

From the Office of
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FOR RELEASE: SUNDAY A.M.
MARCH 5, 1961

HUMPHREY CALLS FOR CABINET-LEVEL DEPARTMENT

FOR URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) yesterday urged early action to establish a Department of Urban Affairs.

Humphrey spoke at a New York City conference on metropolitan problems sponsored by the Lexington Democratic Club.

~~He called for elevation of Dr. Robert C. Weaver, newly appointed chief of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, to the rank of cabinet secretary of the Kennedy Administration.~~

"Our cities must have vigorous, co-ordinated federal financial support with a dynamic Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs as a focal point for research, information, advice, and leadership," Humphrey declared.

"It is about time that we adopt a political philosophy and political institutions which regard our urban areas as vital centers of American life -- worth developing as great national assets.

"It is about time that we start giving our cities the kind of support and leadership they need at the national level.

Humphrey warned that the problems of urban development should not be allowed to conceal the opportunities in city life:

--the opportunity for prosperous economic activity

--the opportunity for creative social life

--the opportunity for widening cultural development

--the opportunity for a growing sense of brotherhood and human dignity."

Urban Development --
A National Challenge

Lexington Democratic Club
New York City, March 4, 1961

As a former mayor, I enjoy
reading newspaper columns about
city life a hundred years ago.

The picture that emerges is
antique. It is quaint. It shows
a tranquil, peaceful, slow-changing
environment with a few really
serious problems facing the mayor
or the city council.

Fifteen years ago in
Minneapolis, life was not
tranquil or slow-moving. As
mayor I was wrestling with problems
that still afflict every big city
-- a lack of housing for low and

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middle income families, urban slum
blight, traffic congestion, unmet
education needs, law enforcement,
inadequate tax revenues, public
health and sewage problems, and the *Tensions*
conflicts of human relations.

✓ The problems we face today
in our big metropolitan centers
often come to our attention
because they involve physical
discomfort, or danger in our
daily lives.

✓ I am concerned about these
problems -- but I am even more
concerned about the challenge
of urban life to our democratic
political institutions and our
democratic way of life, with its

Open society, its opportunity for
individual achievement, social
progress, and human dignity.

In the next ten years
America will add 30 million
people to its present 180 million
-- and 25 of that 30 million will
be in our major metropolitan centers.

Popul.

Two out of every three Americans
now live in these cities. By
1980 four out of five will be city
people.

Fourth

We hear about the "flight to
the suburbs" and the "decay" of
central city areas. Stagnation
and sprawl, congestion and social
conflicts threaten to turn our
city life into a nightmare reality.

But at the same time ^{that} we are
wrestling with these problems, let
us not forget the opportunities we
^{or can find} find in our cities:

- the opportunity for prosperous
economic activity
- the opportunity for creative
social life
- the opportunity for widening
cultural development
- the opportunity for a
growing sense of brotherhood
and human dignity.

and The big, tough problems of
our cities are really a reflection
of the dynamic vitality of American
life. We don't want to destroy this
vitality -- but we do want to channel
it away from its own self-destruction.

Here is a tremendous challenge. And we do not have to look very far from New York City to see that it is a national challenge -- a challenge facing many other American cities -- a challenge which calls for action on a national scale -- a challenge which demands federal action and federal leadership to call forth the co-operative effort necessary to turn our urban problems into opportunities for creative action.

How do we reconcile the jumbled patchwork of voting jurisdictions within a metropolitan area?

How can the average citizen identify himself with a metropolitan area which transcends his own experience

of neighborhood or community?

How can this citizen make up his mind on issues affecting his area-wide metropolitan community -- and then express himself politically?

To ask these questions is to realize the challenge of urban life to our democratic process.

The problem here is political -- and our solution must be political.

We see the failure of our political institutions to grapple with a major national development, the growing urbanization of America.

We see the failure of the great urban majority in the United States to win its proper representation in our state legislatures and in Washington.

Representation

I think it is time to arouse all Americans -- not just city people -- to the urgent need for genuinely creative urban development to revive city life, to raise city life to new heights.

And this will be done if our cities get the political recognition and the national support they should have.

