the judgeship appointment. Moore would largely follow Roosevelt’s cautious approach on appointments for the next two years, much to the frustration of the “antis.” Repeatedly over the next two years Moore advised the administration that Virginia’s senators be “sounded out” before a variety of appointments were made.

Emblematic of the plight Virginia “antis” faced was Norman Hamilton, who, having lost the 2nd district Democratic primary to Colgate Darden, was searching for a

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174 Watson to Missy Le Hand, March 14, 1939, Box 9, Watson Papers.
175 Moore to Price, April 12, 1939, Box 16, Moore Papers.
176 Harkrader to Price, September 29, 1939, Harkrader Papers.
178 Watson to FDR, August 30, 1939, OF 400, Roosevelt Papers. For a detailed description of Moore’s and Roosevelt’s acquiescence to the Virginia senators on federal appointments and the details of the appointments see Koeniger, “The New Deal and the States,” 889-892.
federal job, yet locked out because of his previous vigorous opposition to Glass and Byrd. It fell to Moore to inform Hamilton and his backers that “the Virginia senators would not allow him to be confirmed for any office and that he best think of some office that would not require confirmation.” The point could not have been clearer when Moore said what was by this time apparent: “I was sure that the president would not care to make an appointment at this time which would involve him in an acute controversy with any senator.” Moore was correct to assume senatorial opposition as their correspondence reveals that the senators were following Hamilton’s quest for a federal job closely. As of April 1941, the administration was still lamenting Hamilton’s situation with one of the president’s private secretaries, Marvin McIntyre, commenting, “Confidentially we hope that something can be found for Norman.” Moore also realized the tenuous nature of his own relationship with the Virginia senators. In September 1939, when two appointments were to be made that required consultation with senators, Moore suggested that it should be handled by Roosevelt’s aide Edwin Watson rather than himself. Moore’s suggestion that the matter be handled by Watson was his realization that his own standing with Virginia’s senators had been badly damaged by his involvement in the Roberts’s affair. Moore adjusted his approach in dealing with Virginia’s senators, allowing others directly to engage Glass and Byrd on the administration’s behalf. This is a far cry from just several months prior when he considered making a public statement on

179 Moore to Price, September 8, 1939, Box 16, Moore Papers.
180 Glass to Byrd, September 12, 1939, Box 345, Glass Papers.
181 McIntyre to Wright, April 18, 1941, PPF 1587, Roosevelt Papers.
182 Moore to Price, September 5, 1939, Box 16, Moore Papers.
Judge Roberts's behalf and unimaginable for the man who hounded Senator Glass to support FDR publicly throughout 1936.

On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland and launched most of Europe into the Second World War, changing the course of history forever. The war also permanently altered the course Franklin Roosevelt took in dealing with Virginia’s senators. Roosevelt, realizing he needed their support to insure passage of a repeal of the arms embargo portion of the Neutrality Act, “resolved to spare no efforts to regain the friendship” of Glass, Byrd, and other southern conservatives who had felt increasingly alienated since the proposition of the court-packing plan.183 The initial retreat from confrontation with Glass and Byrd that had begun after the failed Roberts nomination continued unabated in the wake of the Nazi invasion. Indeed, “Roosevelt’s remarkable overtures…certainly facilitated the speed with which southern conservatives returned to the fold. Partly because of Roosevelt’s [friendlier] attitude, all the southern conservatives not only backed repeal in 1939, but remained supporters of the administration’s foreign policy throughout World War II.”184

This political armistice was not across the board as Glass soon emerged as one the most vociferous critics of the idea of a third term for the president. Moore’s awareness of the necessity of both the Virginia senators’ support of this key piece of foreign policy legislation made it easier for him to accept Glass’s criticism of the president and to curb any actions by the “antis” which might anger the senator. Moore was intimately involved

184 Ibid., 616.
in securing passage of the key legislation and helped the president count votes.\textsuperscript{185}

Moore’s involvement in this process clearly made him more understanding of Roosevelt’s dependence on southern conservatives like Glass and Byrd. While he still sought to aid the “antis” whenever possible, their protests about lack of patronage were now largely ignored by Moore as well.

