

From the Office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
140 Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.
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FOR RELEASE: Wednesday P.M.'s
February 11, 1959

HUMPHREY URGES NATION TO RE-OPEN CLOGGED CHANNELS OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Congress must enact "vigorous measures" to re-open the clogged channels of educational opportunity "if the nation is to continue to develop future leaders of strength and wisdom from all its ranks," Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) declared in an address before the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Philadelphia today.

Calling the National Defense Education Act enacted last year "only a first step in the right direction," Senator Humphrey expressed the hope that Congress would succeed in writing into the law "this year or next" programs of Federal assistance for classroom construction, for teachers' salaries, and for competitive Federal scholarships.

"Sooner or later, we must face up to the fact that expenditures for education must be considered as investments -- clear-cut increments to our national productivity and to the strength of our society, which we cannot afford to write off as mere 'government spending,'" Senator Humphrey declared.

"The present allocation of only about 3% of our national income to education is not only foolhardy in the face of the total Soviet competition, but is actually a national disgrace."

Specific recommendations outlined by Senator Humphrey included:

1. Removal of the economic barriers to higher education for the gifted, through provision of at least 40,000 new scholarships each year and a generously-financed loan program.
2. Restoration of the nation's physical plant for education to a level sufficient to permit encouraging learning conditions -- including a first step of constructing 135,000 new elementary and secondary school classrooms.
3. The raising of teacher salaries to an average level high enough to attract a continuing supply of highly qualified and motivated teachers.

"During my recent travels in the Soviet Union, I found that the Russian vocabulary has no word for 'opportunity,'" Senator Humphrey reported. "Yet I saw them actively, systematically, and aggressively providing educational opportunity -- seeking out and training their talented young people at a pace that spells out formidable competition.

"On the other hand, 'opportunity' is a favorite American word. Perhaps it's time we do a little less talking about opportunity and a little more doing to assure it.

"It is high time that we took the steps necessary to restore genuine opportunity and incentive to American education," he declared.

Senator Humphrey added the hope that school principals would also "look beyond the classroom" in support of other "opportunity programs" for young people.

"Congress must also consider action to provide new kinds of incentives which will draw into public service young people of idealism and ability, and which will also channel into constructive work the restless energies of those young people who can not be expected to go on to higher education and the professions."

More

He called attention to his own proposal for a Youth Conservation Corps, to

provide education and work opportunities for boys and young men in the national forests and other public lands, as an example of Federal action to increase the incentives and opportunities for young people.

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Specific recommendations outlined by Senator Humphrey included:

1. Removal of the economic barriers to higher education for the gifted, through provision of at least \$5,000 new scholarships each year and a generously-financed loan program.
2. Restoration of the nation's physical plant for education to a level sufficient to permit encouraging learning conditions -- including a first step of constructing 125,000 new elementary and secondary school classrooms.
3. The raising of teacher salaries to an average level high enough to attract a continuing supply of highly qualified and motivated teachers.

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A D D R E S S
b y
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
before the
National Association of Secondary School Principals
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

February 11, 1959

Yes, it is quite true. I did speak with Nikita Khrushchev -- and at considerable length. And despite the Russian Premier's somewhat intemperate remarks (shall we say) about the other day when he came under attack from the Yugoslavs, we did have a most cordial and frank discussion about a great many subjects -- including missiles, nuclear weapons, Berlin, Communist China, and U. S. choral and symphonic music.

But I talked with a lot of other Russians, too. Mrs. Humphrey and I went into laboratories and hospitals, Moscow University classrooms, public libraries, and the subways. In fact, we stood and talked with Russian youngsters for hours on end one evening in the great Moscow subway, with the assistance of a very able interpreter from our own group.

I am sure that everyone pretty well knows the gist of my conversation with Khrushchev by now. And I hope that my reports on that conversation have been helpful to my fellow-Americans in coming to a better understanding of the kind of opposition we are up against. I have been assured by the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency that the information I brought back has been helpful to our Government.

Let me tell you a little about what I learned from other conversations I had, and about some of the things we saw in the Soviet Union.

THE RUSSIANS AND YOUTH

I remember in particular my first impression of the Soviet Union. It was in the massive Moscow Airport, as we deplaned. The loudspeakers were announcing the arrival of plane after plane, and our interpreters would translate . . . from Syria, from Iraq, from China, from this country and that in Asia and Africa. Literally crowds of young people - students from everywhere - were surging through the airport. And I discovered that the Soviet Union is bringing in not hundreds, not thousands, but tens of thousands of potential young leaders from Africa and Asia every year. And they come fully paid, fully taken care of by the Soviet Government.