This is why I call for prompt establishment of a Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs. This is the pledge of our Democratic Platform. And it is the answer to an urgent need for political recognition and political support of America's urban areas at the highest level of American political life.

Cabinet-
Urban
Affairs.

yes, The problems of our urban areas are indeed local, and their solutions must be

[Signature]
worked out and carried out locally.

But Federal action is justified when the fabric of American life is torn apart by persistent social problems which defy any easy solution by communities lacking full power and authority to counter-attack.

[Signature]
~~If there is a national interest in solving the problems of our urban areas, let us commit ourselves to national action. Let us commit ourselves to the expenditures of energy and money within the federal government.~~

Joe Clark
I think we can do this best if we have a Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs, responsible to the President and to the Congress and to the American people.

*Agnes Salas
Labor
Comm.*

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the fabric of American life is torn

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conventional means and the power and

authority to see to it.

Human Relations

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out
The Secretary of Agriculture is concerned about the welfare of 20 million farm people.

The Secretary of Labor looks after the welfare of America's working men and women.

The Secretary of Commerce represents the interests of several million business firms.

And the Secretary of the Interior is primarily concerned with the welfare of those Western States which have only a small fraction of our total population.

Each of these federal departments has a sound historical justification, and each has contributed to the over-all welfare and progress of our country.

But the welfare of the city dweller and the interests of our great metropolitan areas -- overlapping city, county, and state boundaries -- do not have an official voice

⑩ Present Fed Action
uncoordinated, too little

⑪ Housing & Home Finance Agency
FHA Comm Facilities Admin
P HA Fannie Mae
urban Renewal

⑫ Housing - 1,600,000 units
Ayr.

Urban Renewal = 475 Communities
Fed 2/3 - 1/3 820 Projects

new awareness of Cost of Slums

⑬ Financing - Interest
Charges

⑭ Housing - Full Employment

"States" RTS - Poor Representation
cities - no Revenues
metropolitan areas
zoning

in the President's Cabinet.

As many of you know, our urban areas have some persistent, vocal, and effective spokesmen in the Senate. But legislation passed in the Senate can be blocked in the House of Representatives by Congressmen who are unfamiliar with the needs of urban areas and who are unaware of the growing pressure for a national urban development policy.

What is the result of this lack of representation in Washington?

Indeed, President, Federal action to protect city people and to speed urgently needed assistance to our metropolitan areas is inadequate. It is un-coordinated. It is too little and too late. It lacks the vision which can bring order out of chaos.

The various agencies within the Housing and Home Finance Agency --- the Federal Housing Administration and the

Public Housing Administration particularly -- have at times followed conflicting policies. This is ridiculous. These agencies should be working together under one chief who has authority to knock heads together, to make the decisions which build the housing effort into an integrated whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.

∟ A Secretary of Urban Affairs could do this. He could coordinate our housing efforts with transportation, education and other programs, helping to give a much needed shot-in-the-arm to urban development.

∟ America's cities now have no single, clear voice within the federal government. The Housing and Home ^{Finance} Agency tries to coordinate a variety of housing

policies. The director of the H.H.F.A. has to be an alphabetical wizard. He must coordinate the F.H.A. -- the P.H.A. -- Fannie Mae -- with the Community Facilities Administration and the Urban Renewal Administration.

And he must keep in touch with the National Housing Council which includes the Veterans Administration, the Small Business Administration, the Atomic Energy Commission, the federal departments of Commerce, Agriculture, Health, Education and Welfare, Defense, and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

Billions of dollars are involved and millions of people in urban areas are affected. But H.H.F.A. cannot take an over-all view of city problems. It is primarily concerned with housing, and important as housing may be in urban development, it is not the whole problem

by any means,

~~by any means.~~

Therefore I believe America's cities must have a clear, vigorous, effective voice at the highest level of our government -- a voice at the Cabinet level.

Why at the Cabinet level?

Because it is at the Cabinet level that the decisions are made on a wide variety of issues which profoundly affect the growth and development of city life.

And let us remember that city life is the prospect for the ~~vast majority of~~ Americans.