By the end of 1939 and beginning of 1940, both Moore and, to a much greater extent, Governor Price were growing increasingly negative about the administration’s use of patronage in Virginia. In regard to two appointments, which went against the desires of the governor, Moore lamented, “I can not tell how greatly I regret any happening that lessens your opportunity to strengthen the administration in Virginia.” Price later complained to Moore that recently we have had “only one appointment of any consequence.”\textsuperscript{186} Price saw his power further eroded that spring as the organization-dominated general assembly sabotaged his legislative program.\textsuperscript{187} For the remainder of his term Price would concentrate most of his energies on Virginia’s wartime preparedness.\textsuperscript{188} The only major proposal from Price that the assembly passed in 1940 was “a bill to raise the minimum teacher’s salary and the revenue measures to fund it.”\textsuperscript{189} His brief period of progressive reform in Virginia had ended just two years into his term as governor.


\textsuperscript{186} Moore to Price, December 20, 1939, Price to Moore, January 2, 1940, Box 16, Moore Papers.


\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 297.

\textsuperscript{189} Younger and Moore, The Governors of Virginia, 286.
The efforts of R. Walton Moore and other "antis" to ensure a Virginia delegation that would be friendly to FDR or another New Deal candidate became increasingly difficult as it became clearer throughout 1939-1940 that Roosevelt had no intention of challenging Glass and Byrd again. At the same time, it was obvious that neither senator had any intention of allowing organization men to support any New Dealer. Given the situation, Moore concentrated on what he knew best, history, and how it might aid the president.

More than any other single person, R. Walton Moore sought to research, synthesize and publicize a thoroughly documented historical work on the acceptability of President Roosevelt seeking a third term as president in 1940. There is no record of Moore being assigned this task by FDR or anyone else in the administration. He voluntarily began this effort to defend historically Roosevelt's run for a third term should he chose to do so. The chore combined Moore's love of early American history, knowledge of the founding fathers, and political know-how into one ongoing task, which he seemed thoroughly to enjoy. From early 1939, until the eve of the election in 1940, Moore concentrated his political energies largely in this direction. In many ways it was his greatest political service to the president he had longed to serve and would soon leave. Indeed, Moore's loyalty and admiration for the president were immense. In his autobiography, penned in November 1939, Moore exclaimed, "I may say that in the long line of very remarkable and often celebrated men I have met I do not find anyone
possessing such a combination of astonishing qualities as those possessed by Mr. Roosevelt.  

While President Roosevelt never declared himself a candidate for re-election in 1940, and instead sought to portray the image that he was being drafted, many administration insiders felt in early 1939 that there was little doubt that he would seek the Democratic nomination. Among these insiders was R. Walton Moore, who by February 1939, had already begun to anticipate the arguments that would be used against the president if and when he chose to do so.

Moore’s initial investigation brought out several points that would guide his argument throughout. First, that “it is not true, as often assumed that General Washington was opposed to the president filling more than two terms.” Moore speculated on the possibility of Washington serving a third term and then emphasized that “the custom [of two terms] which has been observed had its genesis with Jefferson, who was influenced that a monarchy might be substituted for our system of government.” Moore concluded his introductory argument by citing more recent statements in support of a third term by Senator William Borah (R-Idaho).

By May, Moore had begun to make contact with George Creel, an administration official who served as U.S. Commissioner of the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. Creel, who previously headed of the Committee on Public Information

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190 Moore Autobiography, 114, Gellman Papers.

191 For a beautifully written account of Roosevelt’s machinations during the 1940 Democratic National Convention see Doris Kearns Goodwin, No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II (New York, 1994), 126-133.

192 Moore memo, February 14, 1939, Third Term for President File, Box 19, Moore Papers.
during the First World War and later served as the Washington correspondent for *Collier's* magazine, had a number of contacts in the publishing industry. He agreed to meet with Moore on this subject of “real importance.”  

