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Opening Television Show - Humphrey Campaign
Tuesday, September 7, 1954

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Good evening, friends ...

It's good to be back home, in Minnesota ...

For the past six years, it has been my privilege, honor, and responsibility to represent you -- all of you -- in the United States Senate.

I have endeavored to do so conscientiously, to the best of my ability. I've constantly endeavored to work for YOU -- and to get things done that the people of Minnesota wanted done.

That's true whether it involved a major legislative issue, or whether it involved help with a personal problem for your business, your family, or yourself.

We have just completed a long and strenuous session of the Congress in which many issues vital to you and your pocketbook and the future of our country were debated and acted upon.

I have now returned to give you an accounting of my stewardship, and ask you for a vote of confidence.

I welcome the forthcoming election campaign, because it will bring me close to the people I respect and love, the people I endeavor

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to serve. As your Senator, I have tried to stay close to the people of Minnesota -- to understand your needs and aspirations and desires, and to carry them out as your elected representative. I have returned home at my own expense as frequently as my work would permit, to keep in close touch with all of you. And I have endeavored to keep you informed, to the best of my ability, of all the issues confronting us and my position upon them.

I've always felt Minnesota citizens were entitled to know fully where their elected representatives stood on every issue -- without mincing words. As a result I think most of you know my deep convictions about creating a government with a heart, instead of just having a bureaucratic cash register down in Washington.

As we enter this election year, I think it well for all of us to give serious thought to our responsibilities as good citizens -- to my responsibility to discuss the issues frankly and openly, and to your responsibility to try and become fully informed on the great issues of our time so you can participate wisely in offering the guidance of your ballot in determining the future destiny of our country.

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Let me speak ~~just~~ briefly to the thousands of loyal friends and supporters working energetically in my behalf. I appreciate your support very deeply, and I am inspired by it to constantly strive toward doing an even better job for the state in which we all take such pride. May I tell you just for a moment the kind of a campaign I want to present -- and the kind of a campaign I want you to help me present?

Political campaigns are a vital part of making democracy work -- and making democracy effective! My life has been dedicated to making democracy effective, extending its blessings to all the people. With that background I think it is understandable that I want a clean, hard-hitting campaign that reflects the ideals in which I deeply believe, and which I have tried to advance. I want a serious discussion of the issues. I want an informed people to soberly pass judgment on those issues.

I want a campaign of truth, not smear. I want a campaign that reflects our belief in the democratic processes, and that maintains the same high level of ethics I have endeavored to exemplify during my political career.

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So let's all of us work together in conducting a campaign that strengthens democracy by appealing to reason and judgment, not a campaign that weakens democracy by exploiting hysteria, emotions, and fear.

I give you my pledge that such shall be my goal.

During the weeks ahead I intend getting out among you just as much as I can to discuss frankly with you my serious concern about some of the trends in our country today, and my reasons for being concerned. I want to report fully to you on my record, and the record of the present Administration in Washington.

I want you to know how I feel about independent business enterprise being the heart and core of the American economic system ... and about the vital role of sound labor-management relations, based upon the accepted American principle of free collective bargaining, in our free economic system. I want you to know why I feel we must have a constantly expanding economy to maintain our prosperity, and assure a decent standard of living for all.

A free society, based on principles of individual liberty and social justice, requires respect for human rights as well as property

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right. Capital and labor are not enemies; they are and must be partners.

Business is entitled to a fair and reasonable profit. Labor deserves a fair and decent wage. Farmers are entitled to equality of opportunity with other segments of our economy.

Americans ALL want and and deserve an ever-better standard of living, that comes with a full economy.

But America's government, in my opinion, must be concerned about more than cash registers and bank accounts and economic reports -- it must be a government with a heart, concerned about its senior citizens, its children, its handicapped, and its veterans.

That's why I have so consistently sought to improve our social security system and increase benefits to the aged and needy and jobless -- and that's why I have worked for decent housing for every American, insisted on adequate programs for protection of the nation's health, and led a continuing battle to provide adequate school facilities for our growing school-age population.

I want you to know, too, why I have felt it so necessary to fight vigorously in the Senate for the conservation and development of

our great natural resources -- land, water, wildlife, and minerals.

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I want you to know more about my concern for good government, and my efforts to raise the moral level of American politics and government, and make our government more efficient and less costly to those it serves.

Most of you already know my deep convictions about the necessity for equality of opportunity for agriculture, but I want to tell you more about everybody's stake in a sound farm program that assures us of abundance and provides for wiser use of that abundance, than we have yet achieved.

Then, too, I want to discuss at greater length with you in the days ahead, the critical situation in the world today, and our policies of national defense and foreign policy as I have had the opportunity of viewing them as a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

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Perhaps/now, in the brief moments available, I can only emphasize my abiding conviction that our objective must be peace -- peace with honor, justice and freedom. To attain that objective, we must be dedicated in our belief and practice of democracy, at home and abroad.