What are the problems that will face a new Department of Urban Affairs?

First of all, it will be responsible for carrying out the purposes of the Housing Act of 1949 ~~the most monumental~~ step forward in the history of our country.

∟ The Housing Act of 1949 pledged our nation to the proposition that every American family has a right to a decent home and a suitable living environment.

The new Secretary of Urban Affairs must regard this pledge as basic to the existence of his department. And he must also carry out the intent of Congress as stated in the 1949 Act -- that a high rate of residential construction is necessary in order to maintain continuing full employment and steady growth of our national economy and our high standard of living. ~~th~~

∟ Take a look at our investment in urban residential buildings. Not counting the value of the land they occupy, these residential buildings represent an investment of more than \$320 billion -- nearly one quarter of

of our total national wealth.

Surely this shows the importance of slum clearance and urban renewal to overcome urban blight and decay.

Yet we have only very skimpy information about deterioration and obsolescence of these residential properties. If they were stocks or bonds, we would have careful statistical surveys. We would know the cost of obsolescence in terms of declining tax revenues.

This is the kind of coordinated research that a Department of Urban Affairs can do to lay the groundwork for genuine progress and development in America's cities.

↳ The Urban Renewal Administration set up in 1949 has helped 475 communities join in 870 projects on a two-thirds

federal, one-third local basis -- and more than 1,400 smaller communities have received help under this urban development program. Public agencies have acquired 15,000 acres of blighted city slum areas for clearance -- yet hundreds of thousands of slum-blighted acres still remain.

|| Fortunately we have developed over the past 10 years a new awareness at local, state, and national levels of the high cost of slum blight and the value of urban development and urban renewal.

And now we have a President with the vision and the will to move forward at the national level to spark cooperative action by all levels of government in reviving and developing our cities. *and* He should have a man in his Cabinet who will help translate his vision into action.

What about the flight to the suburbs? Is this a trend without change in sight, or have we already started a return to the city?

The flight to the suburbs has two sides -- a negative desire to escape crowded city life, and a positive desire to create a richer family life. And yet it sometimes seems that those who flee to the suburbs are creating some of the very conditions they hoped to escape.

Our suburbs too often become social, racial or income "in-groups" -- fearful of minority intrusion, existing in an uneasy relationship on the outskirts of cities, yet not associated with the cities by any rational system, and, with a few notable exceptions, existing on a precarious tax foundation.

Once there were green fields, trees, and streams surrounding our cities. Now there are super-highways, cloverleaf intersections, filling stations, ice cream stands and billboards. And we see the ever-present landscape-changing bulldozer -- the forerunner of new rows of houses and waves of family migrations.

Suburbia has even developed a literature of frustration -- a frustration which may well herald an early end to the flight to the suburbs and the beginning of a return to the cities, the beginning of a closer integration of business, social, and family life in an urban culture which enhances human dignity and individual opportunity.

Another challenge is transportation. Too often we emphasize mobility for its own sake. I think an advanced, civilized

society like ours should give more attention to convenience. We should bring people's homes and their jobs into a more convenient relationship.

Good highways and good roads are essential -- but they are means to an end, not ends in themselves. Public transportation, whether public or privately owned, must be planned to serve metropolitan needs, rather than particular communities or special segments of the area's population.

Road

And we must be prepared to give substantial public support to our mass transportation systems if that becomes necessary in the public interest.

And what about housing -- not housing for some, or housing for the many, but housing for all.

Housing for all -- we have never had it.

Consider what Sweden has accomplished. Fifty years ago the Swedes bought up land surrounding the city of Stockholm to hold for future housing needs.

And 25 years ago they started using city tax money to aid housing construction. They made available municipal credit for prefabricated sections of low cost houses, and city employees advised people how to build their own homes. Financing was made very easy -- nothing down and very low payments.

Here in the United States in 1961 we are still struggling with the lack of suitable land for housing, wasteful use of urban and suburban land, speculation in land and real estate, and exorbitant costs of land and construction.

What are the housing conditions of

our people? Is good housing in our cities as rare as commonly reported? And is it true that slums and blight are spreading faster in some parts of our cities than are being eliminated in other parts?

