

Amending the Constitution

A Program for 8th Grade Students

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation & Museum

Pre- and Post- Visit Activities



A special thank you to Grand Rapids Public School teachers Heather Lewis and Amy Holubeck for their significant contributions to the pre-visit activities included in Amending the Constitution.

Pre-Visit Preparation

Prior to your museum visit, it will be helpful to familiarize your students with several key vocabulary words as well as build some background knowledge about the Watergate Scandal and Gerald and Betty Ford.

- Familiarize students with key vocabulary words and concepts
- Activity 1: Read and summarize a biography of Gerald Ford
- Activity 2: Read and summarize a biography of Betty Ford
- Activity 3: Watch a video and answer questions to learn about the Watergate Scandal

Day-of-Visit Agenda

- Students will learn about the amendment process through class discussion and museum exploration
- Students will explore the 25th Amendment and its role in Gerald R. Ford becoming vice president and president
- Students will explore the “most popular un-ratified amendment”, the Equal Rights Amendment

Post-Visit Activity

- Students will analyze political cartoons featuring Gerald and Betty Ford

Key Vocabulary & Concepts

The following terms will be used both in pre-visit activities and during the program at the Museum:

Amendment	Impeach
Bill of Rights	Legislative Branch
Confirm	Nominate
Constitution	Pardon
Declaration of Independence	President
Equality	Ratify
Executive Branch	Representative

Activity 1: Gerald Ford Biography

Directions: Prior to your museum visit, have students read the biography of Gerald R. Ford and then complete the Concept Map to summarize the main ideas.

Gerald R. Ford Biography



Gerald Ford as a student at Madison Elementary School, ca. 1923.

Gerald Rudolph Ford, the 38th President of the United States, was born Leslie Lynch King, Jr., the son of Leslie Lynch King and Dorothy Ayer Gardner King, on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska. His parents separated and his mother took him to Grand Rapids, Michigan to live with her parents. On February 1, 1916, Dorothy King married Gerald R. Ford, a paint salesman. The Fords began calling her son Gerald R. Ford, Jr., although his name was not legally changed until December 3, 1935. The future president grew up in a close-knit family which included three younger half-brothers, Thomas, Richard, and James.

Ford attended South High School in Grand Rapids, where he excelled scholastically and athletically. He was also active in scouting, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in November 1927.

From 1931 to 1935 Ford attended the University of Michigan. He graduated with a B.A. degree in June 1935. A gifted athlete, Ford played on the University's national championship football teams in 1932 and 1933. He received offers from two professional football teams, the Detroit Lions and the Green Bay Packers, but chose instead to take a

position as boxing coach and assistant varsity football coach at Yale hoping to attend law school there. Yale admitted him in the spring of 1938. Ford earned his LL.B. degree in 1941, graduating in the top 25 percent of his class. His introduction to politics came in the summer of 1940 when he worked in Wendell Willkie's presidential campaign.

After returning to Michigan and passing his bar exam, Ford and Philip A. Buchen (who later served on Ford's White House staff as Counsel to the President), set up a law partnership in Grand Rapids.

In April 1942 Ford joined the U.S. Naval Reserve receiving a commission as an ensign. In the spring of 1943 he began service on the light aircraft carrier USS *MONTEREY*. He was first assigned as athletic director and gunnery division officer, then as assistant navigator with the *MONTEREY* which took part in most of the major operations in the South Pacific. His closest call with death came during a vicious typhoon in the Philippine Sea in December 1944. He came within inches of being swept overboard while the storm raged. Ford spent the remainder of the war ashore and was discharged as a lieutenant commander in February 1946.

When he returned to Grand Rapids Ford became a partner in the local law firm of Butterfield, Keeney, and Amberg. With the encouragement of his stepfather and Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Ford decided to challenge Bartel Jonkman for the Republican nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1948 election. He won the nomination.

During the height of the campaign Gerald Ford married Elizabeth Anne Bloomer Warren. They had

four children: Michael Gerald, born March 14, 1950; John Gardner, born March 16, 1952; Steven Meigs, born May 19, 1956; and Susan Elizabeth, born July 6, 1957.

Gerald Ford served in the House of Representatives from January 3, 1949 to December 6, 1973, being reelected twelve times. Ford's ambition was to become Speaker of the House.