Do you think the Soviet Union is not competing? Do you think they are putting all their money on arms? Not by a long shot. They are building missiles and submarines and all the rest of the military hardware, and they are maintaining a huge standing army equipped with the latest weapons -- but they are also moving with great determination and skill into the battle for the minds of young people throughout the world -- and I stress young people!

Coming in from Helsinki, Finland, as we did that day, Moscow may have looked to me a drab and cheerless city. But think what Moscow, with its great universities, its great libraries and cultural centers, its ballet, its very size, looks like to a young African, or a bright boy from a southeast Asian village!

And the Russians are taking good care that their own bright young people are being moved into the mainstream of training for leadership.

Let me tell you a little story. When I was preparing to go on the Soviet television in Moscow, my interpreter and I were working over my text. At one point I wanted to tell the Russians about our concept of providing broad types of opportunity for our people. I discovered that there was no Russian equivalent for our word "Opportunity"!

But make no mistake about it: there may be no Russian word, but there is a lot of Russian action. They are actively, systematically and aggressively providing opportunity -- educational opportunity -- seeking out and training their talented young people at a pace that spells out formidable competition to the Western world.

More

THE VITAL CHANNEL

On the other hand, "opportunity" is a favorite American word.

Perhaps it's time we do a little less talking about opportunity and a little more doing to assure it!

I think it is time that we took a good, hard look at this idea of opportunity.

One thing we can be sure of, America in the mid-twentieth century is an infinitely more organized, more crowded, more technical, more complex society even than you and I knew in our high school days.

It becomes increasingly obvious that the one great conduit for ability to rise through the layers of this new technological society -- the one channel upon which we must depend to renew the leadership of the nation -- must be our educational system.

Yet we have permitted this vital channel to begin to choke up -- simply by failure to recognize its unique importance and to invest the necessary public funds.

EDUCATION GOES BEGGING

The present allocation of only about 3% of our national income to education is not only foolhardy in the face of the total Soviet competition, but is actually a national disgrace!

It is amazing that, in the face of this starvation for funds, we have developed a good, basically sound educational system.

Despite a huge increase in the gross national product in recent years, more and more of our national income is being dissipated in essentially frivolous and non-constructive consumption, while education goes begging. We are spending far too high a proportion of our talents and energies and capital on such non-vital enterprises as designing and producing new filter-tips and new and higher tail-fins.

I have nothing against frivolity and having a good time but when the other fellow is trained down to hard muscle and bone, I think we have to be willing to take a little fat off if we are going to compete.

RUSSIANS ARE WORKING HARD

And the other fellow is definitely competing. Furthermore, he has learned some things from us - he has adopted quietly in recent years a couple of basic and traditional American doctrines: that society must provide incentives for individuals if it is to go forward, and that the way to the top must be kept clear for individuals to rise unimpeded as far as their abilities permit.

The Russians are beginning to flirt with our traditional "percolate-up" theory of national well-being, but I sometimes think our own nation's leadership seems to have fallen into the ancient and discredited philosophy that the key to national strength and endurance is in the "trickle-down" from wealthy and powerful corporations and other institutions.

And from the Kremlin to the classroom, in the laboratories and in the public libraries I visited in the Soviet Union, it was clear that the Russians have adopted another old-time American custom -- hard work!

I think we had better think about resuming some of the old virtues that made this nation what it is -- from the classroom up to the White House. And I mean hard work, application, competition in achieving, with the emphasis on production rather than restrictions, on participation rather than watching.

THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

These are matters for individual decision and action, of course. No one can legislate virtue. But certainly there are areas which clearly call for legislative action.

In the National Defense Education Act we did take several affirmative steps to strengthen the educational system. For secondary schools in particular we significantly strengthened, I believe, the possibilities for increased achievement in the sciences, mathematics and language teaching through the grant provisions of Title 3, the advanced teacher-training programs of Title 6, and the boost to audio-visual experimentation of Title 7.

The national task of identifying the promising student will be more effectively undertaken with the State-assistance programs and the institutes for counseling and guidance personnel training provided under Title 5.

But Congress fell down when it settled for a relatively meager incentive program for the gifted high school student in the form of long-term loans. I fought, along with many other Senators, right up to the last minute for a real incentive program -- direct and generous scholarships -- a program that would have been based on the good old American system of competition, and that would in the first case have been awarded not for need, but for merit, with an additional stipend available for the scholarship winner who needed it.