We know that nearly 9 million households in the United States live in substandard housing. Another 5 million live in housing units that are deteriorating and well on their way to becoming substandard. And more than 25 million people -- about one out of six -- live now in substandard houses.

Thirty years ago President Roosevelt declared that one-third of ^{the} ~~a~~ nation is ill-housed. We have made improvements but, as the wealthiest nation in the world, we have little to be proud of.

Housing construction is the most important element which must be

accelerated to provide better homes for all of our people. We cannot possibly rid ourselves of slums until an adequate supply of decent housing is available for American families now living in slums.

✓ During the next 10 years, 16 million new urban homes must be built to take care of our housing needs. About 10 million of these are needed just to house new families. The other 6 million are needed to replace houses torn down for slum clearance, highway construction, or deterioration.

This means we will need an average of one million six hundred thousand new homes a year. The number would vary from one million four hundred thousand in the first half of the Sixties to one million eight hundred thousand in the second half, reaching two million by 1970.

These figures from a study by the Senate Subcommittee on Housing do not call for the millenium, but they do realistically assume that we can cut substandard housing in the United States in half by 1970.

Our target in housing construction should be at least two million new homes a year -- most of it priced to meet the housing needs of middle and low income families who are now priced out of the market for decent homes.

This is a big order and it will need all the support it can get at the national level from our federal government. I am confident that Dr. Robert C. Weaver, who has served the city of New York and the state of New York so ably in the housing field, will press this program

vigorously as Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

President Kennedy is deeply concerned about the present slump in housing construction. In 1960, housing starts totaled only one million two hundred thousand, and at the present time, we are building new homes at the rate of only one million a year.

In this country, government aids to housing have taken many forms -- mortgage insurance, direct and indirect lending, and outright grants.

Credit is involved in all of these programs.

Under the insurance programs, the federal government helps attract investment funds into mortgages by insuring the lender

against loss.

In the indirect lending program, the Federal government is helping to maintain the flow of capital into mortgages by purchasing mortgages in the secondary mortgage market, when the demand for mortgage money is temporarily greater than the supply.

At present, the Federal government goes into direct lending and outright grants only in a small way -- to help finance home construction for families which private enterprise cannot possibly take care of. These loan and grant programs must be increased drastically if we are to achieve the goals pledged in our Democratic platform last year.

Fortunately, the present Administration accepts a direct responsibility to hold down the cost of money flowing into mortgages,

as well as other capital investments.

President Kennedy has embarked on the difficult task of reducing interest rates in long-term investments and, at the same time, increasing interest charges on short-term money.

Let me tell you how the cost of buying a house, which is profoundly affected by interest rates, has skyrocketed in recent years.

In 1959, the average FHA one-family new home was valued at \$14,300 compared with \$10,000 in 1952. This was a 40 percent increase.

The average mortgage loan was \$13,300 in 1959, compared with \$8,300 in 1952 -- a 60 percent increase.

When financing costs are added to the principal amount of the loan, the average FHA new home buyer was committing himself to repaying, over the life of the

of the mortgage, \$27,000 in 1959 compared with \$13,000 in 1952. This means more than a 100 percent increase in the cost of a home in seven years.

I realize, of course, that the 1959 house is, on the average, a bigger and better house than the 1952 house. The 1959 house is likely to have 10 percent more space, and many more homes have four bedrooms and two bathrooms. But these factors do not fully account for the increased prices.

The purchasing power of the consumer rose only \$1,000 during this same period. Prices moved far ahead of purchasing power, and this means that more and more low and middle income families have been denied access to the housing market.

Now what is the Federal responsibility in these matters? Some say that these

rising costs are merely the natural working of the market of supply and demand. They say that any interference by the Federal government would do more harm than good.

We Democrats reject these counsels of despair and helplessness in the face of an urgent national problem. We know that our Federal government is a tool which we use to carry out the purposes of our national life. We dare to use Federal power so long as this power is subject to the checks and restraints of the democratic process.

We spend billions to explore and control outer space. It is foolishness to balk at spending millions to raise our standards of living here on this earth!

