

States Must Shape Up if Nixon Plans to Work, Romney Says

By ALEX COFFIN

Nixon administration supporters boosted the President's revenue sharing and welfare reform programs Thursday and called on state legislators from across the nation meeting in Atlanta to accept new responsibilities.

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development George Romney, Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., and others told the 11th



BOOSTS NIXON PROGRAMS
George Romney

annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislative Leaders that President Richard M. Nixon's "New Federalism" means a greater piece of the action for the states.

Romney said in a luncheon speech, state government must be modernized, states must rebuild their relationships with local governments, state governments must move away from rural-suburban domination not in the best interest of central cities and states must "devise viable metropolitan mechanisms for meeting metropolitan needs."

PROPOSALS INADEQUATE

Baker, who introduced and will guide the Nixon administration's revenue sharing legislation, admitted that the proposals are inadequate to meet the needs of state and local governments, but are a move away from centralization, with virtually no strings attached and would provide greater flexibility and a better delivery system than complete reliance on the grant-in-aid approach.

Baker defended the program as better than one including tax credits, which he said would cause confusion.

In answer to a question from State Rep. James Farnsworth of Michigan, Baker said he believes the federal government is the best revenue collector and the states best revenue spenders.

Negro State Rep. William Bowen of Ohio asked what provisions are in the legislation to prevent states from discriminating against minorities in spending the tax funds including specific clauses on this, but determined the 1964 Civil Rights Act provided adequate protection.

\$10 MILLION

Baker said that an amount equal to the gross national product would be needed annually to solve the problems of the states and cities, and his bill would produce \$500 million in 1971. He said Georgia would get about \$10 million the first year.

State Rep. H. L. Merideth of Mississippi said he was glad the Nixon administration is "admitting" federal programs have failed and that states can help solve the nation's problems, and that "this is a step in the right direction, but we need to step farther and quicker."

Earlier, Romney had en-

dorsed Nixon's priorities of ending the Vietnam War, stopping inflation and solving urban problems and said the nation faces the gravest crisis in its history

— but from within, not without. He cited housing as the number one domestic problem, but said the problem is proportionately two-and-a-half times more

serious in rural than in urban areas. He said the problem is more explosive in concentrated urban areas, however.

He said the Nixon administra-

tion is moving to meet the crisis caused by government becoming too complicated and centralized, too much reliance on governmental action and "spawning

of governmental programs and neglect of policies." He said state, city and county leaders must form a coalition if the revenue sharing programs

of the administration stand a chance. He said Congressmen would be reluctant to give up the say-so in where federal money goes in their districts.