In 1963 President Johnson appointed Ford to the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In both the 1968 and 1972 elections Ford was a loyal supporter of Richard Nixon, who had been a friend for many years. Because the Republicans did not attain a majority in the House, Ford was unable to reach his ultimate political goal--to be Speaker of the House. When Spiro Agnew resigned the office of Vice President of the United States late in 1973, President Nixon was empowered by the 25th Amendment to appoint a new vice president. He chose Gerald R. Ford. Ford was confirmed and sworn in on December 6, 1973.

The specter of the Watergate scandal, the break-in at Democratic headquarters during the 1972 campaign and the ensuing cover-up by Nixon administration officials, hung over Ford's nine-month tenure as vice president. When it became apparent that evidence, public opinion, and the mood in Congress were all pointing toward impeachment, Nixon became the first president in U.S. history to resign from that office.

Gerald R. Ford took the oath of office as President of the United States on August 9, 1974. Within the month Ford nominated Nelson Rockefeller for vice president.

One of the most difficult decisions of Ford's presidency was made just a month after he took office. Ford decided to grant a pardon to Richard Nixon prior to the filing of any formal criminal charges. Public reaction was mostly negative to the pardon.

In foreign policy, Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger continued the policy of detente with the Soviet Union and "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East. Ford's personal diplomacy was highlighted by trips to Japan and China, a 10-day European tour, as well as the reception of numerous foreign heads of state, many of whom came in observance of the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.

On two separate trips to California in September 1975 Ford was the target of assassination attempts.

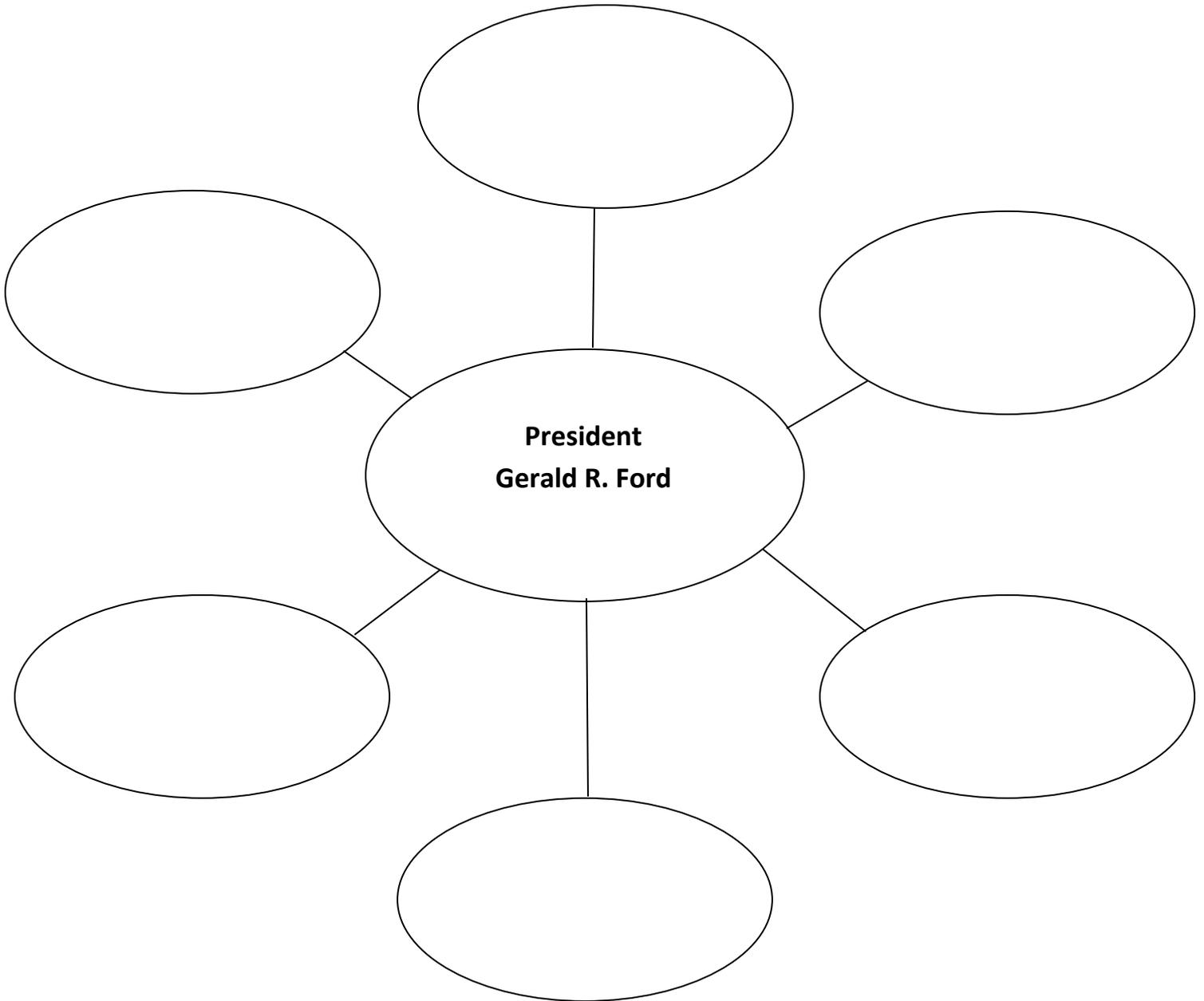
During the 1976 campaign, Ford fought off a strong challenge by Ronald Reagan to gain the Republican nomination. He chose Senator Robert Dole of Kansas as his running mate and succeeded in narrowing Democrat Jimmy Carter's large lead in the polls, but finally lost one of the closest elections in history.