The loan program will be useful. It is already surprising some of the pessimists who thought the colleges would not use the program. But it is a limited kind of operation. It is fine for the student who has already made up his mind to go to college and is willing and able to mortgage himself to a ten year repayment period, and it is far better than no help at all. But we never contemplated that it would be a substitute for scholarships.

Even in this very modest step toward reopening the channels of educational opportunity, the Administration has come in with a request for only \$30 million for the loan program for the coming fiscal year, as compared with the \$75 million authorized in the Act.

DEFENSE OF THE "BUDGET" OR OF THE NATION?

There is so much "Defense of the Budget" talk going on these days that one is tempted to ask whether we should be more interested in defending a budget or in building a nation through sound investment.

Taking the necessary steps to bring our educational system up to the mark will cost money. Yes, it will cost money just as it costs the stockholders of U. S. Steel money to invest in steel capacity expansion or as it costs the Dupont Company to initiate a new multi-million dollar research program in plastics. The stockholders expect to get their money back and more. And we taxpayers, in the same manner, can expect to get all kinds of dividends on intelligent planning and investment in the field of education.

Sooner or later, we must face up to the fact that expenditures for education must be considered as investments -- clear-cut increments to our national productivity and to the strength of our society, which we cannot afford to write off as mere "government spending."

"Money, of course, is not everything," I most often hear that particular phrase from those who have all the money they can personally and comfortably spend. Money certainly is not everything, but the lack of money is a cruel handicap and a block to the healthy development of talent and leadership which our nation can not afford to tolerate.

MOVES IN CONGRESS

As I see it, there are three specific ways in which Congress can help to strengthen American education.

1. SCHOLARSHIPS:

First we must remove the economic barriers to higher education for the

gifted, and we must provide positive incentives for the bright boys and girls of every economic class to settle down to hard pre-college work in the high schools. I think we must, and eventually will, provide at least 40,000 new scholarships each year, as well as providing student loan funds to the colleges to the full amount authorized in the National Defense Education Act.

I intend to press personally for at least 46,000 competitive scholarships -- at least two every year, on the average, for every high school graduating class in America. I think it would be the greatest thing that we could do to encourage students to dig in and work to their fullest capabilities.

2. SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION:

Secondly, we must restore the nation's physical plant for education to a level sufficient to provide the kind of learning conditions under which teachers may give of their best, and students may have the maximum opportunity to learn. As a first step, we must provide matching funds, as we have called for in S. 2 of the present Congress, to help construct at least 135,000 new classrooms. I am not talking about a loan program, or another conference on education to determine what we ought to be doing. We know what we ought to be doing. We know what the problem is. We know how much money it will cost to remedy it, and it is just about time we got out of the discussion stage and into the doing. I have every hope that the Congress will resolve its differences over approach, and that it will override the Defenders of the Budget and pass a school construction bill!

I have heard for many years about Defenders of Virtue and Defenders of the Nation and Defenders of the Faith, but I think we have a new order of knighthood being developed down at the White House. When I heard that rallying call "We must defend the Budget" coming from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue I thought: wouldn't it be nobler, more patriotic, more sensible if we had heard the call: "We must defend the nation" or "We must defend a way of life which is in deadly peril?"

We must resolve to spend and invest whatever is necessary for the health and strength of our society -- not wasteful spending, but hard, concrete, business-like investment.

3. TEACHERS' SALARIES:

The third step Congress must take is a program to help raise teacher salaries to a level high enough to attract a continuing supply of highly qualified and motivated teachers. You school administrators know better than anyone else the critical problem of recruiting and holding a staff of good teachers with the existing salary levels. I think it is a national disgrace that this society of ours forces dedicated professional men and women to work for the salaries we pay our teachers -- an average of less than \$4,800 yearly. We ask them not to force their own salaries up by going on strike. All right, then let us have the decency to pay the dedicated teacher a salary commensurate with his gifts, his years of training and his importance. And let us have the wisdom to know that we cannot afford to depend on the generosity and nobility of young men and women to fill out the steadily expanding ranks of needed teachers. This is a competitive society, and many young people have family responsibilities that preclude them from offering their services for peanuts!

Our bill, S. 2, provides for Federal assistance in this area also. Naturally, in all these steps which I believe Congress should and will take, there should be and will be expressly provided that there must be no Federal control of education. That control should rest firmly where it belongs -- in the locally elected school boards of our communities.

NON-COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY

Now, let me just for a moment go beyond the field of education to talk about other opportunities which our society might consider providing young people.