In establishing contact with Creel on the third term issue, Moore made clear to him his practical political aims immediately: “My deliberate opinion is that unless the president is a candidate to succeed himself a Republican will be elected.” Moore mentioned his research on the third term issue but carefully noted that it was “independent of anything he [Roosevelt] has said or done.” Moore took care not to implicate the president specifically in any of his research and planning. Moore and Creel also began an effort lasting through most of that year to place an article in *Collier’s* magazine discussing the third term issue from a historical view advantageous to FDR. Moore must have been very persuasive because Creel was hardly an ardent New Dealer. In fact, Creel wrote two articles in 1937 about Senator Byrd for *Collier’s*. The first praised Byrd’s drive for economy and reduced spending in a time of deficits and the second promoted him as a possible presidential candidate in 1940. Nonetheless, Creel worked with Moore to find a forum in which to argue against the two-term tradition.

As Creel continued to try to set up a time over the next few weeks to meet with Moore, the latter continually researched and contemplated the third term question. Moore returned in a memo to the question of Washington’s views on the issue, writing, “Washington...was much better aware than Jefferson that the framers of the constitution

193 Moore to Creel, May 11, 1939, Ibid.

194 Moore to Creel, May 22, 1939, Ibid.

did not intend to limit the election of an individual to the presidency...accordingly he was against the rotation [in office] theory."196 By June, Moore had begun to review ideas Creel had generated for their article and began to make suggestions for improvement. These suggestions were largely rehashes of Moore’s previous statements about Jefferson and Washington’s views.197

Throughout his research, analysis and solicitation of a published article on the third term issue, Moore periodically informed the president of his progress. The second week of June, Moore summarized his dealings with George Creel for FDR and also informed him about the status of the neutrality legislation being considered by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.198 As the summer progressed, his correspondence indicates an increasing amount of time spent on foreign affairs and less on party politics, except for the third term issue.

In late summer 1939, Moore was still refining and supplementing his arguments. The general argument about the tradition starting with Jefferson went unchanged but was supplemented by greater historical detail, for instance noting that Washington’s “farewell address, gave no intimation that he would have considered the public interest menaced by his acceptance of a third term.”199

A secondary argument that Moore was developing focused on the fact that many presidents had great difficulty obtaining a second term, much less a third and therefore

196 Moore undated memo, Third Term for President file, Box 19, Moore Papers.

197 Ibid.

198 Moore to FDR, June 8, 1939, Ibid.

199 Moore memo, August 23, 1939, Ibid.
there was little need for the rotation-in-office theory which stood in Roosevelt’s way.

Moore mentioned specifically “that even counting Andrew Jackson, only three presidents
have served eight years from Jackson’s time to the present.”\textsuperscript{200} A year prior to the 1940
presidential election, in November 1939, Moore began to press Creel for a first draft.

Creel replied with a complete draft, but noted that “I think that it is going to be a chore to
get it published.”\textsuperscript{201}

Over the next month Moore and Creel again traded suggestions about the article’s
historical content and argument. Moore once again reiterated the practical importance of
the assignment because the “political evolution now in progress strengthens my
conviction that unless he [Roosevelt] is again our candidate...the enemy will take charge
of the government.”\textsuperscript{202} Creel replied to Moore by submitting a copy of the final article,
but he had already received notice that the article was ‘too historically inconclusive.’

Creel then speculated that “had it been conclusive in the sense of certifying the third term
tradition is absolutely sacred, there is no question that [William L.] Chenery [\textit{Collier’s}
editor and publisher] would have leaped at it.” Despite the setback, Creel informed
Moore that he would shop the article around to \textit{Reader’s Digest} and \textit{Harper’s}
\textit{Magazine}.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{200}Moore to Creel, September 9, 1939. Ibid. Moore notes in this letter that his count of 3 two-term
presidents includes “Jackson, Grant and Wilson,” but not Lincoln who was assassinated at the beginning of
his second term.

\textsuperscript{201}Creel to Moore, November 15, 1939, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{202}Moore to Creel December 8, 1939, Ibid. For the substance of their back and forth over the article’s
content see Moore memo, November 18, 1939, ibid.

