
Collection Summary

Creator: Office of the Special Counselor on Inflation

Title: Records of the Office of the Special Counselor on Inflation

Dates: 1978-1979

Quantity: 7 linear feet, 5 linear inches, 17 containers

Identification:
Accession Number: 80-1
Archival Research Catalog (ARC) Identification Number: 591093

Scope and Content:
This collection contains correspondence, memoranda, briefing papers, speeches, polling samples, resumes, and printed matter. The material relates to Strauss’ duties as Special Counselor on Inflation. In addition to administrative correspondence, the material includes extensive communications between Strauss and his staff to business and labor leaders. This correspondence contains surveys of their opinions about the Carter administration's inflation program.

Creator Information: Office of the Special Counselor on Inflation
In 1978, Strauss was appointed by President Carter as Special Counselor on Inflation. The office was responsible for the development and implementation of the President’s anti-inflation program and organizing and coordinating the government's approach to business and labor on specific wage agreements and price issues. Strauss assisted the President on analyzing the inflationary impact of various proposals and legislation.

Biographical information on key office personnel is located at the end of the finding aid.

Restrictions:
Restrictions on Access: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with applicable executive order(s), which governs National Security policies, applicable
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Related Material:
Related materials in this repository: White House Central Files, Business Economics 4-2 and Federal Government-Organization 6-1-1/Strauss, Robert; White House Central Files, Name File, Strauss, Robert; Domestic Policy Staff, Stu Eizenstat; Office of the Special Adviser on Inflation, Alfred Kahn

Index Terms:
Limited to major topics under each category
Persons: Robert Pender, Irwin Scott, Barry Bosworth

Organizations: Environmental Protection Agency

Subjects: Government regulation, inflation, labor, legislation, finance, business, price regulation

Places: St. Louis, Missouri; Los Angeles, California

Types of Material: Correspondence, memoranda, notes, briefing papers, and printed material

Administrative Information:
Preferred citation: [Type of Document], [Names of Sender and Recipient or Title of Document], [Date], [Collection Title], [Series Title], [Folder Title], [Box Number], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Acquisition information: These historical materials were received under provisions of the instrument of gift that Jimmy Carter signed January 31, 1981.

Processing information: The first series of the collection was opened in 1992. The dates for the remaining series are indicated in the series descriptions.

System of Arrangement:
The records of the Office of the Special Counselor on Inflation are divided into seven series:

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Records of the Office of the Special Counselor on Inflation
Robert Strauss’ Business Community Files
Scope and Content: Containers 1-2. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material related to various businesses. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Strauss’ Labor Files
Scope and Content: Container 3. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material related to labor. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Strauss’ Government Files
Scope and Content: Containers 4-7. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material. Topics include civil service reform, inflation, trucking deregulation, veterans, and public works. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Strauss’ Program Files
Scope and Content: Containers 8-11. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains correspondence, memoranda, notes, and printed material related to inflation. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Strauss’ Speech Files
Scope and Content: Container 12. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains transcripts, memoranda, speeches, back-up material, and printed material. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Strauss’ Correspondence Files
Scope and Content: Containers 13-15. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains correspondence to and from Robert Strauss, back-up material, and printed material. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Robert Pender’s Subject Files
Scope and Content: Containers 16-17. This series was opened in April 1992. This series contains transcripts, memoranda, speeches, back-up material, and printed material. Topics include inflation, urban policy, and hospital cost containment. Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

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Biographical Information

Robert Strauss

Robert Schwarz Strauss was born in Lockhart, Texas, on October 19, 1918. He grew up in Stamford, Texas. Strauss attended the University of Texas at Austin. There he got his first taste of politics when he worked as a clerk at the state capitol in order to support himself at school. In 1937, he worked on the campaign of Lyndon B. Johnson, who was making his first run for elected office. Johnson ran for Congress on a New Deal platform of support for Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1941, Strauss graduated from the University of Texas Law School and joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He worked as a special agent for the FBI until 1945, when he resigned and helped found a law firm—Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. In 1964, he was named president of the Strauss Broadcasting Company.

In 1968, Strauss began his long association with the national Democratic Party when he was appointed by John Connally to the Democratic National Committee. He was to become an important political force in the party for the next 12 years. In 1970, Strauss was elected treasurer of the Democratic National Committee and was charged with reducing the 1968 party debt of $9,300,000 to manageable proportions. By the end of his tenure in July 1972, Strauss had reduced the debt by one-half, funded the 1972 Democratic National Convention, and placed the credit of the national party on a solid basis. During the 1972 campaign, he served as chairman of the National Committee to re-elect a Democratic Congress.

After the disastrous defeat of Senator George McGovern in 1972, disaffected elements of the Democratic Party representing the old established conservative wing made their bid to regain control of the party structure. Their opening gambit was to challenge Jean Westwood for the party chairmanship. Robert Strauss was their candidate. After an acrimonious, month-long struggle, Strauss was elected Democratic Party chairman, promising to use his talents to bring the party together again.

Strauss began immediately the task of conciliation between the "new" political forces that had emerged in 1972—women, African Americans, and the young—and the "old guard" Democratic establishment of labor, urban machines, and the South. The task was to define a party in which George McGovern, Shirley Chisholm, George Wallace, Mayor Daley, and George Meany could all find a place and contribute towards winning a national election. That he succeeded was evident in 1976 when Jimmy Carter was elected president.

President Carter quickly tapped Strauss to participate in a panel with ten other high level officials to select personnel for the Carter administration. In March 1977, Strauss' own nomination as special representative for trade negotiations was confirmed by the Senate. The post carried with it the rank of ambassador, and Strauss was widely regarded as an excellent choice.

In April 1979, following the Camp David accords, Strauss was named U.S. ambassador-at-large for negotiations on Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While his open negotiating manner had been an asset to him on the domestic political scene, Strauss appeared to be less effective in the Middle East. He soon left this post to become chairman of President Carter's reelection committee in November 1979. In consideration of his services to the nation,
Strauss was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the United States, by President Carter in January 1981.

After the defeat of Jimmy Carter, Strauss resumed the practice of law as a partner in his old law firm. In 1983 he was appointed by President Reagan to the Bipartisan Commission on Central America Policy headed by Henry Kissinger. In the 1984 presidential campaign, he was called on to canvass party leaders for advice on behalf of Walter Mondale but played no larger role. He formed a bipartisan committee with Melvin Laird to study the primary system's place in electoral politics in March 1985. Strauss served as United States Ambassador to Russia from 1991-1993 under President George H.W. Bush.