All young people aren't going on to college -- even if they were financially able to do so. Others are going on to college who perhaps don't belong there. Obviously, everyone cannot successfully go on to professional training. But don't we have an obligation as a society to provide opportunity for fulfillment to

these other millions of boys and girls? Are we to be content to see the fifteen and sixteen-year old drop out of high school, or even finish high school, only to drift onto the street corner, into the shadow-land where he is not considered "unemployed" by the Census takers, but where he isn't in school, and he isn't working?

What about these young people? Most of them have a great deal to contribute to the nation. Many of them have real ability, but find that the work opportunities are restricted, routine, drab and boring. Young people, we know, have a highly developed sense of adventure. They want to do things, move things, create, achieve, build.

It is up to our society, I believe, to somehow provide that there are actually available to young people opportunities for service, that there are concrete, practical, going programs in which young people of all levels of ability may seek and find ways of making a contribution to their fellow-men.

There are many such programs in existence now, most of them voluntary, ill-financed, and of relatively small scope. The volunteers who initiated such programs deserve the gratitude of the nation. Their's is important work.

But it is not enough. The task of providing broad incentives, of providing the opportunity for expression and achievement for young people, in work which provides outlets for their enthusiasm and idealism, is one in which Government, too, must play a role -- and an important role.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Congress clearly has an obligation to consider action to provide new kinds of incentives which will draw into public service, young people of idealism and ability; but we also have the duty to see that we channel into constructive work the restless energies of those young people who do not go on to higher education and the professions.

As an example of such a program, I think we can recall the magnificent Civilian Conservation Corps of the thirties -- which gave young men the opportunity to participate in a great national conservation effort, which added untold millions of dollars of value to our publicly-owned lands, building a treasure for the coming generations.

We have proposed new legislation which would create a new kind of program for boys and young men -- a program even more geared to the planned conservation programs of the Forest Service and the National Park Service and other Federal and State conservation agencies -- and which would provide for a strong education program at the same time.

We call it a Youth Conservation Corps -- and the name was chosen deliberately, not simply to reflect its goal of preserving and conserving the rich natural resources of the nation, but also to dramatize that this program is designed to conserve and encourage the priceless resources of idealism and courage represented by our young men and women.

It would be well if all of us would give some thought and discussion to the development of similar challenging and productive programs in which our young people might voluntarily enlist in the service of our country.

Public service is indeed a noble concept. Too often the opportunity for such service is denied to all but the most gifted and energetic in our midst.

Let us, then, continue to work toward the day, when every boy and girl in America will have the chance, first of all, to train himself to the limit of his capacities, and finally, the broader opportunity of contributing in concrete and specific terms to the welfare of his people and his nation.

④ I hope I'm not too
much to you today
I love you much!

④ Choir of
Hershey PA
JHS School

Address by

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

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National Association of Secondary-School Principals

Philadelphia, Pa.
February 11, 1959

Visitors from other countries
Delighted!

Mr. Leo Shattuck, President

Mr. Cliff Robinson - Eugene Owen (Pres Elect)

Yes, It is quite true. I did speak with Nikita Khrushchev. — and

at considerable length ~~a few weeks ago~~. And despite the

Russian premier's somewhat intemperate remarks (shall we

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Culture - U.S.
music symphony
choir

But I talked with a lot of other Russians, too. Mrs.

Humphrey and I went into laboratories and hospitals ~~and~~ ^{Princeton University}

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In fact, we stood and talked with Russian youngsters for

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day, Moscow may have looked to me a drab and cheerless city.

But think what Moscow, with its great universities, its great libraries and cultural centers, its ballet, its very size, looks like to a young African, or a bright boy from a southeast Asian village!

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Let me tell you a little story. When I was preparing to go on the Soviet television in Moscow, my interpreter and I were working over my text. At one point I wanted to tell the Russians about our concept of providing broad types of opportunity for our people. I discovered that there was no Russian equivalent for our word "Opportunity".

But make no mistake about it: there may be no Russian word, but there is a lot of Russian action. They are actively, systematically and aggressively providing opportunity -- educational opportunity -- seeking out and training their talented young people at a pace that spells out formidable competition to the Western world.

On the other hand, "opportunity" is a favorite American word.

Perhaps it's time we do a little less talking about opportunity and a little more doing to assure it!

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(Good system despite
limit)

// start

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I think we had better think about resuming some of the old
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Commissioner
of Education
Told you

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The national task of identifying the promising student, and of ~~getting the square peg in the square hole~~, will be more effectively undertaken with the State-assistance programs and the institutes for counseling and guidance-personnel training provided under Title 5.