\textsuperscript{203}Creel to Moore, December 13, 1939, ibid.
The article submitted to these various publications used most of Moore’s suggestions and even mimicked much of his language. It rebuked the idea that the third-term tradition actually began with Washington and did so with statements from many of the founding fathers. The article traced the evolution of the debate from the early Republic until 1928, when the matter was last considered because of the possibility that Calvin Coolidge might run again.\(^\text{204}\)

While Moore continued to entertain the historical issues at hand over the idea of a third term, he also put out feelers as to party sentiment. The first of these went to Nebraska Governor Edward Howard. Moore sought from Howard what the “trend is with reference to the election next year of a Democratic candidate for the presidency.”\(^\text{205}\) Moore would continue throughout the remainder of 1939 and through 1940 to gauge the feeling of Democrats about the nomination.

The day after Christmas 1939, he informed FDR of the Collier’s rejection and noted that “he did not attach that much importance to the disinclination of magazines to deal with the question.” After lengthily rehashing the historical arguments in Roosevelt’s favor, Moore made his own pitch to the president as to why he should run again. “For many months I have thought and still think that unless you are retained in office your successor will be a Republican with the result that domestic policies become largely reactionary. But even worse would be the loss of the only leadership, which at the end of the war could be exerted with tremendous influence to make fair adjustments and find

\(^{204}\) Ibid (attached article). Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as president upon the death of Warren G. Harding. He was elected in his own right in 1924. Had he chosen to run in 1928, and was elected, it would have been the beginning of this third term, having served part of Harding’s term.

\(^{205}\) Moore to Howard, December 14, 1939, ibid.
some method of insuring a more peaceful world.” This statement is the best summation of Moore’s views as to why he felt it necessary that Roosevelt serve a third term. Beyond his personal affinity for the president, and their shared views on domestic issues, Moore genuinely believed that Roosevelt was the one most capable of keeping the United States out of World War II. He also felt the president would possess the most skill in crafting a just peace. This motivation became evident publicly in Moore’s speech to the Virginia General Assembly the following month. Moore concluded his very personal letter to Roosevelt writing “this frank expression is not dictated by any personal ambition...I can not hope to hold on much longer.”206 The fact that Moore wrote in such “frank” terms to the president on such an important matter again shows the degree of loyalty and admiration he held for FDR and his genuine feeling that he might be a voice in convincing the president to run again. The passage is also vitally important because indicates in his correspondence with others that he may not serve much longer in office.

A month prior, Moore had predicted privately that the Roosevelt would run again and win, but noted that “I would have no thought of serving beyond the beginning of his new term.”207

While Moore seemed quite certain about his own retirement, he became increasingly sure that despite Roosevelt’s statements to the contrary, the president would undoubtedly seek a third term and the arguments he helped to craft would prove useful. Evidence of this belief is found in an address Moore gave to the Virginia General

206 Moore to Roosevelt, December 26, 1939, ibid.
207 Moore Autobiography p. 132, Box 2, Gellman Papers.
Assembly in February 1940. Moore was invited to the address the General Assembly by Governor Price. The occasion for such an address is unclear.

The octogenarian’s address was dedicated largely to the greatness of the president. Moore did include some historical anecdotes, but the speech largely focused on FDR. Moore first set out to dispel the rumors of a run for a third term telling the Virginia lawmakers not to “believe that he [Roosevelt] is scheming and planning for his own benefit.” He continued lavishly praising the president saying, “He is one of the few men I know of who fits the biblical description of greatness.” He also credited Roosevelt’s domestic program and in an indirect way took a poke at Byrd’s economy drive saying “We heard a good deal of talk about our increasing debt and our extravagance. But we may well ask ourselves what would have happened without the program that has been developed and who was better fitted to develop it than the president?” Finally, Moore, once again leaning on history to advocate for his current political views proclaimed “we have an energetic central government such as Washington recommended years ago.”

The analogy of the New Deal’s rapid expansion of the federal government and the idea of a strong national government in Washington’s day may have been a stretch, but the speech overall was well received. The highlight of the address came when Moore addressed the growing crisis in Europe and proclaimed “We do intend that our people shall never again be involved in war.” The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that the “assembly applauded vigorously as they did when he spoke of the greatness of the

208 Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 7, 1940.
While U.S. involvement in the war was still uncertain, Moore despite his speech's felt certain FDR would seek a third term. It should be noted that there is no proof to believe Moore, or anyone else for that matter, had any concrete knowledge of the president's intentions.

