

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey
Statement for Human Relations Conference
Shortridge High School, Indianapolis
May 9, 1964

It is a pleasure to send greetings to the second annual conference on human relations in Indianapolis and to the students of Shortridge High School sponsoring it. I am pleased to contribute to a program emphasizing our struggle for civil rights. If I were a high school student in this historic year I can assure you I would be working in this great movement to prevent discrimination and indignities to any of our fellow citizens.

This conference demonstrates that your efforts in behalf of civil rights stress devotion, forbearance and understanding. This is the reasoned approach that I believe must be emphasized. It will be of immeasurable help in gaining passage of an effective civil rights bill.

Young people, like most of you here today, have awakened this nation to the great moral issue of civil rights. The change in the national climate that began more than four years ago when four North Carolina College students became sit-ins at a lunch counter in Greensboro has launched a social revolution that has gripped this nation and the entire world. It has resulted in bi-partisan support for the best civil rights legislation ever presented for a vote in Congress.

This bill, when it passes the Senate, will give us an effective national policy and the machinery to insure that no American will be denied the right to vote because of the color of his skin. It will give us new machinery to make sure schoolrooms are open to all children, regardless of their color. And it will make sure that no American will have to face the indignity of being refused service at a public place because of his color.

For the average Negro the issue of civil rights is tied

directly to the problem of jobs. For the average Negro the most immediate problem is finding a job that pays him enough money to feed, clothe and house his family. It would be foolish for anyone to think that civil rights is merely a narrow legal issue.

We also must realize that poverty is more than being without money. It also is being without knowledge, being without even the means to help yourself. Neither the poverty nor the ignorance of the sharecropper is very ^{DIFFERENT} much ~~difference~~ than that of his brother living in the depressing atmosphere of our big cities.

We are going to have to muster all the resources we have--including the good will and understanding of those who are more privileged--to bring new educational techniques and vocational and technical training to youth so they can be equipped to earn a living in this exciting and complex society of ours.

There are many who believe this bill is not strong enough. I can sympathize with them because there are some sections I would like to strengthen. But it will work if all of us can instill in our communities a greater spirit of tolerance of differences and respect for the dignity of an individual.

I am convinced that--among young people at least--this tolerance and respect is increasing. An inspiring and refreshing aspect of our civil rights debate in the Senate is the mail I have been receiving from young people. I am constantly amazed and reassured by the clarity and directness with which these young people go to the heart of the civil rights problem.

The young people who forced America to face up to the moral issue of civil rights also are forcing our nation to look at other national problems. These pressing problems also

are closely related to civil rights--the gnawing
aggravations of unemployment and poverty in what has been
called our "affluent society."

I have been asking young people to do all they can to
create a new national climate--one that will respond to
President Johnson's call for an end to hatred and rancor
and the beginning of a new tolerance of difference whether
that difference be political or religious or racial. This
conference indicates you began long ago to work for
this.

I want to congratulate the Human Relations Council
at Shortridge for sponsoring this important event--and
compliment those whose deep feeling about civil rights
brought them here today.

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