After leaving office, President and Mrs. Ford moved to California. The former president was the recipient of numerous awards and honors by many civic organizations.

President Ford died on December 26, 2006. After ceremonies in California, Washington, and Grand Rapids, he was interred on the grounds of the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids.

Gerald R. Ford Concept Mapping Activity

Directions: After reading the biography of Gerald R. Ford, complete the Concept Map to summarize the main points of what you have read.



Activity 2: Betty Ford Biography and Concept Map

Directions: Prior to your museum visit, have students read the biography of Betty Ford and then complete the Concept Map to summarize the main ideas.

Betty Ford Biography



Betty Bloomer, ca. 1938.

Elizabeth Anne (Betty) Bloomer was born in Chicago on April 8, 1918 and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is the third child and only daughter of Hortense Neahr and William Stephenson Bloomer.

At an early age, Betty Bloomer developed a passion for dance. Upon graduation from Central High School in 1936, she attended the Bennington School of Dance, in Vermont. While studying there she met and began her long association with choreographer Martha Graham. She continued her studies in New York City, becoming a member of Graham's Auxiliary Performance Troupe and performing at Carnegie Hall.

Close family ties took Betty Bloomer back to Grand Rapids in 1941. She became fashion coordinator for Herpolsheimer's, a local department store, and continued her interest in dance. She also worked with handicapped children, helping them experience the joy of rhythm and movement in dance. In 1942 she married William Warren. The union did not last, and they divorced amicably several years later.

In 1947 a friend introduced her to Gerald R. Ford, Jr., a young lawyer who had served as Navy lieutenant during World War II. By February 1948 the couple was engaged to be married. Their wedding took place on October 15, 1948, two weeks before Mr. Ford was elected to his first term in Congress. They moved to Washington, D.C. where he served as member of the House of Representatives for 25 years.

While in Congress, the Fords lived in Alexandria, Virginia. Mrs. Ford quickly assumed the tasks of a congressional spouse of the era, spending much of her time in volunteer work with the Congressional Wives Club, the 81st Congress Club, and the National Federation of Republican Women.

The Fords became the parents of four children: Michael Gerald, born March 14, 1950; John Gardner, born March 16, 1952; Steven Meigs, born May 19, 1956; and Susan Elizabeth, born July 6, 1957.

By 1973 the Fords were planning retirement from Congress when a turn of political events shook the nation and reshaped their own future. When Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned amidst a scandal, President Nixon nominated Congressman Ford to replace Agnew. After President Nixon himself resigned on August 9, 1974, Gerald Ford took the oath of office as 38th President of the United States.

As the new first lady, Betty Ford immediately revealed the openness and good-natured candor that became her trademark. She held her first press conference on September 4, 1974. Expressing herself with humor and forthrightness on controversial issues of the day, she answered

questions about women in politics, abortion rights, and a proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer later that month, she broke with social conventions by fostering public discussion of her diagnosis and treatment.

During her tenure as first lady, Betty Ford addressed public issues that were important to her. She was an outspoken advocate of women's rights and aspirations in an era when there was much debate on the matter, encouraged the appointment of more women to senior government posts, supported passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. On the CBS show 60 Minutes, Mrs. Ford candidly shared her opinions on provocative issues. Her statements drew the ire of many conservatives. She continued to promote programs for handicapped children and brought public attention to the importance of the performing arts.