By the spring of 1940, Moore seemed to have given up on the idea of having George Creel try to publish an article on the third term issue. Instead, he used the information he had collected and the arguments he had developed over the past year to aid Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. Ickes had begun compiling a chronicle of historical information supportive of the idea of a third term. Moore also continued to monitor political developments as they arose, but other than surveying third term sentiment within the Democratic Party and occasionally helping Ickes with a historical question, his political role seemed increasingly diminished.

At the 1940 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Franklin Roosevelt was again selected by party delegates as the Democratic nominee for President. This did not happen without considerable opposition, most notably from the Democratic Party Chairman, Jim Farley, who was "opposed to the principle of the third term." Senator Carter Glass placed Farley's name in nomination. In speaking on Farley's behalf Glass assailed the idea of a third term on historical grounds. Glass said that Jefferson appealed to the Democratic Party, just prior to his death, never to nominate someone for a third

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209 Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 7, 1940.

210 Moore to Ickes, April 26, 1940, Ickes to Moore, April 29, 1940, Third Term for President File, Box 19, Moore Papers.

211 Farley, Jim Farley's Story, 268.
term for the presidency.\footnote{Ibid., 286.} Despite Roosevelt and Moore’s best efforts in 1938 and 1939 to use patronage to help determine the make up of Virginia’s delegation to the Democratic National Convention, it did little good. In the end, the Virginia delegation “split its votes among [Vice-President] Garner, Roosevelt, Hull and Farley.”\footnote{Richmond \textit{Times-Dispatch}, July 18, 1940.} It is also interesting to note that “Virginia was the only state not officially represented in the big Roosevelt demonstration” that took place on the floor of the convention when Roosevelt’s name was placed in nomination.\footnote{Hall, “Price and Virginia Politics,” 326.}

Moore did not attend the convention, “but kept up with the proceedings” and noted to FDR three days after his re-nomination that Glass was the “only one…which made specific reference to the third term question.” He mentioned sarcastically that “it started me wondering whether Glass had forgotten that Mr. Jefferson was not only an advocate of rotation in presidential office but an advocate of rotation in senatorial office, and were he now on the scene would probably say that Glass had overstayed his proper limit.”\footnote{Moore to Roosevelt, July 22, 1940, Third Term for President file, Box 19, Moore Papers.} Moore also updated Roosevelt on his work, mentioning the information he supplied Ickes and promising that “should the third term issue prove serious I shall take what may be my last political step in the way of a historical address or article meant to

\footnote{Moore to Roosevelt, July 22, 1940, Third Term for President file, Box 19, Moore Papers.}
show how little validity attaches to the third term tradition."\textsuperscript{216} Here again, Moore affirmed his desire to step down at the conclusion of Roosevelt's second term.

Roosevelt responded to Moore's letter reflecting on the convention's events and deriding Glass by writing, "It was no fun at the moment...I had to consent to run again. What a pity that poor old Carter made such a sorry spectacle of himself in Chicago.\textsuperscript{217}

While Roosevelt and Moore may have made peace with Glass over patronage, their exchange on the convention's events reveals the bitterness both still felt. For his part, "the Senator announced his intentions to vote for the Democratic ticket in the general election, but as in 1936, he refused to take an active part in the campaign."\textsuperscript{218}

Throughout the remainder of the summer of 1940, Moore continued to monitor sentiment on the third term issue and plan accordingly. One example of this behavior is his measured response to an editorial in a Falls Church, Virginia, newspaper that was critical of Roosevelt seeking a third term. Moore wrote to an attorney friend and Roosevelt supporter, George Robey, that "to publish a response now at the threshold of the campaign would perhaps serve to attach too much importance to a statement which in my opinion is going to have very little effect."\textsuperscript{219} If Moore felt this way it must have been fleeting because he continued to construct arguments in his support of a third term.