Revenue

Thirty years ago, local taxes accounted for half of all public revenues in the United States. Today local taxes produce only one-sixth of all public revenues.

The increasing responsibilities of the Federal government for national and international security, not to mention the welfare needs of our fellow citizens, have operated so as to limit the tax resources available to local governments.

Federal income taxes support national defense and pay the interest on our national debt. State sales and income taxes support education, highways, and welfare services.

What is left for our cities? The traditional overworked property tax, supplemented by a variety of makeshift revenues.

Cities

At this point I want to pay my respects to New York City. Here you have an income tax and you apply it quite impartially to people working in your city -- even if they live in Hackensack, New Jersey, or Greenwich, Connecticut.

It is about time that we adopt a political philosophy and political institutions which regard our urban areas as vital centers of American life -- worth developing as great national assets.

It is about time that we start giving our cities the kind of support and leadership they need at the national level. And when you think of the tax revenue they provide for the Federal government, our cities should start getting the financial help they deserve.

✓ The partnership of Federal and city governments makes sense -- in politics and economics.

It makes sense in politics because it is the only way for the urban majority to break through the discriminations now practiced by so many state legislatures. If the States will not help meet city needs, the cities have no other place to turn than to the Federal government.

✓ I often remind the "states rights" advocates that the States themselves are forcing the Federal government to expand its services and its activities when they default on their responsibilities to their cities. They have forced urban America to turn to the Federal government.

States
RHS

∟ The economic argument for Federal support for our large metropolitan areas is even more fundamental.

∟ Federal revenues are raised largely through income taxes. These taxes more closely based on ability to pay are more equitable and more responsive to rising national income than are property taxes and sales taxes on which local governments so largely depend.

∟ Until the "States" make greater progress toward developing equitable tax structures ---and by this I mean more reliance on income taxes as we do in Minnesota and in Oregon and in New York -- only the high income taxpayers will gain by substituting State taxes for federal taxes. This would be a backward step.

Of course the new and expanded programs necessary for sound urban development will cost money. But let us keep in mind their wealth-creating potential, their enlargement of our tax base. And let us keep in mind how dangerous it will be to our national welfare if our cities sink into unredeemed blight, decline, and despair.

Cost
Money

In the long run, we should look forward to a better coordinated tax system -- with States and cities sharing in the rising revenues which come from income taxes on a rising national income.

∟ But now our cities must have vigorous coordinated federal financial support with a dynamic Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs as a focal point for research, information, advice and leadership.

∟ Pioneer efforts in area-wide planning are under way already in Dade County, Florida, in Toronto, Canada, and, of course, here in your own New York Port Authority.

∟ I hope we can learn how a broad philosophy of metropolitan development, with an over-all program of coordinated area-wide action can guide us toward new dimensions in urban life.

∟ Our growing experience in city planning and regional development is helping to shape this philosophy. And we are getting excellent research and

education in urban development from our universities.

↳ The development of a philosophy of urban development must move ahead rapidly if we hope to avoid increasing blight and chaos in our great urban areas. Therefore it is imperative that we establish a focus within the Federal government for this process.

↳ Our great metropolitan centers need a voice at the summit of our national government. They need a focus for creative thought and action. Let us make sure they get this voice -- this focal point -- without further delay.

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Excerpts to Remarks
Prepared for Delivery by
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
Before the
Lexington Democratic Club
New York City, March 4, 1961

Fifteen years ago in Minneapolis, life was not tranquil or slow-moving. As Mayor, I was wrestling with problems that still afflict every big city -- a lack of housing for low and middle income families, urban slum blight, traffic congestion, unmet education needs, law enforcement, inadequate tax revenues, public health and sewage problems, and the conflicts of human relations.

In the next ten years America will add 30 million people to our present 180 million -- and 25 of that 30 million will be in our major metropolitan centers. Two out of every three Americans now live in these cities. By 1980 four out of five will be city people.

We hear about the "flight to the suburbs" and the "decay" of central city areas. Stagnation and sprawl, congestion and social conflicts threaten to turn our city life into a nightmare reality.