Mrs. Ford did not shirk the extensive social duties of a first lady, as she and her husband hosted numerous State dinners and other events, bringing an informality and warmth that guests and the nation welcomed. In 1975 she accompanied the president in journeys to fourteen countries, from China to the Vatican.

Betty Ford was an enthusiastic supporter of her husband during the 1976 presidential election campaign. She made several speaking tours throughout the east and mid-west. Her popularity was reflected on lapel buttons that proclaimed "Betty's Husband For President!" When Gerald Ford was defeated by former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, the couple left Washington and moved to Rancho Mirage, California.

In 1978 her prescription drug and alcohol use led to a family intervention and her self-admittance to Long Beach Naval Hospital for treatment. In facing her personal problems, Betty Ford again dealt openly and honestly with the public. She became an

active and outspoken champion of improved awareness, education, and treatment for alcohol and other drug dependencies.

In 1982, Ambassador Leonard Firestone, joined Mrs. Ford in co-founding the non-profit Betty Ford Center at the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, California. Mrs. Ford worked tirelessly to raise funds and to help research and design treatments to assist men, women, and families in recovery from alcoholism and other drug dependency. Today, The Betty Ford Center is regarded as one of the most outstanding treatment facilities in the world.

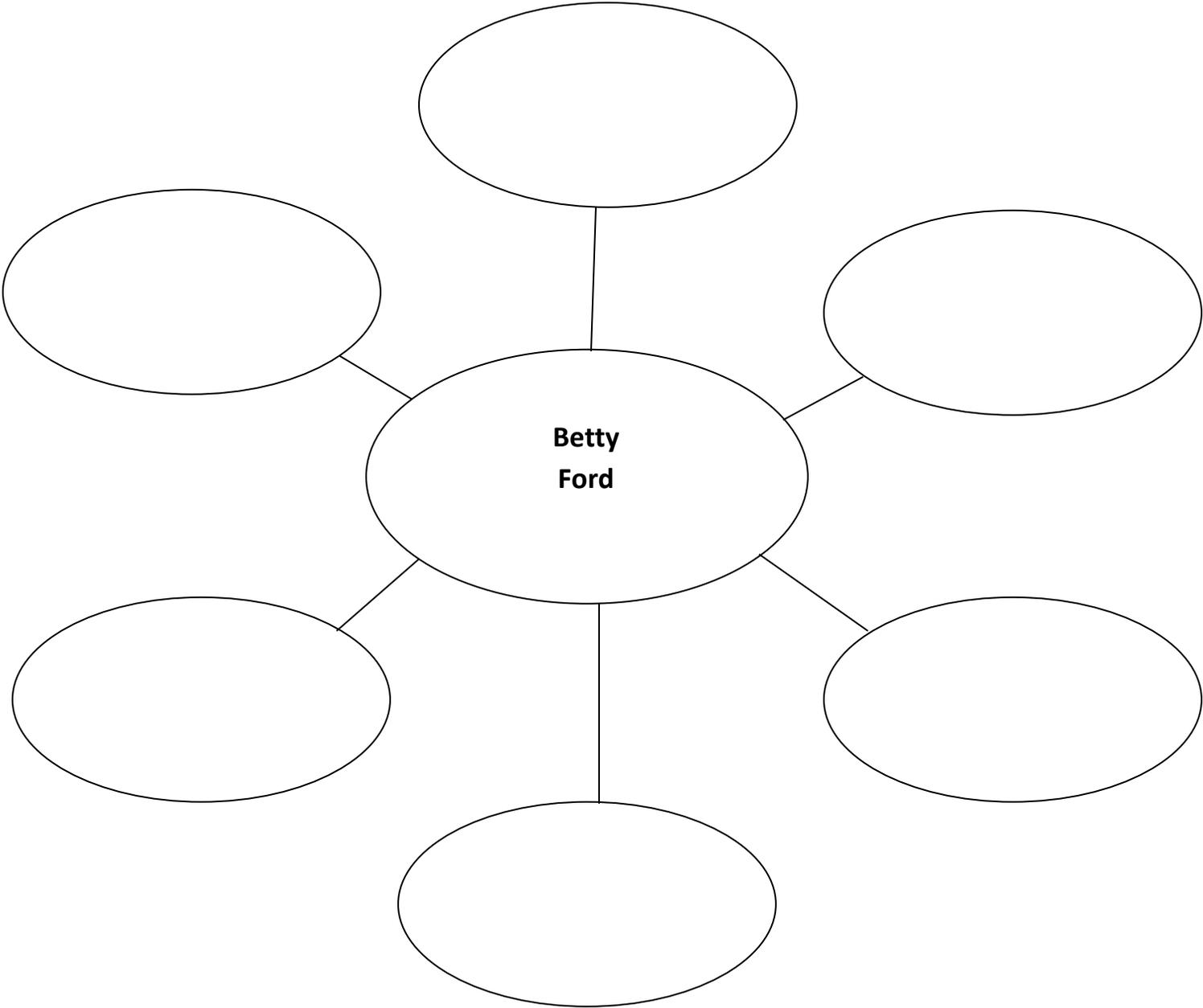
Mrs. Ford has been the recipient of many honors and awards. In 1991 she was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George H. W. Bush for providing "selfless, strong, and refreshing leadership on a number of issues." In 1999 President and Mrs. Ford were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for "dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian contributions."