In September 1940, Harold Ickes published "The Third Term Bugaboo: A Cheerful Anthology," which was a campaign pamphlet in defense of Roosevelt's run for

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{217} Roosevelt to Moore, August 3, 1940, PPF 2605, Roosevelt Papers.

\textsuperscript{218} Koeniger, "Unreconstructed Rebel," 230.

\textsuperscript{219} Moore to George Robey, Third Term for President File, Box 19, Moore Papers.
a third term. The main arguments presented strongly echoed those given to Ickes several months before by Moore and the pamphlet is based largely on materials the latter obtained. This was especially evident in terms of the section of evidence covering Washington’s writings on the possibility of a third term. Ultimately, Ickes’s main argument was that those opposed to Roosevelt’s run for a third term were hypocrites because many of them have been supportive of the idea in the past when it involved other candidates, such as Calvin Coolidge and Woodrow Wilson.

Ickes was by no means the only partisan in the 1940 campaign to delve into history in order to support their view of whether Roosevelt should seek a third term. Young B. Smith, dean of Columbia University’s Law School, also wrote a pamphlet on the issue with a very different tone. The pamphlet carried the approval of the National Committee of Democrats-for-Wilkie. This was an organization of renegade Democrats supporting the president’s Republican opponent Wendell Wilkie.

Young’s recounting of history was largely similar to that of Moore and Ickes. He acknowledged in fact that it was Jefferson to whom “more than any other belongs the credit for the establishment of the third term principle.” What differed sharply from Ickes’s and Moore’s arguments were Smith’s conclusions about the applicability of the principles involved to present conditions. Smith concluded his argument with a laundry list of complaints about Roosevelt’s uses of executive power and predicted that with the oncoming war and “the delegation of war powers to the president, it is not difficult to

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221 Smith, Young B. “The Term Principle and its Significance Today,” 4, Third Term for President File, Box 19, Moore Papers.
visualize what can and probably will happen to our democratic form of government and our way of life if the principle against a third term is discarded."

With these arguments continuing to compete for public attention throughout the early fall and into the final weeks of the campaign, R. Walton Moore prepared himself for one last political speech in which history was to be his guide. He composed a series of speech drafts in the second week of October and prefaced the last draft by affirming his desire to retire. The drafts cover many of the same arguments he had already outlined in reference to Washington and Jefferson. They also go farther in quoting both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson in favor of a third term. Moore concluded his last dated draft of October 14, 1940, with a personal assessment of the president’s intentions and ambitions. He wrote, “I know perfectly well that his decision to be a candidate indicates no desire to exercise power but the desire of a great American citizen to serve his country.” Here, once again, Moore’s love and knowledge of American history, combined with his personal affinity towards FDR, had helped to shape his argument.

Unfortunately, Moore never gave his campaign speech because of health problems. He continued to monitor the political situation and correspond with fellow Roosevelt supporters about any opposition to third term, but was unable to take a more active role as he had in 1936. Three weeks later, on November 7, 1940, Roosevelt was re-elected to an unprecedented third term as president, carrying all but a handful of

222 Ibid., 27.

223 Moore speech draft October 14, 1940, Third Term for President File, Box 19, Moore Papers.

224 Moore to Price, October 17, 1940, Ibid.
Despite Senator Glass’s vocal opposition to a third term, reliably Democratic Virginia once again went for Roosevelt. The popular vote for Roosevelt in Virginia was virtually identical to that he received in his 1936 landslide victory over Alf Landon.226

Whether Moore’s historical arguments had any significant impact on outcome of the election is doubtful. But, what is not questionable is the depth and accurateness of the historically-based arguments themselves. In completing this final deed for the president he so admired, Moore had combined his knowledge of American history and skill as a lawyer in helping the administration develop arguments for and counter arguments against a third term. In terms of his political accomplishments, it yielded little public payoff, but was an important contribution to the campaign nonetheless because it provided a detailed historical basis for Roosevelt’s run with for a third term which was certainly a pivotal issue in the contest.