But Congress ~~has~~ fell down when it settled for a relatively meager incentive program for the gifted high school student in the form of long-term loans. I fought, along with many other Senators, right up to the last minute for a real incentive program -- direct and generous scholarships -- a program that

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(X)

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As I see it, there are three specific ways in

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I think we must, and eventually will, provide at least 40,000 new scholarships each year, as well as providing student loan funds to the colleges to the full amount authorized in the National Defense Education Act.

I intend to press personally for at least 46,000 competitive scholarships -- at least two every year, on the average, for every high school graduating class in America.

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We ask them not to force their own salaries up by going
on strike. All right, then let us have the decency to
pay the dedicated teacher a salary commensurate with his
gifts, his years of training and his importance. And let
us have the wisdom to know that we cannot afford to depend on
the generosity and nobility of young men and women to fill
out the steadily expanding ranks of needed teachers. This
is a competitive society, and many young people have family
responsibilities that preclude them from offering their
services for peanuts!

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Our bill, S. 2, provides for Federal assistance in this area also, ~~but like everything else, the Federal Government can do only so much. We hope that the Federal initiative will stir action on raising teachers salaries at the local level, as Federal action in other fields has done.~~

Naturally, in all these steps which I believe Congress *should* and will take, there should be and will be expressly provided that there must be no Federal control of education. That control should rest firmly where it belongs--in the locally elected school boards of our communities.

Now, let me just for a moment go beyond the field of education ~~for a moment~~ to talk about other opportunities *providing* which our society might consider ~~giving~~ young people.

All young people aren't going on to college--
even if they were financially able to do so.

exchanges

Nat Assoc of Student Councils - European Tour
IFyI - Amer Field Service

Others are going on to college who perhaps ⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰⁹¹ don't belong there.

Obviously, everyone cannot successfully go on to professional

training. But don't we have an obligation as a society to provide

opportunity for fulfillment to these other millions of boys and

girls? Are we to be content to see the fifteen and sixteen-year

old drop out of high school, or even finish high school, only

to drift onto the street corner, into the shadow-land where he

is not considered "unemployed" by the Census takers, but

where he isn't in school, and he isn't working?

What about these young people? Most of them have
a great deal to contribute to the nation. Many of them have
real ability, but find that the work opportunities are restricted,
routine, drab and boring. Young people, we know, have a
highly developed sense of adventure. They want to do things,
move things, create, achieve, build.

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h It is up to our society, I believe, to somehow provide that there are actually available to young people opportunities for service, that there are concrete, practical, going programs in which young people of all levels of ability may seek and find ways of making a contribution to their fellow-men.

h There are many such programs in existence now, most of them voluntary, ill-financed, and of relatively small scope. The volunteers who have ^{initiated} ~~such~~ such programs ~~underway~~ deserve the gratitude of the nation. Their's is important work.

h But it is not enough. The task of providing broad incentives, of providing the opportunity for expression and achievement for young people, in work which provides outlets for their enthusiasm and idealism, is one in which ~~the Federal~~ ^{too,} Government must play a role -- and an important role.

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Congress clearly has an obligation to consider action to provide new kinds of incentives which will draw into public service, young people of idealism and ability; but we also have the duty to see that we channel into constructive work the restless energies of those young people who ~~cannot be expected to~~ *do not* go on to higher education and the professions.

As an example of such a program, I think we can recall the magnificent Civilian Conservation Corps of the thirties-- which gave young men the opportunity to participate in a great national conservation effort which added untold millions of dollars of value to our publicly-owned lands, building a treasure for the coming generations.

We have proposed new legislation which would create a new kind of program for boys and young men -- a program even more geared to the planned conservation programs of the Forest

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Service and the National Park Service and other Federal and State conservation agencies -- and which would provide for a strong education program at the same time.

↳ We call it a Youth Conservation Corps -- and the name was chosen deliberately, not simply to reflect its goal of preserving and conserving the rich natural resources of the nation, but also to dramatize that this program is designed to conserve and encourage the priceless resources of idealism, / courage and represented by our young men and women.

↳ It would be well if all of us would give some thought and discussion to the development of similar challenging and productive programs in which our young people might voluntarily enlist in the service of our country.

↳ Public service is indeed a noble concept. Too often the opportunity for such service is denied to all but the most gifted and energetic in our midst.

Let us, then, continue to work toward the day, when every boy and girl in America will have the chance, first of all, to train himself to the limit of his capacities, and finally, the broader opportunity of contributing in concrete and specific terms to the welfare of his people and his nation.



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