Mrs. Ford has passed the leadership of the Betty Ford Center to her daughter, Susan Ford Bales, but she remains active and interested in the work that is done there. She continues to reside in Rancho Mirage, California.

After her husband's death on December 26, 2006, Mrs. Ford led her family and the nation with grace and strength through several days of national memorial observances. The world has come to expect such strength and guidance from the woman whose Grand Rapids upbringing helped her become an outstanding and well-loved first lady.

Betty Ford Concept Mapping Activity

Directions: After reading the biography of Betty Ford, complete the Concept Map to summarize the main points of what you have read.



Activity 3: Watergate

Directions:

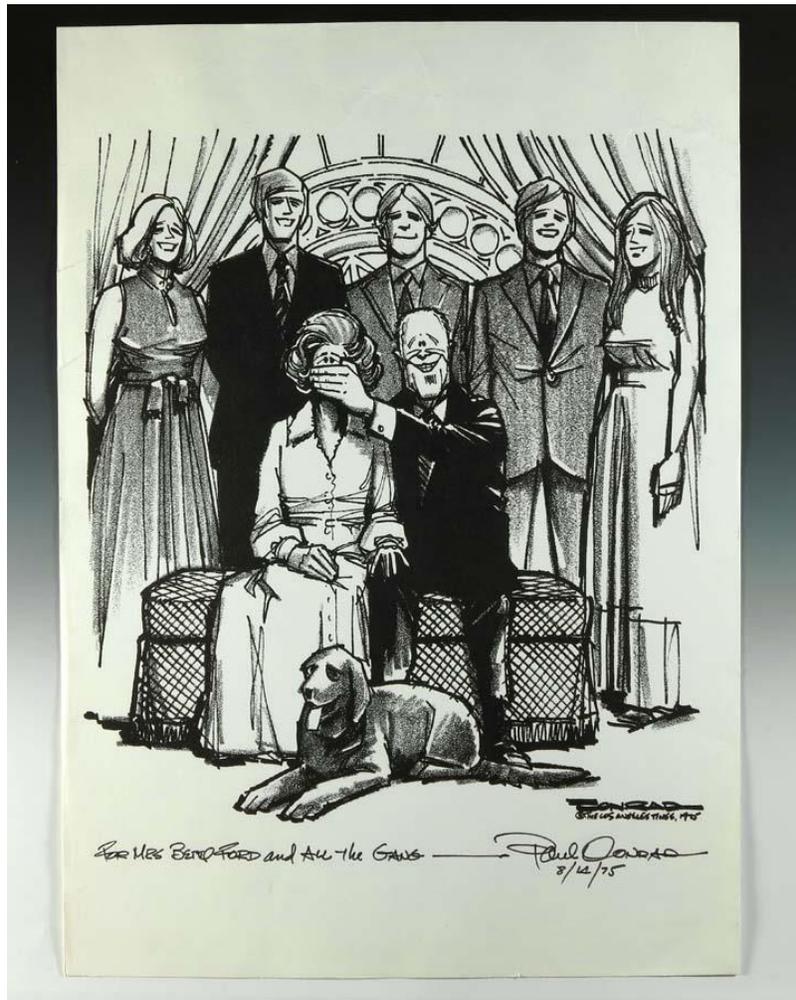
1. Watch *The Watergate Scandal* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9rfEVWA2Ig>
2. During the video, answer the questions below. Pause the video as needed.
3. Additional resources:
 - a. Visit the Watergate website at http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/museum/exhibits/watergate_files/index.html
 - b. View the video, “Watergate in Two Minutes”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjKqibPnE5Y>