We can expect our great metropolitan areas to have hard problems just as long as cities exist. But at the same time that we are wrestling with these problems, let us not forget the opportunities we find in our cities:

- the opportunity for prosperous economic activity
- the opportunity for creative social life
- the opportunity for widening cultural development
- the opportunity for a growing sense of brotherhood and human dignity.

We see the failure of our political institutions to grapple with a major national development, the growing urbanization of America.

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United States to win its proper representation in our state legislatures and in Washington.

I think it is time to arouse all Americans -- not just city people -- to the urgent need for genuinely creative urban development to revive city life, to raise city life to new heights.

And this will be done if our cities get the political recognition and the national support they should have.

This is why I call for prompt establishment of a Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs. It is the pledge of our Democratic Platform. And it is the answer to an urgent need for political recognition and political support of America's urban areas at the highest level of American political life.

As many of you know, our urban areas have some persistent, vocal, and effective spokesmen in the Senate. But legislation passed in the Senate can be blocked in the House of Representatives by Congressmen who are unfamiliar with the needs of urban areas and who are unaware of the growing pressure for a national urban development policy.

What is the result of this lack of representation in Washington?

Federal action to protect city people and to speed urgently needed assistance to our metropolitan areas is inadequate. It is un-coordinated. It is too little and too late. It lacks the vision which can bring order out of chaos.

I believe America's cities must have a clear, vigorous, effective voice at the highest level of our government -- a voice at the Cabinet level.

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Take a look at our investment in our urban residential buildings. Not counting the value of the land they occupy, you will find these residential buildings represent an investment of more than \$320 billion -- nearly one quarter of our total national wealth.

Surely this shows the importance of slum clearance and urban renewal to overcome urban blight and decay.

Yet we have only very skimpy information about deterioration and obsolescence of these residential properties. If they were stocks or bonds, we would have careful statistical surveys. We would know the cost of obsolescence in terms of declining tax revenues.

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Our suburbs too often become social, racial or income "in-groups" -- fearful of minority intrusion, existing in an uneasy relationship on the outskirts of cities, yet not associated with the cities by any rational system, and, with a few notable exceptions, existing on a precarious tax foundation.

Suburbia has even developed a literature of frustration -- a frustration which may well herald an early end to the flight to the suburbs and the beginning of a return to the cities, the beginning of a closer integration of business, social, and family life in an urban culture which enhances human dignity and individual opportunity.

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This means we will need an average of 1,600,000 new homes a year. The number would vary from 1,400,000 in the first half of the Sixties to 1,800,000 in the second half, reaching 2 million by 1970.

Our target in housing construction should be at least 2 million new homes a year -- most of it priced to meet the housing needs of middle and low income families who are now priced out of the market for decent homes.

This is a big order and it will need all the support it can get at the national level from our federal government. I am confident that Dr. Robert C. Weaver, who has served the City of New York and the State of New York so ably in the housing field, will press this program vigorously as Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, and, ~~I hope, as the first Secretary of Urban Affairs in the Kennedy Cabinet.~~

We spend billions to explore and control outer space. What foolishness to balk at spending millions to raise our standards of living here on this earth!

It is about time that we adopt a political philosophy and political institutions which regard our urban areas as vital centers of American life -- worth developing as great national assets.

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In the long run, we should look forward to a better coordinated tax system -- with States and cities sharing in the rising revenues which come from income taxes on a rising national income.

But now our cities must have vigorous, coordinated federal financial support with a dynamic Cabinet-level Department of Urban Affairs as a focal point for research, information, advice, and leadership.

Our great metropolitan centers need a voice at the summit of our national government. They need a focus for creative thought and action. Let us make sure they get this voice -- this focal point -- without further delay.

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February 21, 1961

Mrs. Ralph Gerstle
1125 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mrs. Gerstle:

Barbara Williamson has asked me to send the enclosed pictures and biography copies to you in advance of the Senator's appearance at the Lexington Democratic Club luncheon on March 4.

The text of the Senator's remarks will be ready next week. Should this also be sent to you or to Mr. Irving Haber?

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Winthrop Griffith
News Secretary to
Hubert H. Humphrey

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