

MEMORANDUM

MARCH 28, 1972

TO: Senator Humphrey
FROM: Mark Epstein
SUBJECT: Statement on Elderly, River View Tower East senior
citizens home, Wausau, TODAY

This statement is for your use at 4:30 p.m. this afternoon.
The news lead is an attack on Nixon's message to Congress
last week on older Americans.

We have compared Nixon's elderly message with the White House
Conference on Aging recommendations--the Nixon message falls
way short of the Conference proposals.

We then follow with descriptions of your plans for the elderly,
in health care, income, etc.

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

RIVER VIEW TOWER EAST SENIOR CITIZENS HOME

WAUSAU, WISCONSIN

MARCH 28, 1972

LAST WEEK PRESIDENT NIXON SENT TO THE CONGRESS HIS MESSAGE ON OLDER AMERICANS. THIS LENGTHY AND WEIGHTY DOCUMENT IS A MONUMENTAL SHAM THAT SHAMEFULLY IGNORES THE TRUE NEEDS OF 20 MILLION OLDER AMERICANS.

ABOVE ALL, PRESIDENT NIXON HAS DISREGARDED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF HIS OWN WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING-- WHICH MET IN WASHINGTON LATE LAST YEAR. PRESIDENT NIXON HAS FAILED TO HEED THE DEMANDS OF THE 3,400 DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE--WHO ASKED FOR ACTION AND NOT EMPTY PROMISES,

AND PRESIDENT NIXON'S SILENCE ON MANY ISSUES SPEAKS MORE ELOQUENTLY THAN THE MANY WORDS OF HIS MESSAGE:

--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY FOR THE ELDERLY--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE NEED TO CREATE A NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY POSITION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT TO OVERSEE AND COORDINATE HOUSING PROGRAMS FOR OLDER AMERICANS.

--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, EYE GLASSES, HEARING AIDS--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE NEED FOR GREATER FEDERAL RESEARCH EFFORTS ON THE PROBLEMS OF HEALTH CARE FOR THE ELDERLY--HE SAYS NOTHING ABOUT CREATING A NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF GERONTOLOGY.

AND WHEN HE DOES ADDRESS HIMSELF TO THE ISSUES WHICH CONCERN ELDERLY AMERICANS, PRESIDENT NIXON HAS FAILED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS NEEDED.

--HE HAS RECOMMENDED ONLY A 5 PERCENT INCREASE IN SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE. BUT WHAT IS REALLY NEEDED IS 5 TIMES THAT INCREASE--THE 25 PERCENT INCREASE I HAVE CALLED FOR AND THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDS.

--AND THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AGAINST INFLATION BY TYING THEM TO COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES IS MEANINGLESS UNLESS WE RAISE ASSISTANCE LEVELS ADEQUATELY AND IMMEDIATELY.

--PRESIDENT NIXON ALSO SPEAKS PROUDLY OF SIGNING INTO LAW SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASES OF 26 PERCENT. BUT THE ELDERLY OF THIS NATION KNOW THAT THE INCREASES IN THE PAST 3 YEARS--OF 15 AND 10 PERCENT--WERE PASSED BY A DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS OVER THE OPPOSITION OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION.

LET'S NOT FOOL OURSELVES--AND LET'S NOT LET THE PRESIDENT FOOL US EITHER. THE TIME HAS COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE NEEDS OF OLDER AMERICANS ARE NOT PRIVILEGES TO BE BESTOWED BY A GENEROUS SOCIETY, BUT BASIC AMERICAN RIGHTS.

--IT IS WRONG THAT 5 1/2 MILLION OF OUR ELDERLY--MORE THAN A QUARTER OF ALL OLDER AMERICANS--ARE LIVING IN POVERTY. AND SINCE PRESIDENT NIXON TOOK OFFICE, MORE THAN 100,000 SENIOR CITIZENS HAVE JOINED THE POVERTY ROLLS.