Video: *The Watergate Scandal* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9rfEVWA2Ig>)

1. Five men were found inside the Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate complex. What were they doing there?
2. What did the FBI discover about these five men?
3. What did the Watergate Senate Committee discover?
4. What did President Nixon try to do?
5. The FBI found that there was a secret Republican fund used to...
6. What did President Nixon do on August 9th, 1974?
7. Who became president following the resignation of President Nixon?

Post-Visit Activity

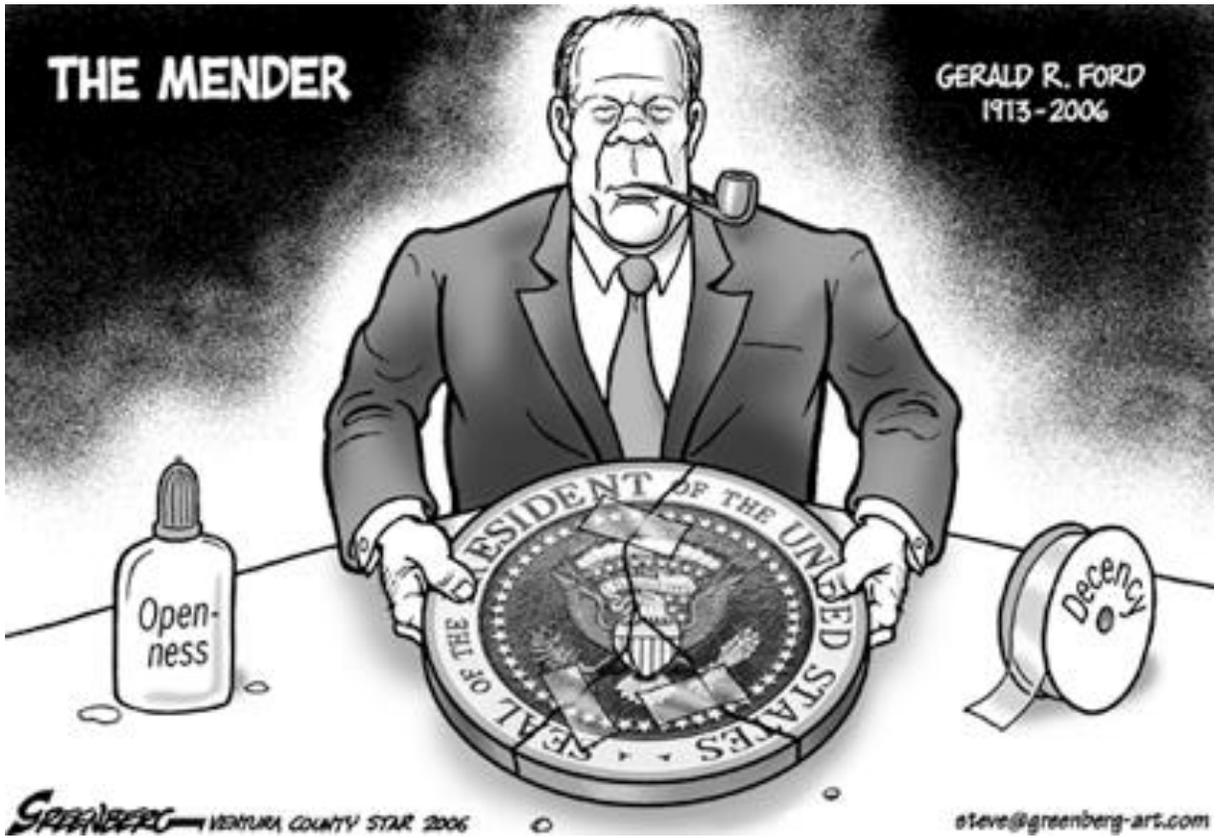
Directions: View and analyze the political cartoons using the provided prompts.



Interpret the meaning behind this cartoon. What do you think the artist is trying to say?

Why do you think the artist created this cartoon?

Make an inference. What does this cartoon tell you about life in the United States at the time it was created?



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