With his health declining after an attack of pneumonia in December and no political battles left to fight, Moore prepared to retire. Harold Ickes recorded at the beginning of 1941 that Moore was “in bad health and that, even if he recovers, he will resign shortly.”227 Ickes was not far off at all. On January 27, 1941, Moore sent his resignation letter to the president. The letter references his declining health and his admiration for Roosevelt, saying “I wish you to know my feeling that I could have had no higher privilege and honor than to serve under your great leadership during your service

225 The New York Times, November 8, 1940.

226 Edgar Eugene Robinson, They Voted For Roosevelt: The Presidential Vote, 1932-1944. (Stanford, 1947), 170. Robinson’s popular vote totals for Virginia show that FDR received 81 more votes in the commonwealth than in 1936.

for two terms in the presidency, which I am glad is now extended for another term.”

Roosevelt responded in kind, writing “I want you to know that I deeply regret your decision that you must leave the department. You being there in these days of stress and anxiety has been a very real comfort to me.” The president continued “I look forward to seeing you as soon as your health will permit you to come in.” Unfortunately, Moore’s health never allowed for another visit with the president.

Just over a week after his retirement from the State Department, R. Walton Moore lapsed into a coma and died on February 8, 1941, in his Fairfax home. Beside the lifetime bachelor were his two sisters, Helen Moore and Margaret Ellen Moore. On hearing the news, Governor Price ordered the flag at the State Capitol to be flown at half staff in Moore’s honor. His memorial three days later was attended by numerous dignitaries including Secretary of State Cordell Hull, former Ambassador to France William Bullitt, Governor Price, “Representative Smith who succeeded Mr. Moore in the House, [and Representatives] Darden, Thomas Burch and Otis S. Bland. The White House was also represented by Capt. Callaghan and Mrs. James Helm, Mrs. Roosevelt’s personal secretary.” The president also sent a personal message to Helen Moore, reading “your brother was an old and devoted friend whose passing is a personal

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228 Moore to Roosevelt, January 27, 1941, PPF 2605, Roosevelt Papers.
229 Roosevelt to Moore, January 29, 1941, Ibid.
231 Richmond News-Leader, February 8, 1941.
232 Richmond News-Leader, February 10, 1941.
grief." Noticeably absent from the funeral procession were both of Virginia’s senators with whom he had battled with over politics and patronage since his appointment in 1933.

R. Walton Moore was remembered as he no doubt would have wished. Secretary Hull recalled Moore as a “person of unusual ability, high purpose, a profound student of both domestic and international affairs, who possessed character and patriotism of the highest order.” A *Washington Evening Star* editorial on his passing perhaps summarized his personal legacy best: “Mr. Moore died, as he had lived, a Virginia gentleman in the best meaning of the phrase. He was devoted to his native state beyond the capacity of ordinary language to report. Its history he mastered in meticulous detail. The Old Dominion never had a son more profoundly concerned to preserve the chivalrous spirit of the past.” Moore was buried on a hillside next to the graves of his mother and father in Fairfax, Virginia, where he lived his entire life.

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234 Roosevelt to Helen Moore, February 8, 1941, PPF 2605, Roosevelt Papers.


Conclusion

The political impact of R. Walton Moore on Virginia politics during the first two terms of the Roosevelt administration is very difficult to measure. Unlike Senators Glass and Byrd and even Governor Price, Moore played a small public role. While he made a few speeches and authored several newspaper editorials, his role was primarily limited to the influence he could bring to bear on the president, senators, and opinion makers around the country. Perhaps more important than any influence Moore may have had is what he represented. Moore was a vital link from the anti-organization faction of the Virginia Democratic Party to the White House. Here he served not only to voice its concerns over federal patronage and the implementation of federal programs in Virginia, but his close contact with “anti” leaders gave them a legitimacy they had not known before. Moore’s easy access to the president insured the “antis” would at least have some manner of voicing their views, which would have otherwise been ignored by the organization. This relationship between Moore and the “antis” was significantly strengthened with Governor Price’s election.