We must build a shield of strength for our defense against the evil and aggressive force of Communism.

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The only war we seek, as freedom-loving people, is war against inequality, disease, poverty and fear. These are the breeding grounds of world strife and Communism; they represent the worldwide challenge to American leadership -- and to freedom-loving people everywhere.

All of these issues, and more, I intend discussing with you -- documenting the record of just who is protecting your best interest, and who is endangering your future and the future of your loved ones behind a smokescreen of nice-sounding slogans.

Quite frankly, the American people do not get the full and complete story of what is happening in Washington. Perhaps this campaign can help bring some of the facts to light that you, as citizens and taxpayers, are entitled to know about.

Let me give you just one example tonight ... one of many I hope to bring to you in the days ahead.

Your dollars pay taxes. You are entitled to know whether or not your taxes are based on the principle of fair and equal treatment,

considering the ability to pay. Every time someone else finds a loophole of special privilege to evade paying taxes, it means just that much more which you must pay to meet the costs of government and our national security.

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You've been hearing quite a lot of boastful claims lately, about how the Eisenhower Administration has reduced taxes by \$7.4 billion -- the biggest cut in history. Sounds impressive, doesn't it? Well, let's just examine it a bit more closely.

In the first place, \$6 billion, or 81%, of this tax reduction was enacted by the Democrats and went into effect automatically -- the Eisenhower Administration had nothing to do with it at all!

In the second place, let's just see where the tax cuts provided by the Eisenhower Administration went. Let's see how you benefitted.

Here's how they cut up the pie of tax relief --

Out of each dollar of tax reduction provided by the Republican 83rd Congress, the corporations will get 73 cents, families earning more than \$5,000 will get 18 cents, and the under \$5,000 group in annual income will get only 9 cents.

You will hear a lot about how this new bill "helps the little

fellow". Actually, this tax bill will bring only a few "crumbs" of relief to a very few people.

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According to the Eisenhower Administration, we can "afford" an \$850 million tax cut for corporation shareholders and a \$1 billion \$50 million tax cut for corporations, but we can't "afford" such things as an increase in the personal exemption to benefit EVERY taxpayer, or excise tax cuts on consumer items such as automobiles and cigarettes.

Under the Eisenhower tax proposals, for every dollar of tax relief we can "afford" to give the corporation shareholders, we can only "afford" to give:

...less than a nickel to working mothers

...less than a dime to families with heavy medical expenses

...a little over a penny to consumers buying on the installment plan.

...less than a dime to families whose children are working their way through college.

...a little over a penny to families with foster children.

Isn't that something to think about? Oh, it's a fifty-fifty tax bill all right -- one horse and one rabbit! YOU get the rabbit, or at least the fuzz off its tail!

Let me give you one more comparison that might illustrate better how this new tax bill works.

One of the biggest tax bonanzas in the GOP tax bill is the huge relief proposed by the Eisenhower Administration for corporation shareholders. To show you how this works, take two families, each with two children, each earning \$5,000. One is a worker at U. S. Steel; his \$5,000 is earned by working an open-hearth furnace, eight hours a day. The other is a U. S. Steel stockholder; his \$5,000. is merely mailed to him in the form of U. S. Steel dividends. Under the Eisenhower proposal --

...the U. S. Steel workers must pay \$420 in taxes, on his \$5,000.

...the U. S. Steel shareholder pays only \$200 in taxes, on his \$5,000.

Does that sound fair to you?

We Democrats in the Congress believed every taxpayer in America was entitled to a tax break. In order to achieve this, we proposed

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raising the personal exemption from \$600 to \$700. If you make \$70 to \$100 a week and have two children, this would have meant:

...a 5-cent an hour pay increase.

...\$1.75 a week more take-home pay.

96% of the House Democrats and 91% of the Senate Democrats voted for that tax break for everybody. But it was defeated ... because 95% of the House Republicans and 96% of the Senate Republicans voted against it.

If YOU want to share equitably in tax relief, you better send more Democrats to Congress.

Well folks, this is just an example of some of the behind-the-scene facts I think you should know -- and should want to know -- about the record of the 83rd Congress. I hope to tell you more about it as the campaign progresses, both in person and over television and radio.

In the meantime, talk this over with your friends and neighbors. Get out a pencil and do a little figuring, when you hear talk about tax relief, and see how little help came to YOU. And remember that, on

November 2!

Government, in a democracy, is everybody's business -- yours as well as mine. Whether you are a housewife, a businessman, a farmer, an industrial worker, or a professional man or woman, it is your business to be concerned about the kind of America we have.

You make that choice at the ballot box.

That's why I like to think of my campaign in the coming election as "Operation American"— another step in the building of our democracy.

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