

From the Office of  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
140 Senate Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.  
National 8-3120, Ext. 881

FOR RELEASE  
April 28, 1953 - A.M.'s

Schools as well as guns are vital weapons in the arsenal of democracy, and the need for adequate school facilities cannot be safely ignored by our country any more than we can ignore inadequate military preparedness to protect the nation's future, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn) declared tonight in an address before the Bloomington, Minnesota, Civic Association.

"If our education deteriorates, we will be in danger of deteriorating as a nation," Senator Humphrey warned.

"We have no better weapon with which to combat Communism as a doctrine and ideology, than the education of our people. The United States will be free so long as our people are educated to freedom. We shall lead the free world so long as our people are educated to know and understand the world and its tremendous problems.

"Yet today, as we mobilize our strength and our resources against the threat of Soviet Communism, we are inclined to neglect this most powerful weapon of all -- our schools.

"We are failing to keep pace with our school needs, and failing badly to look ahead toward our needs of the future," he cautioned.

As an illustration of the vast amount of new school construction urgently needed in the country to accommodate increasing enrollments, Senator Humphrey quoted Dr. Earl J. McGrath, retiring U. S. Commissioner of Education, as saying:

"Additional floor space equal to a one-story building, 52-feet wide, extending from New York City to San Francisco, California, is needed adequately to house the nation's public elementary and secondary school population."

Senator Humphrey said approximately one-third of our nation's school children "are attending classes in buildings whose safety against fire is questionable".

"At a time when our nation is spending billions to promote and protect democracy throughout the world, our children must not be prevented from receiving the finest education that democracy can provide. The needs of American children cannot

be met in crowded schools requiring half-day classes, or in buildings that are dangerous fire traps."

Senator Humphrey told the group that a School Facilities Survey just recently completed by the Office of Education, undertaken as a result of legislation introduced by the Minnesota Senator in the Congress, indicates a need for 708,000,000 additional square feet of school building space for nearly  $9\frac{1}{4}$  million pupils in public and secondary schools.

Senator Humphrey warned that this was "only the beginning" since the figures did not include the anticipated increased enrollment flowing from the fact that the "war babies" are reaching school age.

Senator Humphrey said the survey also indicated that State and local governments are "financially unable to meet the school construction problem".

For Minnesota alone, Senator Humphrey said, the survey showed \$165,959,000 will be needed to meet school facility requirements -- 90.5% of that amount for new construction, 7% for remodeling, 1.5% for sites, and 1% for school buses.

Senator Humphrey explained the School Construction Act of 1953 which he had introduced in the Congress, authorizing federal aid for school construction to supplement available local funds.

"It provides that State Educational Agencies will have full control of planning and developing new buildings, and in setting up construction priority programs for each state," he said. "Allocation of funds will be based on the number of children and the per capita income payments in each state. The bill would establish a sound administrative pattern within which the Federal government could fulfill its responsibility for housing the growing school attendance without interference with State administration. The actual amount of money to be made available would be decided by the Congress each year, depending upon the immediate need and the overall budget requirements".

"Unless the Congress acts to meet this crisis", Senator Humphrey warned, "the mothers and fathers of our young children will have a right to feel that their children and their children's education have been neglected by the Congress."



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)