The three major political tasks Moore undertook during his almost eight years in the Roosevelt Administration were uniting Virginia’s political elite behind Roosevelt’s re-election in 1936, ensuring the “antis” a significantly greater share of federal patronage, and developing a historically based rationale for a third term. All achieved varying levels of success. Moore’s first task was to help ensure a united Virginia Democratic Party behind Roosevelt in 1936. This meant assuring the support of both of Virginia’s senators who had voted largely against the New Deal and by 1936 had become its vocal critics.
Byrd, with whom Moore had little contact or influence, did endorse the president, albeit reluctantly. Despite months of trying to convince Glass to speak on Roosevelt’s behalf, the senior senator was steadfast in his refusals and never did endorse Roosevelt publicly. Moore, who had relied so heavily upon his relationship with Glass, unquestionably failed in this venture. But Moore’s small failure cost FDR little, as he easily won Virginia and re-election as president.

The second major task Moore engaged in was ensuring that a greater share of federal patronage in Virginia go to the “antis.” This policy evolved from simply choosing candidates that would not openly offend Glass and Byrd to one of challenging them directly through the selection of Judge Roberts who was championed by virtually every “anti” in Virginia. Both Moore’s and Roosevelt’s motivation in seeking a fight with the senators went beyond the issue of the “antis’” share of patronage. This fight was in many ways the opening battle for control of the Virginia delegation to the Democratic National Convention in 1940. Ultimately, Moore’s plan backfired when Roberts was easily defeated for confirmation in the senate. Roberts’s defeat ended any significant efforts on the part of the administration to alter the distribution of federal patronage in Virginia. While the final decision to nominate Roberts was the president’s, there is no question that Moore deserved a considerable portion of the blame for the defeat. Moore’s correspondence reveals that he was without question one of the primary movers behind the decision and in fact more than anyone else in the administration championed the appointment. His predictions that public opinion would go against the senators on the issue were also completely off base.
Moore’s misjudgment of public and political sentiments over the Roberts nomination is significant because the defeat altered Roosevelt’s domestic political course in dealing with Virginia. While the president continued to extend small favors to the “antis” such as the delay of an appointment, by the spring of 1939 he had begun to repair the rift between himself and the Virginia senators. Once Roosevelt changed course, R. Walton Moore’s role as an emissary to the senators and advisor on Virginia politics effectively ended. While Moore continued to try to aid the “antis” there was little he could really do without the full support of the White House.

The final major political task Moore took on was his research, analysis, and presentation of historical information regarding the third-term tradition. It was without question the only unqualified success in domestic politics that he enjoyed during the Roosevelt administration. The task was well suited to Moore’s strengths, which included an extensive knowledge of the documents of the founding fathers, and an ability to draft clear and compelling historical arguments to suit his political purposes. Unfortunately, he received little credit for his efforts, as Harold Ickes ultimately published the information Moore compiled and synthesized in his own pamphlet. Nonetheless, Roosevelt was aware of Moore’s work and from his correspondence it is evident he valued Moore’s efforts on his behalf.

Given the mixed results Moore achieved in the attempting these three major tasks, he leaves a mixed political legacy. While his value as emissary to the Virginia senators had quickly diminished by the time of the 1936 elections, he did serve as critical link to the White House for the “antis.” Unfortunately, Moore’s legacy, like all other major anti-
organization Democrats, must be evaluated on his effectiveness in altering the course, nature, and outlook of the Virginia Democratic Party. Virginia historian and Byrd biographer, Ronald Heinemann, has written that “throughout the thirties there was never a formidable enough opposition to the organization on which to build a challenge to its power.”\(^{237}\) Proof of the anti-organization Democrats’ lack of power by 1940 is seen in the fact that Byrd ran unopposed in the Democratic primaries for re-election that year. Heinemann’s statement rings especially true in the aftermath of the Roberts’s affair as Roosevelt conceded control over Virginia’s federal patronage to Glass and Byrd. Prior to this concession, the “antis,” orchestrated by Moore, did have at least the potential to challenge the senators for control of the party. After the Roberts’s affair, lacking the backing of the leader of both the nation and the Democratic Party, that potential quickly evaporated, leaving Moore’s efforts as little more than a footnote in Virginia’s political history. The organization would control the Virginia Democratic Party for another generation.

\(^{237}\) Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia*, 152.
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