--IT IS WRONG THAT MILLIONS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS LACK ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION EVEN FOR SUCH BASIC NEEDS AS VISITS TO A DOCTOR OR TO A GROCERY STORE.

--IT IS WRONG THAT MILLIONS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS ARE PRICED OUT OF THE HOME BUYING MARKET AND FORCED TO LIVE IN WHAT ARE ALL TOO FREQUENTLY, CROWDED, SHABBY, AND UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS.

--IT IS WRONG THAT OUR SOCIETY SHORT-CHANGES THOSE WHO IN THEIR PRODUCTIVE YEARS HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH, AND THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW.

I PROPOSE A NEW DEAL FOR THE ELDERLY CITIZENS OF AMERICA:

1. AS PRESIDENT, ONE OF MY FIRST ACTS WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A CABINET-LEVEL OFFICE ON AGING TO BE NOT JUST ANOTHER ADVISORY GROUP HOLDING PERIODIC MEETINGS, BUT TO PULL TOGETHER ALL FEDERAL PROGRAMS CONCERNING THE ELDERLY, TO SET SCHEDULES FOR MEETING SPECIFIC GOALS, TO FIX RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION, TO MOVE OUT IN NEW DIRECTIONS.

2. I HAVE PROPOSED AND INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE THE HUMPHREY HOME HEALTH SERVICES PLAN FOR ELDERLY AMERICANS. THIS COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM WILL CLOSE A MAJOR GAP IN MEDICARE AND PUT A NEW EMPHASIS ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE.

AS THE AUTHOR OF THE ORIGINAL MEDICARE LEGISLATION, I TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BUT THE PROGRAM

MUST BE REFORMED AND EXPANDED IF WE ARE TO TRULY EXTEND TO THE ELDERLY THE RIGHTS AND REWARDS TO WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED.

MY PLAN WILL END THE PRESENT MEDICARE PROVISION THAT RECIPIENTS MUST BE HOSPITALIZED FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS BEFORE THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR HOME HEALTH SERVICES.

WE NEED A MAJOR REDIRECTION OF OUR NATIONAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FROM THE NARROW CONCEPT OF MEDICAL CARE IN INSTITUTIONS DURING ACUTE ILLNESS TO ONE OF PREVENTIVE CARE, HEALTH MAINTENANCE, AND REHABILITATION SERVICES.

WE MUST ACT NOW TO REFORM THE MEDICARE SYSTEM WHICH SAYS TO THE ELDERLY WE WILL RECOGNIZE SOME OF YOUR NEEDS, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO ASSURE YOU OF GOOD ACCESS TO ALL YOUR HEALTH NEEDS.

3. I HAVE PROPOSED INCREASES IN THE OLD AGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO FEDERALLY-FUNDED MINIMUM LEVELS OF \$165 A MONTH FOR A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL AND \$215 FOR A COUPLE. THESE INCREASES WILL HELP TO LIFT THE 5 1/2 MILLION ELDERLY AS WELL AS THE MORE THAN 1 1/2 MILLION BLIND AND DISABLED ABOVE THE POVERTY LINE.

4. I CALL AGAIN FOR A 25 PERCENT INCREASE IN SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, WITH A \$100 A MONTH MINIMUM PROVISION, AND A COST OF LIVING EXCALATOR FOR REAL AND PERMANENT INFLATION PROTECTION.

THE TIME FOR PIOUS PROMISES IS OVER. WE NEED ACTION--
AND WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS:

--THE RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE INCOME.

--THE RIGHT TO DECENT HOUSING.

--THE RIGHT TO QUALITY MEDICAL CARE.

--THE RIGHT, ABOVE ALL, TO HUMAN DIGNITY AND SECURITY.

WHAT WE NEED NOW ARE FIRM NATIONAL POLICIES BACKED BY
BOLD AND COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PROGRAMS COMMITTED TO ONE
PARAMOUNT GOAL: THAT A PERSON IN HIS OLD AGE SHALL BE
TREATED AS A HUMAN BEING.

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